

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION INSTANT AWARD PROGRAM

I. BACKGROUND

The University's annual merit program is intended to reward excellence in the sustained performance of assigned job functions and significant contributions toward the goals of the University as established by the supervisor and the department. These efforts are included in the annual performance appraisal process.

In addition, UCOP Policy PPSM 34, (<http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4010430/PPSM-34>) permits deans and vice chancellors to develop and fund local programs that foster appreciation and acknowledgment of actions and behaviors that are beneficial to the organization and may or may not be part of established individual or department goals.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Undergraduate Education (UE) Instant Award Program is to offer managers and supervisors a means to encourage, acknowledge, and reward UE employees.

Eligibility: Staff (MSP & PSS), students, temporary employees and casual appointees. Awards may be given in the form of gift cards to individuals/and or groups within UE as an expression of appreciation and recognition of a significant one-time contribution. (NOTE: Academic titles and SMG employees are specifically excluded. These employees will be covered under [University of California – Regents Policy 7712](#))

Criteria: Acknowledgements may recognize, but are not limited to, actions or ideas that result in budgetary savings; innovative solutions to difficult work problems; new ideas for improving service; examples of outstanding supervision; outstanding service; actions that promote a positive image of the department, improve department communication and cooperation, and exemplify department values, such as fostering teamwork and department pride, and giving extra effort under difficult or challenging circumstances.

Presentation: To minimize the duration of time between the act of being recognized and the presentation of the award, the award should be presented within 30 days of the acknowledged effort. Presentation of the gift card award will occur on an

informal and discreet basis. Personal acknowledgement in lieu of ceremony is a key element of the program.

III. AWARDS

An employee's noteworthy, work-related accomplishment will be acknowledged by the presentation of a gift card, in the amount of \$25.00, \$50.00 or \$75.00. The gift card is a prepaid, nonnegotiable online retail destination that offers gift card shoppers the largest assortment of local, regional, and national merchant cards on the Internet. The maximum amount an employee can receive at one time is \$75.00, with a yearly maximum of \$250.00 per employee. Employees may not recommend or approve awards for themselves. The proposed awardee must also be performing at a satisfactory level or above. The issuance of an award should not conflict with management actions being taken or contemplated regarding employee performance.

The gift cards are non-negotiable (i.e., not redeemable for cash; no cash back if a purchase is less than the value of the card; no reduction of the balance due on his or her account with the issuer of the card; etc.) and comply with IRS regulations; therefore, they are excludable from an employee's gross income.

Employee recognition awards are meant to be occasional and informal and, therefore, must be presented to an employee on an infrequent basis. Awards presented to an employee on a regular or routine basis do not meet the IRS test for exemption and are not allowable. Awards must be presented to employees on a nondiscriminatory basis.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. Unit managers and supervisors can request an award for any regular/career UE employee for which they are the designated supervisor. Supervisors may also use their allotted share of funds to award career staff members of any UE team member. The amount awarded to an individual – \$25.00, \$50.00 or \$75.00 – is at the supervisor's discretion and should correspond with the degree to which the action met the criteria. The total amount a unit director or designated supervisor has available to allocate is based on the number of career staff they directly supervise. The allocation is based on a per-person annual limit of \$75.00.
Example: A supervisor with four individuals who directly report to him/her would have an award budget of \$300.00 for the fiscal year (4 x \$75). Unallocated award amounts will not be allowed to accumulate and be carried forward into the next fiscal year.

An Instant Award Request Form for the gift card should be forwarded to the Business Operations Coordinator in UE Admin & Finance with the following information:

- Name of the employee/awardee
- Dollar amount of the award (\$25/\$50/\$75)
- Acknowledgement that awardee meets all criteria.
- Brief description of the specific behaviors, ideas, savings, service, or supervision that merits the Instant Award.

NOTE to Supervisors: When proposing an award for an employee to whom you do not have a direct reporting relationship, you are responsible for advising the proposed awardee's supervisor and verifying that the performance meets the criteria prior to requesting an award certificate.

The gift cards will be centrally managed by UE Administration & Finance to ensure a quick turnaround for presentation of the awards. As additional reviews are not required, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that awards meet the criteria of the program. UE Administration & Finance will verify that the awardee is eligible and issue the gift card. Supervisors are encouraged to include a personal note along with the gift card, acknowledging the effort.

- B. VP/Dean and Senior Management staff will have two separate allocations: 1) an allocation based on the number of employees directly supervised (similar to all other UE managers and supervisors; and 2) a small contingency fund of \$100 to be used and to acknowledge any UE staff member or team on an ad hoc basis. The VP/Dean and Senior Management staff will follow the same procedures for requesting the gift cards as outlined in IV.A. All supervisors and staff are invited to make recommendations to the VP/Dean and Senior Management staff and call attention to special contributions that fit within the spirit of the program. The VP/Dean and Senior Management staff reserves the right to decline to offer an award based on performance concerns on the part of potential awardees, lack of available funds, or lack of compelling reasons to support the award.
- C. Students, temporary employees, or casual employees assigned to UE are also eligible. Requests for awards through the Instant Award Program must be forwarded to the Chief of Staff for consideration. If approved, the nominee will receive a gift card and acknowledgement from the Chief of Staff.

V. FUNDING

The Chief Administrative Officer will ensure that only non-negotiable (non-cash) awards are charged to State funds. Various non-State funds under University control (e.g., endowments, gifts) may be used for employee awards in accordance with this policy and are subject to any restrictions on the funds.

The Chief Administrative Office will provide the Chief of Staff with a quarterly report of activity and audit records of the program on an annual basis.