



# Employee Award Guideline Procedures

- **Corresponding Policy Title:** [Policy on Payment of Awards](#)
- **Procedure Owner:** Human Resources
- **Related Policies:**
- **Forms:** N/A
- **Effective:** May 1, 2018
- **Last Updated:** May 2018
- **Responsible University Department:** Human Resources
- **Procedure Contact:** Executive Director, Payroll, Benefits and Records

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## I. Procedure Statement

The Employee Award Guideline Procedures are provided to ensure consistency and fairness throughout all university award programs and to guide Auburn University departments and units with the development and implementation of award programs. These guidelines are provided as a tool to assist departments and units with their recognition efforts and do not imply that each department or unit must have an awards program.

**Controlling Authority:** [Internal Revenue Code](#)  
[The Code of Alabama](#)  
[Policy on Employee Awards](#)

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## II. Procedures

### A. Guiding Principles

- Awards must be given through a competitive program that promotes the best interest of Auburn University (“the University”) and the purpose for which the University was created (must have a business purpose or of primary benefit to the University and its mission).
- All proposed employee award programs must be submitted to the University Employee Awards Committee for review. Approval from this Committee is required prior to any award distribution. Award Programs shall be submitted

to the Chair of the Committee.

- All award funding is provided through the local budget. Departments are responsible for funding and continuation of award programs. If funding is no longer available for award programs, a statement of withdrawal must be sent to the Awards Committee, as well as, a notice sent to all department employees.
- These procedures apply to student awards only when the award is based on the student's employment with the University.

## **B. Awarding Unit/Department that intends to provide employee awards should:**

### **Step 1: Establish an Awards Recognition Development Committee**

The Awards Development Committee will guide program design. The development committee must determine the components of the recognition program. The committee role is to identify, develop, and implement recognition program(s) for their department.

Although not required, it is best practice for the Development Committee to create terms and convene a Selection Committee: The Development Committee should make a determination of how Selection Committee members are chosen to serve, the length of service terms for serving, and training needs to be established.

### **Step 2: Identify Award Program Objectives**

The Development Committee will need to identify recognition program objectives for their department to provide opportunities for the employee to be recognized. There are many factors to consider when identifying these objectives for your department. Here are some important factors to consider in this process:

- The recognition program should meet the needs of the employees in the department or complement the kind(s) of job behaviors and performance the department wants to recognize and reward.
- The program should be linked to the mission statement or core values of the department, division or the university.
- The program should be fair and flexible to the employees in the department.
- The recognition program should comply with university rules and regulations regarding award and incentive programs, taxation of payments and awards to employees or any other rules and regulations related to awards.
- Review other university award programs.

To assist with this process, gather input from the employees in the department. This can be done by developing an employee survey to identify work behaviors and job performances to recognize and reward, identify employee eligibility criteria and award criteria.

### **Step 3: Identify Award Themes and Award Selection Criteria**

The Development Committee must identify award themes for the award program that complement the employees and the department. This will help identify the selection process of the awards and help employees work towards setting goals so that they can be recognized.

Example award themes include:

- Keys to Excellence Award
- Exemplary Performance Award
- Department Employee of the Year
- Outstanding Employee Award
- Employee Safety Award
- Superior Customer Service Award
- Teamwork Award

After an award theme has been identified, the committee will need to identify selection criteria. The selection criteria may be linked to a department's mission or core values or positive behaviors. To assist with this process, create an employee survey to find out what characteristics the employees value and think an employee should exhibit for nomination and to receive an award. Also, seek input from management on the types of behaviors they want to be recognized. Here are some examples of selection criteria:

- Job Excellence
- Customer Service
- Unsung Hero
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Productivity
- Innovation

### **Step 4: Identify Award Eligibility Criteria, Award Frequency and Award Types**

The Development Committee will need to identify funding, determine award eligibility, award frequency and award selection processes. The committee will need to determine who is eligible to participate and/or be nominated for an award. They will also need to make sure that the award eligibility criteria complement the work environment of the department. Components of award eligibility criteria to consider are:

- Length of service: is there a minimum length of service an employee must have with the department or University?
- How frequently can an employee win an award?
- Would Development or Selection committee members be eligible to participate in or receive nominations for an award during their term?

After award eligibility criteria are identified, the frequency of awards will need to be determined. There are some factors to consider when determining the frequency of awards for a department such as:

- Are department funds available to cover the cost of multiple awards?
- Are there too few employees in the department to participate in the program?
- Are there other recognition programs in the department?
- Will awarding many employees devalue the award itself?

After you have identified the frequency of awards, you will need to determine the types of awards. The awards selected for a recognition program should be meaningful and relevant to the award recipient(s). The awards given to employees can range from an award certificate to cash (paid through university payroll).

### **Step 5: Identify Nomination and Selection Process**

The Development Committee or the Selection Committee will be responsible for carrying out the nomination and selection processes of a formal award program. The committee should determine the following factors about the nomination process:

- Is the nomination process confidential? Should nominators be known or remain anonymous?
- Which employees are eligible to submit a nomination?
- What employee information should be provided on the nomination?
- How should the nominations be submitted? (electronic, paper, etc.)

If the awarding Department/Unit convenes a Selection Committee, the Development Committee will need to determine the following items for the selection process:

- Defining rating procedures and processes
- Determine who will review and score the nominations
- Determine the length of membership for the selection committee
- Determine who will make the final decision on the winning nominations
- Determine if past recipients should serve on the selection committee
- Determine if selection subcommittee is eligible for nomination

### **Step 6: Identify Communication Plan**

Public announcements should be made prior to the award program to announce the award program, after the award program and immediately following the recognition of the award recipients to recognize the employees. Here are some examples of how to market your department's award program:

- Award program flyers
- Email to department employees
- Department newsletter

- SharePoint intranet site
- Department website
- Department bulletin boards
- Department meetings

### **Step 7: Establish and Monitor Award Program**

A departmental recognition program should be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis to assess its effectiveness and to obtain feedback and suggestions from employees for enhancements to the program. All substantial changes to the program must be approved by the University Awards Committee in advance of implementation.

#### **C. Procedures for Issuing Awards:**

1. Obtain appropriate approval from awarding Department/Unit Awards Committee to issue specific award.
2. Ensure appropriate unit or department approval if applicable.
3. Notify award recipient of possible tax implications prior to presentation of award.
4. For an Award of tangible property:
  - a. Follow [established University Spending Policies and Procedures](#) for non-employee awards.
  - b. Maintain a list of awards, value, and recipients for submission annually to University Payroll for processing.
5. Cash awards:
  - a. An Electronic Personnel Action Form (EPAF) with all appropriate information must be completed and sent to the Human Resource Records unit for processing. The employee's position number with a suffix of A1 should be used and an earn code of AWD. Once received cash award payments will be processed on the next scheduled pay day for the recipient.
6. Terminated employees: If employee has received a tangible award then the award purchase price should be reported to University payroll with documentation for the last paycheck. An email with the employee's name, banner id and amount of award should be submitted to the awards and incentive email address.

#### **D. Record Keeping:**

Each department or unit is responsible for documenting all award recipients and award types. This report should include employee's name, banner id and purchase amount of award. This documentation should be sent annually, no later than December 1, to University Payroll for review. This documentation must be sent to [awardsprogram@auburn.edu](mailto:awardsprogram@auburn.edu)

Resources used for Development of this document: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, *Employee Recognition Handbook*; Texas A&M University, *Employee Recognition Program Guidelines*

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## **III. Definitions**

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## **IV. Sanctions**

Strict adherence to policy procedures is mandatory in order for Awards to be accessible.

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## **V. Forms**

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## **VI. Related Information**

[Internal Revenue Code](#)

[The Code of Alabama](#)

[Policy on Payment of Awards](#)

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## **VII. History**

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## **VIII. Frequently Asked Questions**