**STAR Program: FAQs**

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**1. Who can participate in the STAR Award program?**

Policy-covered career employees, career MSP employees and career CX employees 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; and,
- Received a "Meets Expectations" or better overall rating on their most recent annual performance evaluation. (*PPSM 23* requires that written performance evaluations be completed annually.) 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."

***Exclusively represented employees are eligible for recognition awards under the Plan only if the applicable collective bargaining agreement authorizes participation in the STAR Plan.***

**2. Who can approve a STAR Award?**

The processes for all STAR Plan cash awards require endorsement of the employee's immediate supervisor and approval of the next level manager. STAR Plan cash awards over $500 also require department head approval
**STAR Awards greater than $1,000 require additional level of HR approval. The Compensation Manager will obtain the additional level of HR approval from Executive Director, Talent and Rewards, as necessary.**

**3. What's the process for requesting a STAR Award?**

Complete a nomination form, including a brief description of the specific reason for the nomination. Then obtain the required approvals prior to processing the payment and presenting the STAR award.

This can be done by working with your school/college's HR department who will arrange for the payment to be processed in PPS.  Central HR approval is not required for presenting these awards.

**4. If I want to request an award for a team or workgroup, should I complete a separate request form for each individual?**

Yes.

**5. Is there a deadline for requesting a STAR Award?**

STAR awards may be presented at any time during the year and should be awarded as soon as possible after the accomplishment or event in order to provide immediate recognition to employees. The STAR Program has been approved through June 30, 2021. Continuation of the program beyond June 2021 is subject to annual review by Office of the President.

**6. Once a request is approved, when can an employee expect to receive payment of a STAR award?**

STAR awards will be processed as they are approved and paid in the next regular paycheck. Timing is subject to payroll deadlines. STAR awards are considered taxable income, but they are not covered compensation under the UC Retirement Plan.  STAR awards will not be issued as separate, off-cycle checks.

**7. How will employees be notified if they are going to receive a STAR award?**

After awards are approved, the Division/Department Head or their designee shall notify the awardee.

**8. What is the fund source for STAR awards?**

There will be no central source of funding for the program, so awards must be paid from existing division and department budgets. Unrestricted fund sources (mainly assessment funds) may be used for STAR Awards. The use of restricted funds is subject to any restrictions on those funds.

**9. What is the DOS code used for processing the STAR award?**

The appropriate DOS code is XSL.  This code must be used in processing the award for this program.