

UMB COLA & Merit Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2026 Eligibility, Application, and Processing

This document outlines Cost-of-Living (COLA) and Merit eligibility, criteria, and application.

COLA Eligible Employee Groups

1. Regular Exempt and CII Exempt Staff (33 and 35), Regular Nonexempt and CII Nonexempt Staff (20 and 22), Faculty and Librarians (01, 02, 03, and 15), and Post Doctoral Fellows/Research Fellows coded to be eligible (19 coded with ANNLEL earnings code).
2. Exclusions apply to employees exempted per their union contract such as FOP bargaining unit members.

COLA Ineligible Employee Groups

1. Student employees (14, 14W, 16, and 16W), Graduate Assistants (04), Contingent I Staff (31T and 34), Post Doc Fellows/Research Fellows coded ANNLIN (19 coded with ANNLIN earnings code), and Adjunct Contractual Faculty (36).
2. Exclusions apply to employees designated as SOM Clinical Faculty employees.

Merit Eligible Employee Groups

A. Regular Nonexempt and CII Nonexempt Staff (20 and 22)

1. Nonexempt employees assigned 0.50 FTE or higher, with a merit eligible earnings code of ANNLEL, and regular nonexempt staff who have successfully completed their original probationary period prior to June 1, 2025.
2. Nonexempt employees in their UMB position for at least 120 days by the end of the cycle: March 31, 2025. For the 2024 – 2025 cycle, must have been hired by December 1, 2024.
3. Nonexempt employees who have completed their initial probationary period, have been promoted and are on probation at the time of merit application remain eligible for merit.

B. Employees in Non-State Funded Jobs

1. Employees in non-state funded jobs should receive a performance evaluation and be considered for a merit increase.
2. Each department will work with their employees' sponsors and school/admin unit's finance area to plan to obtain the funding for merit, as well as COLA if otherwise eligible for COLA or Merit.

Merit Ineligible Employee Groups

1. Regular Exempt and CII Exempt Staff (33 and 35), Faculty and Librarians (01, 02, 03, and 15), Student employees (14, 14W, 16, and 16W), Graduate Assistants (04), Contingent I Staff (31T and 34), Post

Doc Fellows coded ANNLIN (19 coded with ANNLIN earnings code and SOL Research Fellows), and Adjunct Contractual Faculty (36).

2. Eligible nonexempt employees (20, 22) who started employment with UMB on or after December 2, 2024.
3. Regular nonexempt employees who have not been in their UMB position for at least 120 days by the end of the cycle, March 31, 2025, and hired after December 1, 2024.
4. Employees assigned to .49 FTE or lower.
5. Employees who received an overall rating below “Meets Standards” such as “Below Standards” or “Unsatisfactory”.
6. Employee(s) who are on an approved leave of absence. Employees who otherwise meet eligibility criteria who are on an approved leave of absence may be eligible for a merit increase upon return to work once their performance evaluation is on file. The performance evaluation must be completed within 30 days of the employee’s return to work. The employee’s merit increase will be adjusted for the time on leave upon return to work that correlates to the period of leave.
7. Employees who end employment from UMB either voluntarily or involuntarily June 30, 2025 - July 15, 2025.
8. Employees who are excluded based on exemptions per their union contract such as FOP union members

Application of COLA

1. Employees eligible to receive COLA must have started employment at UMB and be active in the UMB HRMS system on or before June 30, 2025, and must be in an eligible employee status as outlined above.

Application of Merit

1. The performance evaluation cycle for merit application is April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025.
2. Eligible nonexempt employees who receive an evaluation rating of “Meets Standards”, “Above Standards”, or “Outstanding” will receive a merit increase.
3. Eligible nonexempt employees that are not evaluated by the deadline will be considered to have “Meet Standards” rating for the purposes of merit pay and will receive a merit increase assuming all other eligibility criteria are met, see USM policy VII – 5.20 – Policy on The Performance Management Program.
4. Eligible nonexempt employees whose salary meets or exceeds the maximum of their assigned pay grade will receive a one-time lump sum payment for the difference of the merit increase provided that exceeds the pay grade maximum. Note: In compliance with USM policy COLA can exceed the maximum of the pay grade while merit cannot.
5. Eligible nonexempt employees represented by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) bargaining unit whose overall performance evaluation is “Meets Standards” or better will receive an increase in accordance with the memorandum of understanding between the University and AFSCME and consistent with USM Policy VII 9.20.

Compensation Change Sequence of Processing effective July 1, 2025

Consistent with UMB’s Pay Administration policies and as authorized by President Jarrell, UMB will use the following order of operations for processing simultaneous pay transactions:

1. Approved Salary Modification Plans for Exempt and Faculty Employees



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2. 1.0% Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) to applicable employees
3. 2.5% Merit Increase (MER) to applicable employees
4. Other Compensation changes (i.e. Promotion, New appointments, FTE changes, FLSA changes, etc.)

Notes:

1. This order of operation is exclusive to actions entered July 1, 2025 for FY 26.
2. The last day to process adjustments identified from the Annual Equity Report will be July 1, 2025.

Processing Schedule

1. ePAF black out period will be from June 29, 2025, to August 4, 2025 at midnight at which point the system will reopen.
2. Cost of living adjustments and merit increases will appear in the August 15, 2025, paycheck along with retroactive pay from July 1, 2025.