



Policy No. 3-45

Subject: Employee Recognition and Merit Pay

Last Revised: 03/26/2026

Historical Status: 03/26/2026, 09/13/2023, 03/16/2022

Division	Policy Manager	Administrative Supervisor	Reference
Human Resources	College President	Director of Human Resources	VCCS Policy Sections 3.6.0.3; 3.6.0.5; 3.6.1

I. POLICY

It is the policy of Virginia Highlands Community College (VHCC) to recognize deserving College employees for their meritorious service, noteworthy achievements, or outstanding contributions to the mission of the institution.

II. PERTINENT INFORMATION

- A. This policy represents the institution's college-wide organizational award program, though additional recognitions and honors may be made under special circumstances or within departments and divisions, as appropriate.
- B. All employees at VHCC who are not in a probationary period, regardless of rank or classification, are eligible for recognition under this policy.
- C. This policy does not replace the unofficial recognition and honor given to deserving employees by supervisors, co-workers, or other stakeholders, and VHCC supports such acknowledgements as evidence of a healthy workplace culture.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Adjunct Faculty: designated individuals employed to teach less than a full load on a semester-by-semester basis.
- B. Administrative/Professional Faculty: designated individuals employed primarily in support, supervisory, or managerial roles at VHCC.
- C. Classified Staff: employees who occupy positions that are listed in the Commonwealth's Compensation Plan, and who are covered by the Virginia Personnel Act as found in Chapter 10, Title 2.1 of the Code of Virginia, once they have completed the probationary period.
- D. Full-time Teaching Faculty: designated individuals employed in classroom instruction at VHCC.
- E. Wage Employees: employees not covered by the Virginia Personnel Act (also referred to as hourly, P-14, or WE-14 employees). Generally, these positions are non-exempt for the purpose of overtime compensation, and are limited to an average of 29 hours per week and 1,500 hours per year.

IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES

A. Merit Pay and Merit Based Awards

1. In accordance with the VCCS Policy Manual, VHCC recognizes meritorious employees in several ways, including granting multi-year contracts where applicable, providing rank promotions, and presenting annual monetary recognition awards.
2. For rank promotion and multi-year contracts, the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services will coordinate with academic deans. Eligibility is determined by the employee's annual evaluation and an assessment of the faculty member's credentials.
3. Rank promotions are made with a 2% salary increase for promotion from instructor to assistant professor. A 4% salary increase is given for promotion from assistant to associate professor and from associate to professor ranks.

B. Types of Recognition Awards

1. The College may grant monetary and non-monetary awards in accordance with Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) policy.
2. Recognition and awards shall be available to each type of VHCC employee: full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, administrative/professional faculty, full-time classified staff, and wage employees.
3. Up to 40 hours of Organizational Recognition Leave may be awarded to full-time faculty and classified staff employees per leave year.
4. All recognition awards will comply with VCCS and DHRM policy.

C. College Responsibilities

1. The College President or designee is the Agency Recognition and Engagement Coordinator, per DHRM policy.
2. The College will design strategies for the staging and presentation of awards, engagement, and celebration activities. Activities should be held during work hours and be reasonable in both duration and cost.
3. The College may combine recognition and service awards events with other events.
4. The College will maintain records as necessary to plan for and manage awards program, and comply with records retention requirements promulgated by the Library of Virginia and expenditure guidelines issued by the Department of Accounts.
5. The College shall ensure the availability of funding for support of the organizational award program.

V. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

- A. The College President has the authority and delegates to the President's Cabinet the responsibility to establish procedures to meet the requirements of this policy.

APPENDIX

VI. RELATED STANDARDS, LEGAL CITATIONS, OR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A. DHRM Policy 1.15
- B. VCCS Policy 3.6.0.3, 3.6.0.5, 3.6.1

VII. OPERATING REQUIREMENTS

A. Types of Recognition Awards

1. Outstanding Full-time Faculty: this award recognizes full-time faculty member(s) who has provided outstanding service to VHCC and its students through teaching, scholarship, engagement, or other meritorious action.
2. Outstanding Adjunct Faculty: this award recognizes adjunct faculty member(s) who has provided outstanding service to VHCC and its students through teaching, scholarship, engagement, or other meritorious action.
3. Outstanding Administrative/Professional Faculty: this award recognizes administrative/professional faculty member(s) who has provided outstanding service to VHCC and its students, through excellent work, engagement, or other meritorious action.
4. Outstanding Classified Staff: this award recognizes classified staff member(s) who has provided outstanding service to VHCC and its students through excellent work, engagement, or other meritorious action.
5. Outstanding Wage Employee: this award recognizes the wage employee who has provided outstanding service to VHCC and its students through excellent work, engagement, or other meritorious action.
6. Additional recognition awards may be presented by the College as deemed appropriate by the President's Cabinet. The supervising vice president will coordinate with the appropriate deans and directors to identify employees eligible for recognition.

B. Eligibility and Criteria

1. Notwithstanding any other recognition or awards, the College will annually honor at least one employee of each of the following type: full- time faculty, adjunct faculty, administrative/professional faculty, full- time classified staff, and wage employee.
2. In accordance with VCCS Policy 3.6.0.5.E., multi-year faculty who receive a "does not meet expectations" rating in their performance evaluation are ineligible for reward and recognition that year.
3. Classified Staff must receive an overall ranking of "successful", "highly successful", or "extraordinary" in their performance evaluation to be eligible for reward and recognition that year.
4. Wage employees are not eligible to receive recognition leave in accordance with DHRM policy.
5. Only individuals not in a probationary period, not in their first year of employment at VHCC, and employed during the academic year by VHCC are eligible for recognition.
6. Each individual selected for recognition must have provided meritorious service, noteworthy achievements, or outstanding contributions to VHCC, and these activities will be documented and maintained in the individual's personnel record.

C. Process for Selection

1. For each of the awards in Section VII.A., nominations will be collected during the Spring semester from the College community, including employees and students. Submissions may be received verbally or in writing, but in all

cases, the merits for the nomination shall be documented.

2. The President or designee shall appoint an ad-hoc committee or working group to collect and evaluate the nominations for each award.
3. The ad-hoc committee or working group will make recommendations to the President's Cabinet for each award.
4. The President's Cabinet will make the final determination for the awards in Section VII.A to be presented at the end of each academic year.