2014

Guidance on Compensation of Community Partners in Research at Virginia Commonwealth University

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Guidance on Compensation of Community Partners in Research at Virginia Commonwealth University

Abstract
This document provides guidance on the compensation of community partners engaged in research with VCU faculty, staff and students. Because community partners can play many roles throughout a community-engaged research project, compensation and expense reimbursement may vary.

Keywords
community-engaged research, community partner, university-community partner, research, compensation, CEnR, partner

Disciplines
Higher Education
Guidance on Compensation of Community Partners in Research at Virginia Commonwealth University

August 15, 2014

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Acknowledgement

The Center for Clinical and Translational Research and Division of Community Engagement wish to thank the many people who have been involved in the development of this guidance document. Each helped us to identify critical issues to address and ensured that the VCU policies and procedures were documented accurately.

David Allen, CPA, MAcc  
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Laurie L. Bourne, MBA, CCP  
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We also wish the thanks to the members of the Faculty Learning Community on Excellence in Community-Engaged Research at VCU, as well as others in the VCU community, who agreed to use this guidance document in their work to test its clarity and usability.

Recommended Citation:
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Introduction

As a premier, urban research institution committed to community engagement, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) has prioritized advancing high-quality and high-impact community-engaged research (CEnR) as a key strategy in advancing the Quest for Distinction (VCU, 2013). CEnR, or the involvement of stakeholders beyond the university in the research process, is increasingly viewed as a promising approach to both knowledge generation and regional development (Andrews, Newman, Meadows, Cox, & Bunting, 2012).

This document provides guidance on the compensation of community partners engaged in research with VCU faculty, staff and students. Because community partners can play many roles throughout a CEnR project, compensation and expense reimbursement may vary. The compensation of community researchers should be agreed upon in the beginning of the research endeavor (Lindau, et al., 2011) and be reflected in formal documents such as Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) (CTSA, 2011; Trinh-Shervin, et al., 2007), data sharing and authorship agreements (Castleden, et al., 2010; Cochran, et al., 2008), and position descriptions, and other formalized agreements (AHRQ, 2004).

VCU compensation category symbols depicted in Figures 1 and 2:

- **Affiliate Status**: If financial compensation is not part of the agreement, then VCU’s Affiliate status serves to formally recognize ongoing partnerships and connects the partner to VCU resources.

- **Non-Employee Compensation**: If compensation is to be part of an agreement, then partners must fit within a given compensation category as shown in Figure 1 and follow all accompanying policies (connected via hyperlinks). Figure 2 depicts these categories along a continuum of accountability to help match the category for compensation with the need for accountability to VCU in ensuring the project is completed in compliance with funder requirements.

- **Employee Compensation**: For community partners who have specific but non-regular duties, various forms of non-employee compensation are available.

- **Travel/Expense Reimbursement**: For community partners who have specific and regular duties, two categories of part-time employee status are available.

- **VCU employees, non-employees, affiliates, and non-affiliates may all be reimbursed for business travel and other approved business expenses, so long as VCU, unit, departmental, and/or any other funder-specific policies and procedures are adhered to.**

VCU defines community-engaged research as “a collaborative process between the researcher and community partner that creates and disseminates knowledge and creative expression with the goal of contributing to the discipline and strengthening the well-being of the community. Community-engaged research (CER) identifies the assets of all stakeholders and incorporates them in the design and conduct of the different phases of the research process.”
Figure 1: Procedural overview of VCU categories for compensation 1,2 of community partners in CEnR3

### Affiliate Status
- Associated with, but not paid by VCU
- Registration is required in Banner

### Non-Employee Compensation
- Associated with and paid by VCU
- Partner completes a W-9 form (or substitute) requires social security#n
- For earnings over $600 in 1 year, a 1099 misc. income tax form is issued

### Research/Survey Participant
- For participation as a subject in research
- Students and employees are also eligible
- Can pay through cash, gift card, direct pay by check, or electronic deposit
- Can lose those who do not provide SS#

### Monetary & Non-Monetary Awards & Prizes
- Random drawings or other prizes
- Students are also eligible
- Can pay monetary through direct pay by check or electronic deposit
- Non-monetary over $75 value must be reported for tax purposes

### Honorarium
- For special service (no regular duties)
- Recipient cannot set the amount
- Direct pay by check or electronic deposit
- Payment occurs after services rendered
- Amounts over $2000 require approval

### Preceptor Payments
- For supervising students in the field
- Requires Preceptor Payment Form
- Payment occurs after services rendered
- Direct pay by check or electronic deposit

### Independent Contractor
- Meets IRS criteria as a contractor
- Requires Independent Contractor Agreement outlining scope of work
- Payment occurs after services rendered
- Direct pay by check or electronic deposit
- Total payments over $10,000 in 1 year must have prior approval

### Affiliate Category
- Units must specify the Affiliate category, the qualifications of the Affiliate, and describe their role
- Affiliate Faculty category is for partners that support students; not required to be registered in Banner, but will need to be if they want access to VCU Affiliate benefits

### Affiliate Benefits
- VCU Card ID & accompanying discounts & services
- VCU email address
- Library access (limited access to those with commercial interests and no access to contractors)
- RedCAP access (VCU faculty/staff sponsor is required)
- Training for human research

### Employee Compensation
- Employed and paid by VCU
- Partner completes a Background check, I-9 form, and other new hire paperwork as required
- Partner receives a W-2 tax form

### Hourly Employee
- Must meet temporary workload needs or perform jobs where faculty/classified are not required
- No official search required
- To maintain non-benefit status, restricted to average 29 hours per week
- Must complete a Wage Position Description form
- Must justify any rate over $15/hour
- Direct pay through electronic deposit

### Adjunct Faculty
- Role of community partner must be related to specific faculty roles and/or specific student learning goals that are related to research and units must specify this relationship in their contract
- No official search required
- Non-tenure, part time capacity for specific teaching/faculty roles
- Annually renewable contracts
- Units provide guidelines consistent with funding source and VCU policy
- Contract must specify employee as part time and/or without employee benefits
- If part time with no benefits, restricted to 29 hours per week
- Direct pay through electronic deposit
Figure 2: Continuum of community partner accountability to VCU in CEnR, by compensation type

**Research/Survey Participant**
- Relevant when partner provides data as a human subject with informed consent
- Can be used as incentives for focus groups, town halls, community forums, etc.
- Partner has no accountability

**Monetary & Non-Monetary Awards & Prizes**
- Relevant when partner provides support that is not human subjects research
- Can be used as incentives for participation in planning, providing a special service for a one-time event, etc.
- Partner has no accountability

**Affiliate Status**
- Relevant for recognizing volunteer and/or non-employee partners who have ongoing duties and/or provide special service
- Can be used to connect partners to library and other research resources to support them in engaging in CEnR
- Affiliates are accountable to their role as specified by units; as well as all policies governing use of any and all of the specific benefits

**Independent Contractor**
- Relevant when there are specific and regular duties
- Can be used to compensate partners who are planners, data collectors, analysts, reporters, and/or disseminators
- Partner is accountable to meet objectives specified in their agreement, but how & when the work is accomplished cannot be controlled by VCU beyond what is specified in the contract

**Hourly Employee**
- Relevant when there are specific and regular duties
- Can be used to compensate partners who are planners, data collectors, analysts, reporters, and/or disseminators
- Partner is accountable to their position description as an employee of VCU

**Independent Contractor**
- Relevant when there are specific and regular duties
- Can be used to compensate partners who are planners, data collectors, analysts, reporters, and/or disseminators
- Partner is accountable to meet objectives specified in their agreement, but how & when the work is accomplished cannot be controlled by VCU beyond what is specified in the contract

**Adjunct Faculty**
- Relevant for CEnR that involves service learning through a specified course
- Can be used to incentivize community partners supporting students who are engaged in research while in the field
- Partner is accountable to support specified student learning objectives and to their position description as an employee of VCU

**Preceptor Payments**
- Relevant for CEnR that involves service learning through a specified course
- Can be used to incentivize community partners supporting students who are engaged in research while in the field
- Partner is accountable to support specified student learning objectives

**Honorary**
- Relevant for specific services provided on a non-regular basis
- Can be used to reward Community Advisory Board members, or to incentivize partners for providing a special service for a one-time event, etc.
- Partner is accountable to provide the specified service and is paid after services are rendered

**Low accountability of partners**

**High accountability of partners**

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**Affiliation**
- Relevant for recognizing volunteer and/or non-employee partners who have ongoing duties and/or provide special service
- Can be used to connect partners to library and other research resources to support them in engaging in CEnR
- Affiliates are accountable to their role as specified by units; as well as all policies governing use of any and all of the specific benefits

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**Accountability of partners to VCU in CEnR, as guided by compensation type**

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**Facility, Students, Classified, and Fulltime Employees are academic partners**
Travel/Business Expense Reimbursement

- Relevant when an expense related to participation in the CEnR project occurs and funds are available for reimbursement.
- Official university business travel can be reimbursed to Affiliates, non-employees, and employees to participate in planning meetings, to serve as community-based data collectors, to present findings at conferences and meetings, to provide training to inform other projects, etc.
- Partner must provide Social Security (SS)# and follow all VCU policies and procedures. Pre-approval is required for travel expenses exceeding $500.
- VCU employees can request a Travel Advance for amounts over $100; VCU employees can request a Travel Card for significant travel.
- VCU employees can request a P-card in advance if there is a recurring need for small expenses items such as food for meetings, printing of recruitment materials, program supplies, etc. (usually a $5000 limit). Personal reimbursements should not be submitted for items that can be purchased on a Pcard.
- Documentation must be submitted for expenses and all VCU policies and procedures related to reimbursement must be followed.
References and Additional Resources


**VCU Policy Resource Hyperlinks**

1. Summary of Payment methods for Employee, Student, and Non-Employee: [http://www.hr.vcu.edu/media/hr/documents/SupplementalPayMethods.pdf](http://www.hr.vcu.edu/media/hr/documents/SupplementalPayMethods.pdf)
2. VCU Compensation & Rewards Resources: [http://www.hr.vcu.edu/compensation-and-rewards/](http://www.hr.vcu.edu/compensation-and-rewards/)
3. VCU Community Engagement Key Terms and Definitions: [http://www.community.vcu.edu/files/2012/05/CER-Definitions-Updated-8-28-13.pdf](http://www.community.vcu.edu/files/2012/05/CER-Definitions-Updated-8-28-13.pdf)
5. Banner system link: [www.hr.vcu.edu/banner/security/](http://www.hr.vcu.edu/banner/security/)
8. VCUcard site: [http://vcucard.vcu.edu/index.html](http://vcucard.vcu.edu/index.html)
9. Email@VCU: [http://www.ts.vcu.edu/askit/email/emailvcu/](http://www.ts.vcu.edu/askit/email/emailvcu/)
12. VCU Office of Research, CITI Training: [http://www.research.vcu.edu/human_research/citi_requirements.htm](http://www.research.vcu.edu/human_research/citi_requirements.htm)
13. VCU Office of Procurement Services: I want to pay an individual: [link]
15. VCU Substitute W-9 form: [link]
16. IRS 1099 Miscellaneous Income form: [link]
17. Accounts Payable forms: [link]
18. VCU Office of Procurement Services: I want to compensate a Research/Survey Participant: [link]
19. VCU Office of Procurement Services: I want to give a reward or prize: [link]
20. VCU Honorarium Policy: [link]
21. VCU Office of Procurement Services: I want to give an honorarium: [link]
22. VCU Office of Procurement Services: I want to pay a Preceptor: [link]
23. VCU Policy Employee vs. Independent Contractor Guidelines: [link]
24. IRS regulations defining someone as an Independent Contractor: [link]
25. VCU Office of Procurement Services: I want to pay an Independent Contractor: [link]
26. Hourly/Wage Employee Compensation: [link]
27. Criminal Conviction Investigations Policy: [link]
28. IRS I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification form: [link]
29. VCU Quick Reference for new hires: [link]
30. IRS W-2 Wage and Tax Statement: [link]
31. VCU Wage Employment Policy: [link]
32. 29 Hour Work Week Limit FAQ: [link]
33. Wage Position Description and other employee compensation forms: [link]
34. Human Resources for Faculty: [link]
35. Search Process handbook: [link]
36. Faculty Salary Administration Guidelines: [link]
37. University Business Travel: [link]
38. Allowable Business Expenditures: [link]
39. Chrome River Authorizations and Reimbursements for Non-employees Cheat Sheet: 
   http://procurement.vcu.edu/files/NonEmployee_CheatSheet.pdf
41. Chrome River Info: http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/travel/get-reimbursed-through-chrome-river/#.UmaUqnD1smE
42. Chrome River FAQ: http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/travel/chrome-river-faqs/#preapproval
43. Pre-approval for Travel: http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/travel/understand-responsibility-and-authorization/#.UnwWz3D1smE
44. Requesting a Travel Advance: http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/travel/request-a-travel-advance/#.UjcV38asiSo
45. Requesting a Travel Card: http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/travel/request-a-travel-card/#.UnwfcnD1smE
46. Purchasing Card (P-Card): http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/use-p-card/#.UmaaO3D1smE
47. Documentation required for reimbursement of travel expenses: http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/travel/requirements-for-travel-food-expenses/#.UmaU43D1smE

VCU General Policy Resources

49. Office of Procurement Services “I want to”: http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/#.UjcSY8asiSo
50. Office of Procurement Staff Directory: http://procurement.vcu.edu/about-us/staff-directory/#.UjcWF8asiSo
51. Office of Research, Sponsored Programs Forms: http://www.research.vcu.edu/forms/osp.htm
52. VCU Human Resources Policy Library: http://www.hr.vcu.edu/about/policies.html