

# Classified Employee Recognition Award Guidelines

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Recognition Award is to:

- encourage excellence in University service;
- recognize and reward extraordinary individual achievements and contributions; and
- recognize and reward extraordinary team achievements or contributions.

The award is intended to encourage and reward the extraordinary accomplishments and contributions of employees in ways separate from the performance appraisal process, the Employee Suggestion Program (ESP), or any other University-sponsored recognition program. The award also is not intended to recognize the length of an employee's service or to be used as a "holiday or birthday bonus."

## ELIGIBILITY

Eligible employees include all classified employees with current performance evaluation ratings of "Fair Performer" or better and no active written notices.

Wage employees are not eligible.

## TYPES OF AWARDS

Awards can be given, as described below, for extraordinary accomplishments or contributions.

**Recognition leave**, not to exceed 5 days per calendar leave year per employee, can be granted on a monthly basis (on the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month), separately or in combination with monetary awards. Recognition leave expires within 12 months of the date it is awarded. Any active unused recognition leave is paid to the employee upon separation or transfer to another state agency and is subject to income tax withholding.

**Monetary (cash) awards** can be granted on a monthly basis during the fiscal year (on the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month). The lump-sum payments cannot exceed \$2,000<sup>1</sup> over the fiscal year per employee and are normally included in a single check with regular pay. Supplemental tax rates apply. However, the employee also has the option of putting the lump-sum payment into an account with the VCU Tax-Deferred Annuity (TDA) program or the Commonwealth of Virginia's Deferred Compensation Plan (DCP).

**Non-monetary (non-cash) awards** are not permitted, regardless of source of funds. Non-monetary awards include any non-refundable gift (e.g., tangible gift items such as prints, season tickets, gift baskets, etc.) or gift certificate.

## **ELIGIBLE FUND SOURCES**

Any University fund source may be used to pay for a recognition award. Sponsored research (ledger 5) funds may be used as a source for payment if the payment is directly related to work on a grant or contract and the sponsor allows recognition payments.

## **AWARD CRITERIA**

Deans and department heads must develop award criteria and identify potential funding sources as part of their annual classified pay practice and recognition award plans that are reviewed with their Vice Presidents. (Note: the planning document is a proposed guide for the next fiscal year, and it is expected that actual recognition awards may not follow this plan exactly as priorities and business needs change.) Criteria should be developed around either individual or team actions that illustrate extraordinary accomplishments, outstanding initiative, or extraordinary support of work goals and objectives. The accomplishments and contributions also should reflect efforts made above and beyond normal work duties or performance expectations.

Examples might include staff who demonstrate extraordinary effort in:

- working together to develop and implement strategies to resolve a work unit crisis;
- contributing a one-time, outstanding effort, which benefited the work unit or the University;
- completing a major project before the deadline under extraordinary time pressure;
- completing a major project under budget;
- receiving repeated recognition by customers for extraordinary service; and
- providing extraordinary workplace assistance saving time and money.

## **DOCUMENTATION AND PROCESS**

Recognition awards are proposed, approved, and processed using a Recognition Award Action Form (RAAF) available on-line at <http://www.hr.vcu.edu/forms/>. The appropriate Vice President's office and VCU Human Resources must approve recognition awards in advance of notification to the employees. ***Departments must submit the RAAF to VCU Human Resources by the first day of the month that the payment is to be made.***

## **NOTIFICATION**

VCU Human Resources will notify the department once a Recognition Award has been approved. The department is then responsible for notifying the employee in writing of the Recognition Award. A sample Recognition Award Certificate is available from your HR Generalist.

## **OTHER FORMS OF EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION**

Other forms of recognition (monetary and non-monetary) not covered by the provisions of these guidelines include, but may not be limited to:

- University Service Awards;
- State Employee Suggestion Program (ESP);
- Retiree Recognition;
- Departmental or holiday recognitions that are open to all employees;
- Events for volunteers for activities, such as the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC);
- Presidential Awards for Community Multicultural Enrichment (PACME);
- Finance and Administration Division Customer Service Awards;

- Provost and Academic Affairs Division Customer Service Awards; and the
- Dorris Douglas Budd Award (DDB).

The monetary value of these awards, if any, is not included in the \$2,000 per fiscal year monetary award cap. However, many of these other forms of University recognition will result in taxable income to the employee. Contact the VCU Controller's Office (828-0388) or Payroll Office (828-0740) about the inclusion or exclusion of any payment or gift as taxable income and the tax withholding implications (approximately 38.4%).

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<sup>1</sup> Effective July 1, 2005