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## 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

# Virginia Commonwealth University

## 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.

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We also wish to thank 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:

George, C., Holton, V., & Haley, A. (2014). *Guidance on compensation of community partners in research at Virginia Commonwealth University*. Virginia Commonwealth University. Richmond, VA.

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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).

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."

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.

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.



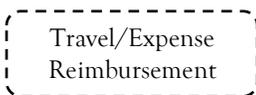
Non-Employee  
Compensation

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



Employee  
Compensation

For community partners who have specific and regular duties, two categories of part-time employee status are available.



Travel/Expense  
Reimbursement

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.

Figure 1: Procedural overview of VCU categories for compensation 1,2 of community partners in CEnR3

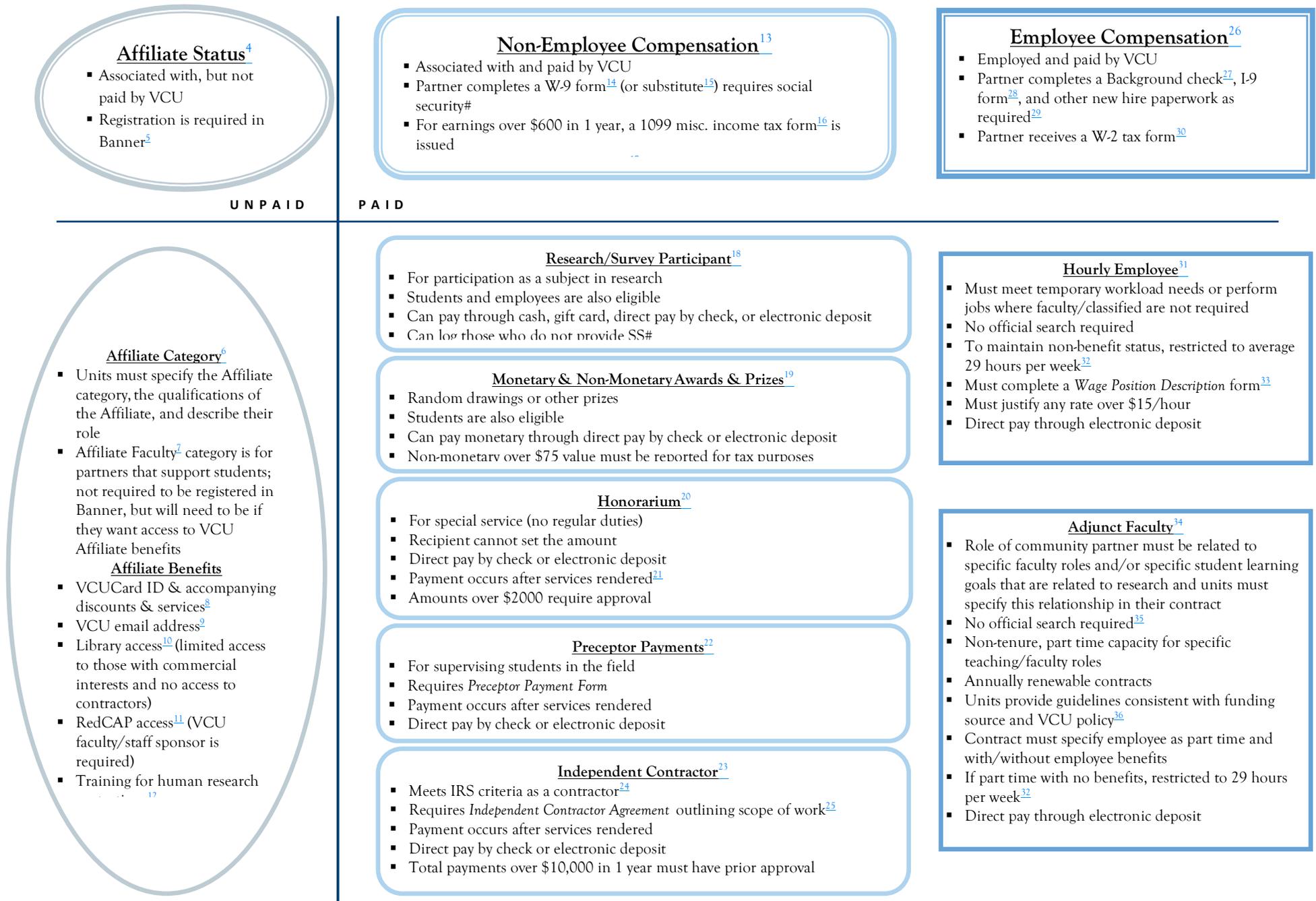
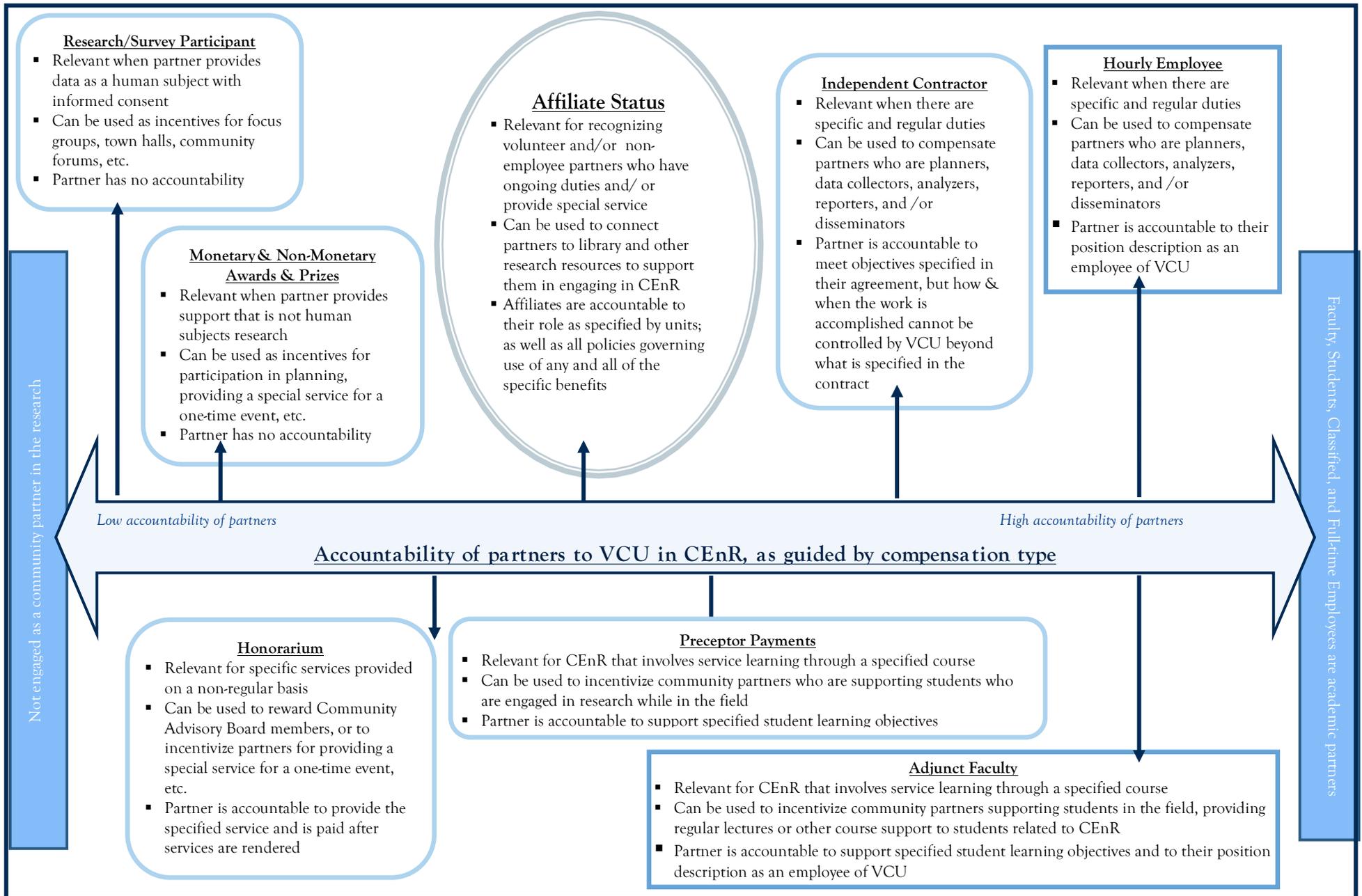


Figure 2: Continuum of community partner accountability to VCU in CEnR, by compensation type



### Travel<sup>37</sup>/Business Expense<sup>38</sup> Reimbursement<sup>39</sup>

- 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<sup>40,41,42</sup>. Pre-approval<sup>43</sup> is required for travel expenses exceeding \$500.
- VCU employees can request a Travel Advance<sup>44</sup> for amounts over \$100; VCU employees can request a Travel Card<sup>45</sup> for significant travel.
- VCU employees can request a P-card<sup>46</sup> 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<sup>47</sup> must be submitted for expenses and all VCU policies and procedures<sup>48</sup> related to reimbursement must be followed.

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## 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>
2. VCU Compensation & Rewards Resources: <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>
4. Affiliate User Guide: [http://www.hr.vcu.edu/pdf\\_docs/AffiliateUserGuide.pdf](http://www.hr.vcu.edu/pdf_docs/AffiliateUserGuide.pdf)
5. Banner system link: [www.hr.vcu.edu/banner/security/](http://www.hr.vcu.edu/banner/security/)
6. Employee & Affiliate Identification guidance: [http://www.hr.vcu.edu/pdf\\_docs/Employee\\_Identification.pdf](http://www.hr.vcu.edu/pdf_docs/Employee_Identification.pdf)
7. Affiliate Faculty Policies and Procedures: <http://www.assurance.vcu.edu/Policy%20Library/Affiliate%20Faculty%20Appointments%20Policy%20&%20Procedu res.pdf>
8. VCUCard site: <http://vcucard.vcu.edu/index.html>
9. Email@VCU: <http://www.ts.vcu.edu/askit/email/emailvcu/>
10. VCU Libraries Access: <http://www.library.vcu.edu/>
11. RedCAP: <http://www.ts.vcu.edu/software-center/general-purpose/redcap/>
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*: <http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/pay-an-individual/#.UnvLVHDlsmE>
14. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) W-9 Request for Taxpayer ID form: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>
15. VCU Substitute W-9 form: <http://procurement.vcu.edu/files/SubstituteW9.doc>
16. IRS 1099 Miscellaneous Income form: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1099misc.pdf>
17. Accounts Payable forms: <http://procurement.vcu.edu/document-library/accounts-payable/#.UrdCJNLiahN>
18. VCU Office of Procurement Services: *I want to compensate a Research/Survey Participant*: <http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/pay-an-individual/compensate-a-research-participant/#.Unv0xXDlsmE>
19. VCU Office of Procurement Services: *I want to give a reward or prize*: <http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/pay-an-individual/give-an-award-or-prize/#.Unv2DHDIsmE>
20. VCU Honorarium Policy: <http://www.assurance.vcu.edu/Policy%20Library/Honorarium%20Policy.pdf>
21. VCU Office of Procurement Services: *I want to give an honorarium*: <http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/pay-an-individual/give-an-honorarium/#.UnvUiHDlsmE>
22. VCU Office of Procurement Services: *I want to pay a Preceptor*: <http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/pay-an-individual/pay-a-preceptor/#.UnwFS3DIsmF>
23. VCU Policy Employee vs. Independent Contractor Guidelines: <http://www.assurance.vcu.edu/Policy%20Library/Employee%20vs%20Independent%20Contractor%20Guidelines.pdf>
24. IRS regulations defining someone as an Independent Contractor: <http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&-Self-Employed/Independent-Contractor-Defined>
25. VCU Office of Procurement Services: *I want to pay an Independent Contractor*: <http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/pay-an-individual/pay-an-independent-contractor/#.UnwGTnDIsmE>
26. Hourly/Wage Employee Compensation: <http://www.hr.vcu.edu/compensation-and-rewards/hourlywage-employees/>
27. Criminal Conviction Investigations Policy: <http://www.assurance.vcu.edu/Policy%20Library/Criminal%20Conviction%20Investigations.pdf>
28. IRS I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification form: <http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-9.pdf>
29. VCU Quick Reference for new hires: <http://www.hr.vcu.edu/media/hr/documents/QuickReferenceNewHire.pdf>
30. IRS W-2 Wage and Tax Statement: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw2.pdf>
31. VCU Wage Employment Policy: [http://www.hr.vcu.edu/media/hr/documents/Wage\\_Employment.pdf](http://www.hr.vcu.edu/media/hr/documents/Wage_Employment.pdf)
32. 29 Hour Work Week Limit FAQ: [http://www.hr.vcu.edu/media/hr/documents/FAQs\\_29HourRule.pdf](http://www.hr.vcu.edu/media/hr/documents/FAQs_29HourRule.pdf)
33. Wage Position Description and other employee compensation forms: <http://www.hr.vcu.edu/compensation-and-rewards/forms/>
34. Human Resources for Faculty: <http://www.hr.vcu.edu/faculty.html>
35. Search Process handbook: <http://www.assurance.vcu.edu/Policy%20Library/Faculty%20Search%20Process%20Handbook.pdf>
36. Faculty Salary Administration Guidelines: <http://www.assurance.vcu.edu/Policy%20Library/Faculty%20Salary%20Administration%20Guidelines.pdf>
37. University Business Travel: <http://www.assurance.vcu.edu/Policy%20Library/University%20Business%20Travel%20Policy.pdf>
38. Allowable Business Expenditures: <http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/make-a-purchase/know-what-you-can-and-cannot-buy/allowable-business-expenditure-chart/#.UnwUQHDIsmF>

39. Chrome River Authorizations and Reimbursements for Non-employees Cheat Sheet: [http://procurement.vcu.edu/files/NonEmployee\\_CheatSheet.pdf](http://procurement.vcu.edu/files/NonEmployee_CheatSheet.pdf)
40. Personal Reimbursements Policy: <http://www.assurance.vcu.edu/Policy%20Library/Personal%20Reimbursements.pdf>
41. Chrome River Info: <http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/travel/get-reimbursed-through-chrome-river/#.UmaUqnDIsmE>
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/#.UnwWz3DIsmE>
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/#.UnwfcnDIsmE>
46. Purchasing Card (P-Card): <http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/use-p-card/#.UmaaO3DIsmE>
47. Documentation required for reimbursement of travel expenses: <http://procurement.vcu.edu/i-want-to/travel/requirements-for-travel-food-expenses/#.UmaU43DIsmE>
48. Purchasing A to Z Manual: <http://www.assurance.vcu.edu/Policy%20Library/Purchasing%20A%20-%20Z%20Policies%20&%20Procedures%20Manual.pdf>

## 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>