

General FAQs

1. What is performance-based merit pay?

In a performance-based merit pay program, salary increases are differentiated based on performance rather than distributed equally as an across-the-board increase. An employee's performance is evaluated over a period of time (typically twelve months) and then a merit award is determined based on the employee's performance contributions during that period.

2. Why does UCI base merit pay on performance?

In July 2015, President Napolitano announced that all UC campuses and locations will be required to implement a merit-based pay for performance model for non-represented employees beginning in fiscal year 2016-2017. Rewarding high performers improves organizational performance, increases employee engagement, and lays the foundation for effective workforce planning and talent management. In addition, performance-based pay is the most widely used base pay program in organizations today. According to a study conducted by WorldatWork in June 2015, 92% of the 1,421 organizations that participated in the study use performance-based pay increases (merit increases).

3. Who is eligible for a merit increase?

To be eligible for a 2019/20 merit increase, an employee must meet the following criteria:

- Hold a non-represented career or partial year career appointment as of July 1, 2019
- Completed the probationary period by July 1, 2019
- Be on active status (or on approved leave) on July 1, 2019
- Have a merit level of "On Target Performer" or above
- Serve as a contract employee whose contract allows for a merit increase
- Be on active status (or on approved leave) on the applicable payout date

4. What if an employee is on an approved leave on July 1, 2019 and they receive a merit increase? When will the employee's increase be effective?

The employee's merit increase will be effective the day they return from leave.

5. Do MSP employees have to be hired by a particular date in order to be eligible for the merit increase?

No, however they must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Question 3. MSPs do not serve probation, therefore, the criteria regarding completion of probation period does not apply.

6. Will the performance management program change for Merit 2019?

No, non-represented staff will continue to use the ACHIEVE performance management program. In July 2017, ACHIEVE replaced all existing non-represented performance evaluation processes and forms across the UCI enterprise, including the main campus, health sciences and the medical center. With ACHIEVE, annual performance evaluations and performance ratings were eliminated and

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replaced with performance check-ins which are completed online using the ACHIEVEonline performance system. During check-ins in August, December and April, employees and managers meet to discuss employee performance. This real-time, informal feedback will increase agility and employee engagement, and lead to increased levels of performance. For more information regarding ACHIEVE, visit <http://hr.uci.edu/partnership/performance/>.

7. How is performance linked to merit?

Managers/Supervisors will use the information contained in the ACHIEVE check-ins during the merit period (April 1 through March 31) as well as the UCI merit criteria guides to determine employee merit levels. There are three merit levels: above target performer, on target performer and below target performer.

8. What are UCI Merit Criteria Guides?

To increase transparency and help employees understand what leaders, managers, and supervisors use to determine merit levels, UCI has developed consistent, performance-based merit criteria guides for eligible non-represented staff. The merit criteria guides provide example behaviors for each merit level (above target, on target and below target). There are two guides: one for individual contributors who do not supervise staff, and one for people managers who do supervise staff. There are four merit criteria which include Goal Accomplishment, Enterprise Contributor, Innovation and Job Mastery. For more information, go to hr.uci.edu/partnership/merit.

9. How will the merit increase amount be determined?

After managers and supervisors determine employee merit levels, merit awards will be determined. Above target performers will receive increases between 3.1% and 5.0% of current salary. On target performers will receive increases between 2.0% and 3.0% of current salary. Below target performers will not receive an increase. The amount of the merit award will vary according to the employee's performance contributions and the available budget. The merit program is dependent on available funding. Our program is supported by a limited budget provided by the campus/medical center and individual schools and departments. Every organization will be operating with the same percent merit budget allocation. The fixed budget means that the actual merit increases will also be limited. The total of all employee increases within a department cannot exceed that organization's allocated budget.

10. How will consistency be achieved?

To ensure consistency in the application of the merit program across the UCI enterprise, calibration meetings will be required. School/Division/Department leaders or their designees will meet with their respective management teams to calibrate employee merit levels and merit awards within their respective organizations. Calibration meetings will ensure consistency in the distribution of merit increases, ensure total distribution equals allocated budget amount, and ensure leadership

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support. HR will also review the distribution spreadsheets to ensure compliance with merit guidelines.

11. Does UCI use forced distribution to determine merit levels?

No, UCI does not use the method of forced distribution to determine merit levels. With forced distribution, managers would be required to force a certain percentage of employees into each of the three merit levels rather than determining merit levels based on performance contributions. As mentioned in Questions 7 through 9, managers are required only to use performance-based merit criteria and adhere to their allocated budgets when determining employee merit levels.

12. Why do schools/divisions/departments distribute merit awards differently?

UCI is a very large and complex organization with three distinct business units - campus, health sciences and medical center. We unite all UCI employees under one merit program with one set of merit guidelines; however, within those merit guidelines, we allow schools/divisions/departments to determine how best to distribute merit awards to support their unique needs. For example, one department may choose to use the entire range of merit guidelines for each merit level while another may choose to use a sub-section of the merit guidelines for each merit level.

13. Are the merit awards competitive with market?

Yes, according to the 2018-2019 Salary Budget Survey conducted by Culpepper and Associates and the 2018-2019 WorldatWork Salary Budget Survey, the 2019 projected average base increase for the Los Angeles-Long Beach area is 3.2%.

14. Will any other factor be considered other than performance?

No, merit increase guidelines will be based on performance only as opposed to performance and/or position in range, seniority, time in classification, etc. The entire fund will be used to reward employee performance rather than attempt to address equity, compression or market lags.

15. When will managers/supervisors discuss merit distribution with their employees?

After HR has reviewed the proposed increases and executive leadership has approved them, managers and supervisors will meet with their employees to discuss merit distribution. In 2019, this will occur in August.

16. Will schools/divisions/departments be able to supplement their allocated merit funds with additional funds?

No, each school/division/department will work with the same percent merit budget allocation.

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17. Will pay ranges be adjusted in July 2019?

No, UCI HR is in the process of converting all non-represented positions to the new UC classification program known as Career Tracks. Career Tracks ensures consist use of classifications across the UC system, moves us from generic classifications to more specific classifications, and establishes market-driven pay ranges. By September 2019, the medical center, Health Sciences, HR and Office of Information Technology (OIT) at campus will be converted to the new classification program and pay ranges. In October 2020 (after UCI's conversion to UCPath in December 2019), the remaining campus departments will be converted to Career Tracks. Pay ranges will be reviewed each year to determine position relative to market and adjusted as necessary.

18. What if my salary is at the pay range maximum?

If an employee with a salary at or near pay range maximum receives a merit increase, his/her salary will be increased to no higher than the pay range maximum and then the portion of the merit increase that exceeds pay range maximum will be paid out as a one-time lump sum payment.

19. When will merit increases be effective? When will they be paid out?

Increases will be effective July 1, 2019 (June 30, 2019 for biweekly paid employees); however, increases will not be entered into the payroll system until August. Increases will be made retroactive back to July 1, 2019 (or June 30, 2019). Increases for monthly paid employees will be paid out starting with August 30, 2019 paychecks. Increases for bi-weekly paid employees will be paid out starting with September 4, 2019 paychecks. Retroactive payment for the period between July 1 and August 30, 2019, inclusive, (June 30 through August 10, 2019 for biweekly paid employees) will be distributed on September 18, 2019.

20. Where can I go for more information on the merit model?

Additional information, including videos and FAQs can be found at hr.uci.edu/partnership/merit.

21. What if I have questions regarding information contained in the FAQs or any other resource?

Questions regarding FAQs and any other tools or resources can be submitted at hr.uci.edu/partnership/merit.

22. Is there a mechanism for feedback?

Yes, employees can submit concerns and feedback regarding the merit program to merit@uci.edu.

23. Will there be an appeal process for merit increases?

No, there is no appeal process for merit increases. Determining merit increase amounts is a management responsibility. In addition, the merit increase fund is a limited resource. Once all of the

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increases are reviewed, calibrated and approved by the organization and submitted to HR, no additional funds remain from which to make changes.

24. Who should an employee contact with concerns?

Employees should go to their immediate manager/supervisor with questions or concerns.

25. What if an employee has a concern that their manager/supervisor could not address?

Employees should contact their [Campus HR Business Partner](#), [Health Sciences HR Business Partner](#) or [Medical Center HR Business Partner](#) .

26. How will merit be distributed next year?

It is anticipated that merits will be distributed next year the same way they are distributed this year, subject to funding availability and program approval.