

V 01 24 DEGREE ATTAINMENT AWARD

The College supports the concept of employees continuing their education by granting a one-time monetary award, to employees who earn a higher education degree after beginning employment with Volunteer State Community College. Associates and undergraduate degrees of any discipline are available for the one-time award. Graduate degrees are to be directly applicable to the duties of the position currently held by the employee and/or increase capacity for performing those duties. If the completion of a degree is a condition of employment, employees are ineligible for additional compensation. A monetary award will not be awarded when an employee earns a second degree at the same level i.e., two Master's Degrees or a lesser degree than the employee already held. Employees are only eligible to be compensated for one degree during their employment with Volunteer State Community College. The determination of whether the degree qualifies will be made prior to the employee beginning pursuit of a degree rather than at degree completion, so that both the College and the employee know whether a monetary award will be awarded.

To request a degree-related monetary award, the employee must secure the approval of his or her immediate supervisor and the appropriate vice president by completing a Degree Advancement Request form and submitting it for approval. The employee should complete this form prior to beginning the program of study. A new employee or a current employee already engaged in a program of study must complete this form as well to receive the monetary award. Those employees who were engaged in a program of study not directly applicable to the duties of their position during the 2015/2016 Academic Year will be grandfathered in to receive a one-time award upon completion of that degree.

For degrees conferred beginning July 1, 2016, employees will receive a monetary award as outlined in the policy and the chart below. (Compensation changes for degrees conferred prior to July 1, 2016, will be awarded based on the prior policy.)

One-time monetary award for degree attainment

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|--------------------|---------|
| Associate's Degree | \$1,250 |
| Bachelor's Degree | \$1,500 |
| Master's Degree | \$2,000 |
| Doctoral Degree | \$2,500 |

Upon achieving a change in educational status, the employee should notify his/her immediate supervisor and the degree will be verified by the Office of Human Resources with the submission of an official transcript. An official transcript is an original transcript issued to the Office of Human Resources or other designated party with the appropriate seal and/or signature of the school Registrar. Transcripts will not be accepted if they are duplicated, faxed, or marked "Unofficial" or "Issued to Student".

The department supervisor must submit an extra compensation form with the appropriate signatures to the Office of Human Resources. The Office of Human Resources will review to see if the Degree Advancement Request Form has been approved. If this form is not on file and approved, the monetary award may be denied. The award will be paid in the next monthly payroll following successful completion of required documentation. Applicable taxes and benefits will accrue to this award in a similar manner as longevity pay.

A degree must be earned through an institution accredited by one of the Regional Accrediting Organizations recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (www.chea.org).

VSCC Source: December 8, 1999, President's Cabinet; January 6, 2009, President's Cabinet; October 5, 2009, President's Cabinet; April 4, 2016, President's Cabinet; February 6, 2017, President' Cabinet.