

Staff Achievement and Recognition Plan Excellence in Leadership Award For Plan Year July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027

This is the Staff Achievement and Recognition Plan (the “STAR Plan”) document for implementation of the *Excellence in Leadership Award* program. The STAR Plan is governed by [Personnel Policies for Staff Members 34 \(Incentive and Recognition Award Plans – Managers & Senior Professionals and Professional & Support Staff\)](#), and sets forth the requirements for all University cash recognition awards.

Plan Purpose

STAR Plan cash recognition awards are discretionary and may be awarded to employees for the purpose of recognizing and rewarding excellence in University service; recognizing and rewarding significant achievements and contributions; and recognizing and rewarding outstanding individual and team performance. Cash awards are discretionary and non-base building. The University will not place restrictions or conditions on an employee’s use of any cash awarded under the STAR plan. Employee non-cash awards and other gifts, including gift cards and gift certificates, are regulated under [UC Business and Finance Bulletin No. G-41](#).

The Excellence in Leadership Award is intended to recognize exceptional leaders at University of California, Irvine at all levels who:

- Inspire employees to focus their individual talents on the goals of the organization and contribute to the highest level, and
- Are guardians of the culture and exemplars in living the organization’s values

Awards including a \$1,000 cash award and a distinctive personalized memento are presented at the UCI Staff Assembly Excellence in Leadership Awards program.

Plan Oversight

Development, governance, and interpretation of the STAR Plan will be overseen by an independent Administrative Oversight Committee (AOC) comprised as follows:

- Senior Management Advisory Committee
- Vice President–Human Resources
- Executive Director–Compensation Programs and Strategy

Plan Approval

Once the Excellence in Leadership Awards program is approved by the President of the University of California, the Plan may be implemented as part of the STAR Plan at the sole discretion of the Chancellor of the University of California, Irvine.

The STAR Plan will be subject to annual review conducted by the Administrative Oversight Committee (AOC). It will be implemented each year by this location upon the approval of the AOC if no substantive or material changes are being recommended. If the AOC recommends any substantive or material changes to the STAR Plan, the AOC will obtain the approval of the President before implementing such changes. Reasonable efforts, given all circumstances, will be made to delay implementing substantive or material STAR Plan changes until the end of the current Plan year.

Plan Year

The Excellence in Leadership Awards program year will correspond to the Local STAR Plan year, beginning July 1 and ending the following June 30.

Program Eligibility

Eligibility for STAR Plan cash awards under the Excellence in Leadership Awards program is outlined below.

Policy-covered career PSS and MSP managers or supervisors are eligible, 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; and,
- Received “On Target” or better overall rating on their most recent Align check-in.

Only those managers and supervisors with staff appointments are eligible for nomination; those holding academic and/or student assistant title codes are not eligible. Senior Management Group (SMG) members are not eligible for recognition awards under the program.

An employee may not receive a STAR Plan cash award under the Excellence in Leadership Awards program if the employee is a participant in an incentive award plan that prohibits the receipt of a recognition award.

An employee’s receipt of a STAR Plan cash award under the Excellence in Leadership Awards program does not establish any right or guarantee that the employee will be eligible for or entitled to an award in any subsequent plan year.

Performance Standards

Under the Excellence in Leadership Awards program, managers and supervisors must clearly demonstrate the following leadership competencies as outlined in their nomination statement:

- Collaboration
- Employee Engagement
- Innovation

Award Limits and Restrictions

The following limitations apply to STAR Plan cash awards under the Excellence in Leadership Awards program.

- STAR Plan cash awards under the Excellence in Leadership Awards program will not exceed \$1,000.
- Cumulative Excellence in Leadership Awards program and other STAR Plan cash awards paid to an employee in a plan year will not exceed 10% of the employee's base salary or \$10,000, whichever amount is lower.
- STAR Plan cash awards under the Excellence in Leadership Awards program are strictly discretionary and will not be promised or guaranteed in advance.
- "Across-the-board" type awards (e.g., awards to all employees, awards to a category of employees without regard to a recipient's performance or relative contribution, or equal awards to all employees or a majority of employees) will not be permitted in the Excellence in Leadership Awards program. Awards will be based on the recipient's contribution as an individual or as part of a team.
- Managers and supervisors may be nominated every year, but may only receive a STAR Plan cash award under the Excellence in Leadership Awards program every three years (unless manager or supervisor moves to a different job/department).

Exceptions to the above monetary award limits will not be made except in rare circumstances. Any exception will require the approval of the Senior Vice President, UCI Health, and Vice Chancellor, Human Resources, UC Irvine (SVP/VC-HR). If the SVP/VC-HR approves, the SVP/VC-HR will need to secure the approval of the Chancellor, the Administrative Oversight Committee (AOC) of the Plan, and the University President. Recommendations for an award that would be an exception to these limits must be submitted in writing to the SVP/VC-HR and include compelling justification for making the exception.

Nomination, Review and Award Approval Process

Nominations for the Excellence in Leadership Awards program will be accepted online. Please follow the nomination process and requirements listed on the Staff Assembly webpage: <https://www.staffassembly.uci.edu/excellence-in-leadership-awards/>

Any person may nominate an individual manager or supervisor, however if more than one person nominates an individual, they will be asked to work with other nominators to combine their nominations into one document with one contact name.

Nominations must include:

- Information about the manager or supervisor being nominated
- Information about the primary contact person for the nomination
- A copy of the current organizational chart for the nominee's department, including names, titles, and percent FTE of all direct reports to the nominee
- A signature page including representation from at least 50% of the nominee's direct reports in support of the nomination
- A nomination statement

Be sure to follow the instructions in the nomination form for more complete details on each of these items.

Incomplete nomination packets will not be considered.

The Staff Assembly council will convene a nomination committee that will select awardees based on the merits outlined in the nomination statement.

All nominees will receive an email from Staff Assembly and the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor congratulating them on their nomination and inviting them to attend the Staff Service Awards where the announcement of these awardees will be made.

Administrative Provisions, Requirements and Procedures

Only local funds will be used for Excellence in Leadership Awards program awards. The assigned Earn Code XSL, specific to the Excellence in Leadership Awards program will be used when paying awards to employees.

Local implementation and administration of the Excellence in Leadership Awards program plan will be consistent across this location, and the office of the SVP/VC-HR will be the official designee to ensure consistency.

The Internal Audit Office will ensure that periodic audits will be performed to confirm that the University is in compliance with the Excellence in Leadership Awards program plan.

The STAR Plan may be terminated or replaced at any time for any reason by the University of California systemwide President. The University Chancellor may suspend

or terminate this location's implementation of the Excellence in Leadership Awards program plan at any time.

Treatment for Benefit Purposes

The STAR Plan Excellence in Leadership Awards program cash awards are not considered to be compensation for University benefit purposes, such as the University of California Retirement Plan or employee life insurance programs.

Tax Treatment and Reporting

Consistent with Internal Revenue Service Regulations, payment of STAR Plan Excellence in Leadership Awards program cash awards will be included in the employee's income as wages subject to withholding for federal and state income taxes and applicable FICA taxes. Payment is reportable on the employee's Form W-2 in the year paid.