

UTA
Office of Talent,
Culture, and
Engagement



Mav Up

MVP Employee Recognition

Program Guidelines



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About

Owner: Office of Talent, Culture, and Engagement (TCE)

Effective: January 2026

Applies To: All UTA Employees (Faculty, Staff, and Student Workers)

Purpose

At the University of Texas at Arlington, we believe in recognizing employees for their hard work and dedication toward the success of our mission.

The [Mav Up MVP Employee Recognition Program](#) (Program) is a University-wide recognition initiative for all employees, faculty, staff, and student workers, and part of the [2030 Strategic Plan](#).

The Program's goal is to increase engagement by fostering a culture of recognition and praise where every employee feels appreciated, connected, and valued for their contributions to the success of UTA. It consists of an Employee Recognition Hub website, recognition card, and other tools to enable multidirectional recognition for employees, managers, and cross-functional teams.

This recognition opportunity acknowledges and celebrates employees doing great work and demonstrating UTA Shared Values (Collaboration, Engagement, Excellence, Innovation, and Integrity.)

Resources are available on the [Employee Recognition Hub](#) website for departments to integrate into existing recognition programs.

Existing Programs

The Program is not to replace existing departmental recognition and rewards programs, but rather enhances day-to-day, informal recognition opportunities, elevating a sense of employee value and boosting engagement.

Additionally, a department's recognition budget is separate and not derived from the Mav Up MVP Employee Recognition Program.



Program Governance

Oversight

President Jennifer Cowley, Ph.D., and Provost Tamara Brown, Ph.D., are executive sponsors of the Program and endorse and approve the recognition strategy.

Dr. Cowley and Dr. Brown directed the Office of Talent, Culture and Engagement (TCE) to manage and be accountable for the Program including overseeing policies, procedures, compliance and ongoing programming. This oversight includes an annual TCE Program review for continuous improvement.

Feedback

TCE actively involves the UTA Engagement Council (which consists of representatives from all schools and colleges) and relies upon them to help support the Program and review goals annually.

Employees can send feedback about the Program to engagement@uta.edu.

Evaluation

The Program is evaluated with a summary of data analytics from the tracking dashboard, training assessment, focus group feedback, participation usage rates, UTA Shared Values digital card alignment, and engagement survey results.



Program Administration

Eligibility

All employees, leaders, staff, faculty, and student workers (excluding Persons of Interest) are eligible to give and/or receive unlimited recognition for demonstrating UTA Shared Values, regardless of their position or tenure with the University.

Recognition Submission Process

Employees submit a recognition card via the [Employee Recognition Hub](#) website.

The recognition then is emailed to the recipient and their supervisor, and a printable card version of the recognition is attached for an optional commemorative display.

Recognition Criteria

Recognition should be genuine, meaningful, and based on UTA Shared Values.

Participants can highlight others' exceptional achievements, efforts, and character.

As a guide, write 2-3 short paragraphs. Refer to UTA Shared Values behaviors and the [Tips for Writing Effective Recommendations](#).

Recognition Frequency

While there is no limit to the number of recognitions allowed, the Program's primary aim is to foster a culture where recognition is consistent, authentic, and related to the employee's specific value-based contributions.

Recognition Tracking

Recognition data is tracked by academic year. Leader dashboards are available to leaders to monitor participation and trends.

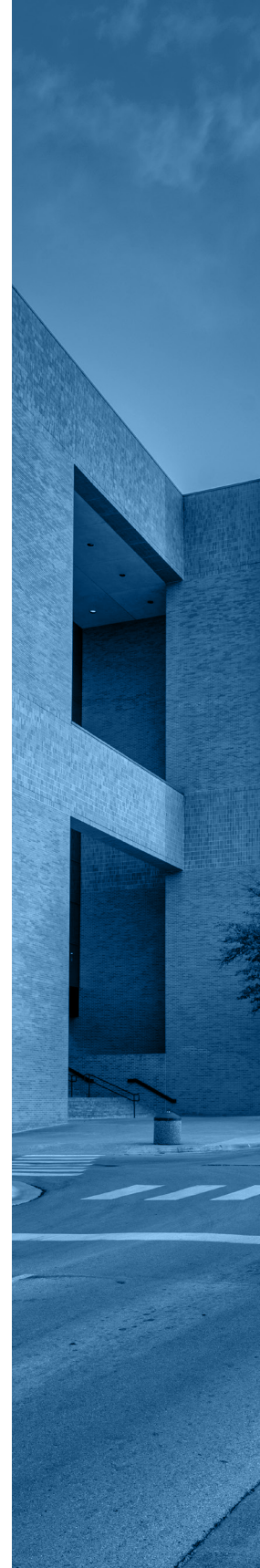
Recognition Data Use Visibility

The recipient receives their recognition via email and their direct supervisor is copied on the email to create a meaningful recognition experience.

All recognition is visible to promote the Program.

Accessibility and Language Support

All Program tools, communication, and other electronic resources are designed to comply with [WCAG 2.1 AA criteria](#), per [UTA IT-PO5](#), [UT System Rule 150](#), [Texas Administrative Code 213](#), and [Subpart H of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#).



Roles and Responsibilities

All employees are asked to share the responsibility for knowing, modeling, and living out UTA Shared Values every day and actively participate in the Program's success.

Employees

- Actively participate in the Program by submitting value-based recognition for colleagues, supervisors, and cross-functional peers.
- Engage in recognition activities that reinforce UTA Shared Values and attend the annual celebration.
- Help promote the Program and model UTA Shared Values.

Supervisors

- Foster a culture of recognition incorporating the Program recognition into daily operations.
- Include student workers in the Program recognition and activities.
- Encourage and model multidirectional recognition across the team.
- Ensure recognition is value-based, fulfilling, authentic, personalized, and equitable.
- Create meaningful recipient recognition experiences that reinforce UTA Shared Values.
- Access the tracking dashboard to monitor usage and ensure engagement.
- Promote recognition of success stories and best practices to inspire and engage.
- Encourage participation and involve the team in the annual celebration event.



Campaigns, Celebrations, and Awards

Promotional Campaigns

UTA creates ongoing employee and team digital card “spotlights”, uses “leadership storytelling”, and provides other cultural content to highlight values-based recognition success stories through various UTA communication channels.

Key initiatives include:

- Using digital card data for inclusive rotation of departments and roles
- Showcasing the visible impact of employee and team achievements
- Practicing and reinforcing the UTA mission and Shared Values
- Celebrating a recognition culture where employees are appreciated and engaged
- Presenting leadership and management engagement and participation

Annual Celebration

- UTA hosts an annual celebration with opportunities for participants to win awards.
- The UTA Employee Engagement Council assists with event planning and selecting awards for faculty and staff.
- Faculty and staff participate in a recognition celebration in December during the President’s annual UTA Holiday Party.
- Student workers participate in a recognition celebration in April during the National Student Employee Appreciation Week hosted by the Division of Student Affairs.

Awards Distribution

- UTA defines and clearly articulates the process and criteria for determining award winners to ensure transparency.
- The types of awards and their value vary each year based on available resources and funding.
- The Program includes an award tracking process.
- All participants have an equal chance to win awards.



Tips for Writing Effective Recognitions

- **Be timely.**
Send the recognition right away to have the greatest impact.
- **Identify achievement.**
Focus on the specific achievement, effort, and/or character with impact.
- **Align UTA Shared Values.**
Connect and describe the recognition to reinforce UTA Shared Values.
- **Personalize the message.**
Add specific details, work examples, praise, unique skills, etc.
- **Use a motivational tone.**
Use enthusiastic, uplifting language for positive reinforcement.
- **Express gratitude.**
Conclude with genuine gratitude and encouragement—a form of thanks!

Training and Support

- Training on effective recognition practices is available through the [Employee Recognition Hub](#) and the [TCE Learning and Development training](#) websites.
- Visit the [Employee Recognition Hub](#) to send recognitions, review FAQs and engage with more resources.
- Contact the [OIT Service Desk](#) for technical support and access issues.
- Email the HR Service Center at askHR@uta.edu with questions about the Program.



Terminology

Eligible Employee

All employees (except Persons of Interest), staff, faculty and student workers are eligible to participate in the Program.

Employee Recognition Hub

A central, easy access website for showcasing all UTA staff and faculty recognition programming to foster a culture of recognition across campus.

“High Five” Recognition

The “high five” celebratory gesture proudly symbolizes employee contributions!

Informal Recognition

This primarily focuses on expressing appreciation, acknowledging achievements or goals, and highlighting character traits that demonstrate UTA Shared Values and University culture.

Recognition Form and Card

This is linked on the Employee Recognition Hub to submit recognition for eligible employees and celebrate achievements demonstrating UTA Shared Values.

UTA Shared Values

The UTA Shared Values are Collaboration, Engagement, Excellence, Innovation, and Integrity. These shape the standards of how we work, communicate, and lead—helping UTA set the foundation for a thriving culture of recognition.





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go.uta.edu/mvp