

Staff Appreciation & Recognition (STAR) Awards

Employee STAR Awards are discretionary, and recognize and reward excellence in university service, significant achievements and contributions, and/or outstanding individual and team contributions. The STAR Award Plan provides managers with a tool to recognize, acknowledge and reward employees for exceptional performance related to, and supportive of, individual, departmental, divisional and/or organizational goals and objectives.

The STAR Award plan requires annual approval by the Chancellor and Office of the President. Approval of the program during a given fiscal year is not an indication that the campus will participate in subsequent years. The STAR Awards plan is only available during the fiscal year for which it was approved.

Plan Eligibility

Eligibility for cash awards under the STAR Plan is outlined below. Senior Management Group (SMG) members and many employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement (union) are **not** eligible for any awards under the STAR Plan.

Policy-covered career, contract, limited, and student employees, as well as exclusively represented employees in the Clerical Unit (CX) are eligible for STAR Plan cash awards if, at the time of the award, they:

- Have successfully completed their probationary period, if applicable;
- Are on active pay status or on an approved unpaid leave (however, payment will be delayed until the employee returns from their approved leave); and,
- Received a "meets expectations" or better overall rating on their most recent annual performance evaluation. Employees who have not yet received an annual performance evaluation may be eligible for an award if their manager confirms on the nomination form that they are "meeting expectations."

An employee may not receive an award under the STAR Plan if the employee is a participant in an incentive award plan that prohibits the receipt of a recognition award. For example, an employee who is eligible to receive an incentive payment under the Clinical Enterprise Incentive program is not eligible to receive an award under the STAR Plan program.

An employee's receipt of an award under the STAR Plan does not establish any right or guarantee that the employee will be eligible for or entitled to an award in any subsequent plan year.

Selection Criteria and Performance Standards

Under the STAR Plan, managers are able to recognize, acknowledge and reward employees for exceptional performance and/or significant contributions related to and supportive of individual, departmental, divisional, and/or organizational goals and objectives.

Managers may acknowledge and reward individuals and teams demonstrating:

- **Exceptional performance:** Demonstrated and sustained exceptional performance that consistently exceeds goals and work expectations in quantity and/or quality.

- **Creativity:** One-time innovation or creation that results in time/dollar savings, revenue enhancement, and productivity improvement; and/or ongoing innovative/creative activities that benefit organizational systems, protocols, and/or procedures.
- **Organizational abilities:** Exhibiting extraordinary skills in leadership resulting in the accomplishment of significant departmental or divisional goals and objectives; effective project management, which could include developing a project and/or implementing a project with substantial success; and/or demonstrating organizational capability leading to a greater level of effectiveness.
- **Work success:** Significantly exceeding productivity, customer service, quality of care or similar goals, including demonstrating superior interactions with managers, peers, supervisors, subordinates, the University community, and/or clients and customers served.
- **Teamwork:** Acting as an exceptionally effective and cooperative team member or team leader for a team that has significantly exceeded the goals/objectives of the department/unit.

STAR Plan cash awards should be awarded as soon as possible after the accomplishment or event in order to provide immediate recognition to employees.

Award Limits and Restrictions

The following limitations apply to STAR Plan cash awards.

- No single STAR Plan cash award may exceed 10% of the employee's base salary or \$10,000, whichever amount is lower.
- Cumulative STAR Plan cash awards paid to an employee in a plan year may not exceed 10% of the employee's base salary or \$10,000, whichever amount is lower.
- Any **cumulative** award in excess of \$5,000 must be approved by the CHRO and by the Chancellor.
- STAR Plan cash awards are strictly discretionary and may not be promised or guaranteed in advance.
- "Across-the-board" type awards (e.g., awards to a category of employees without regard to a recipient's performance or relative contribution) are not allowed under the STAR Plan. Awards must be based on the recipient's achievement as an individual or as part of a team.
- Award payments should not be given to employees just for doing their job well or because they received an exceptional overall performance rating. It is expected that all award payments will be tied to either a departmental goal, organizational and/or a systemwide goal.
- Typically, a small set of the eligible employee population receives an award, not all of the eligible employees. Exceptions to the above monetary award limits will not be made except in rare circumstances.

Any exception will require the approval of the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO). If the CHRO approves, the CHRO will need to secure the approval of the Chancellor, the AOC and the President. Recommendations for an award that would be an exception to these limits must be submitted in writing to the CHRO and include a compelling justification for making the exception.