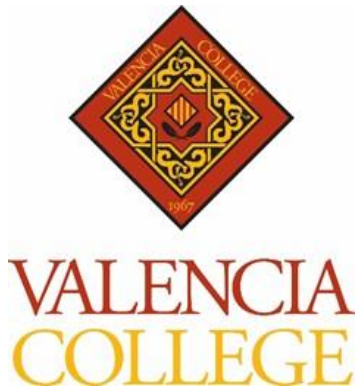


POLICY: 6Hx28:3C-04



**Responsible Executive:**  
~~Vice President, Organizational Development and Human Resources~~  
Executive Vice President, Administrative Services

**Policy Contacts:** Chief Human Resources Officer

**Specific Authority:** 1001.64, F.S.

**Law Implemented:** 1001.64, F.S.

**Effective Date:** ~~11-21-2016~~05-07-2026

**Date of Last Policy Review:**  
~~11-02-2016~~05-07-2026

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## Total Rewards: Recognition of Full-Time Employees for Educational Advancement

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### Policy Statement:

- ~~I.~~ In order to attract, motivate, develop, and retain employees who contribute to student success, the college shall provide components of pay designed to recognize, reward, and compensate its employees. Full-time instructional employees who earn advanced college credit or academic degrees or full-time non-instructional employees who earn academic degrees during their employment at ~~the~~ Valencia eCollege (“College”) may be recognized for this accomplishment. The eCollege adheres to all federal and state rules and regulations governing the reporting of all compensation to its employees, including but not limited to any compensation awarded in accordance with this policy.
- ~~II.~~ The College President, or designee(s), is(are) authorized to approve advanced degrees, advanced courses and/or other courses of study, not specifically identified in this policy, that are deemed to be beneficial to the College and the eligible employee.
- ~~I.~~III. The College President, or designee(s), may establish programs and procedures to implement this policy.
- ~~II.~~ Full Time Instructional Employees Receiving Advanced College Credit or Academic Degrees

- ~~A. Full-time eight, ten or twelve-month instructional employee who earns advanced college credit or an advanced degree from an accredited institution is eligible to receive an increase in salary. If the criteria specified herein are met, the employee will be placed in the higher salary range commensurate with the advanced degree or advanced credit at his/her current step. The effective date of the increase in salary will be determined by the date evidence of completion of the advanced degree or advanced college credit is submitted by the employee, in accordance with the procedures related to this policy.~~
- ~~B. In order to qualify for the Bachelors, Masters, or Doctoral degree categories, an instructional employee who teaches must complete an approved degree which is appropriate to the college level and which is related to education, the teaching discipline, or educational administration/management. In order to qualify for the Masters + 30 category, the instructional employee must complete thirty (30) hours of approved upper division undergraduate or graduate work after the date the first master's degree was conferred. Twenty one (21) of the hours must be approved graduate hours appropriate to the college level and be related to education, the teaching discipline, or educational administration/management.~~
- ~~C. In order to qualify for the Bachelors, Masters, or Doctoral degree categories, an instructional employee not engaged in teaching must complete an approved degree which is appropriate to the college level and which is related to the occupation (e.g., academic counseling, library science) or educational administration/management. In order to qualify for the Masters + 30 category, the employee must complete thirty (30) hours of approved upper division undergraduate or graduate work after the date the first master's degree was conferred. Twenty one (21) of the hours must be approved graduate hours appropriate to the college level and be related to the occupation (e.g., academic counseling, library science) or educational administration/management.~~
- ~~D. The president or a designee is authorized to approve advanced degrees, advanced courses, or other courses of study, not specifically identified in this policy, that are deemed to be beneficial to the college and the employee.~~

### ~~III. Full-Time Non-Instructional Employees Receiving Advanced College Degrees~~

- ~~A. Full-time non-instructional employees will be rewarded for obtaining advanced degrees from a regionally accredited institution in accordance with the procedures related to this policy.~~

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## **Policy History:**

Adopted 11-2-16; Amended 05-07-2026

## Related Policies:

Amends Policy 6Hx28:3C-04.3.2 (repealed 11-2-16)

Combines Policy 6Hx28:3C-04.3.1 (repealed 11-2-16)

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## Procedures:

### I. Full-Time Instructional Employees (including Counselors and Librarians) Receiving Advanced College Credit or Academic Degrees

A. A full-time instructional employee who earns advanced college credit or an advanced degree from an accredited institution is eligible to receive an increase in salary. If the criteria specified herein are met, the eligible full-time instructional employee will be placed in the higher salary range commensurate with the advanced degree or advanced credit. When the eligible full-time instructional employee earns a higher degree, their salary will be adjusted to the corresponding degree-based salary range as determined by Organizational Development & Human Resources (ODHR). The new salary preserves the eligible full-time instructional employee's position within the range by applying the same percentage above the base salary as previously calculated when determining the eligible full-time instructional employee's salary, taking into consideration the new degree and calculated years of experience. The effective date of the increase in salary will be determined by the date on which the evidence of completion of the advanced degree or advanced college credit submitted by the eligible full-time instructional employee has been successfully verified and validated by the College, in accordance with the procedures related to this policy.

1. Counselor or Librarian: In order to qualify for the Bachelors, Masters, or Doctoral degree categories, a Counselor or Librarian must complete an approved degree which is appropriate to the college level and which is related to the occupation (e.g., academic counseling, library science) or educational administration/management. In order to qualify for the Masters + 30 category, the Counselor or Librarian must complete thirty (30) hours of approved upper division undergraduate or graduate work on or after the date the first master's degree was conferred, which includes a second master's degree that is conferred on the same day. Twenty-one (21) of the hours must be approved graduate hours appropriate to the college level and be related to the occupation (e.g., academic counseling, library science) or educational administration/management.

2. All Other Full-Time Instructional Employees: In order to qualify for the Bachelors, Masters, or Doctoral degree categories, all other full-time instructional employees must complete an approved degree which is appropriate to the college level and which is related to education, the

teaching discipline, or educational administration/management. In order to qualify for the Masters + 30 category, the eligible full-time instructional employee must complete thirty (30) hours of approved upper division undergraduate or graduate work on or after the date the first master's degree was conferred, which includes a second master's degree that is conferred on the same day. Twenty-one (21) of the hours must be approved graduate hours appropriate to the college level and be related to education, the teaching discipline, or educational administration/management.

B. Once the advanced degree or advanced credit is earned, the eligible full-time instructional employee is responsible for submitting evidence of completion to ODHR. Such evidence shall consist of official transcripts bearing the seal of the accredited institution, with the date conferred and the awarded degree or credits. If ODHR determines that the employee has met the criteria specified in this policy, ODHR will prepare a personnel action form and forward it to the eligible full-time instructional employee's supervisor along with the evidence submitted by the employee. The supervisor is responsible for verifying the applicability of the degree awarded as described in Procedures Section I.A.1. or 2., as appropriate. When approved by the supervisor, the personnel action form and evidence of completion will be processed by ODHR for payment and the supporting documentation will be retained in the employee's personnel record.

C. If the request for recognition of educational advancement is not approved by ODHR or the eligible full-time instructional employee's supervisor, ODHR, in partnership with the supervisor will notify the respective employee in writing of the reason for the decision. The respective employee may appeal the decision in writing to their respective Provost/Vice President, whose decision will be final.

~~I. Instructional, Full-Time Employees Receiving Advanced College Credit or Academic Degrees~~

~~A. The employee is responsible for filing, in advance, a proposed course of study with his/her dean/supervisor, identifying the degree program and specific courses that will be taken to satisfy the requirements for advanced college credit or an advanced degree. The dean/supervisor will evaluate the degree program/courses and make a recommendation to the Campus Provost or Vice President. The Campus Provost or Vice President will act on the recommendation, and advise the dean/supervisor and employee in writing as to the acceptability of the proposed course of study. If the proposed course of study is not approved, the employee may appeal the decision to the president, whose decision will be final.~~

~~B. Once the advanced degree or advanced credit is earned, the employee is responsible for submitting evidence of completion to the dean/supervisor. Such evidence shall consist of official transcripts or a letter from the registrar bearing the seal of the institution. If the dean/supervisor determines that the employee has met the criteria specified in this policy, the dean/supervisor will sign a personnel action form and forward it to the appropriate Campus Provost or Vice President along with the evidence submitted by the employee. If approved by the Campus Provost or Vice~~

~~President, the personnel action form and evidence of completion will be sent to Organizational Development & Human Resources, in turn, for payment and retention in the employee's record. If not approved, the Campus Provost or Vice President will notify the dean/supervisor and employee in writing. The employee may appeal the decision to the president, whose decision will be final.~~

~~C. If the employee submits the required documentation within ninety (90) days from the time the college credit or degree was earned and receives approval, the change in salary will be made effective the first day of the pay period following the date the college credit or degree was earned. If the employee submits the required documentation after ninety (90) days and receives approval, the change will be made effective the first day of the pay period following the date the documentation is received.~~

II. Full-Time Non-Instructional, ~~Full-Time~~ Employees Receiving an Educational Recognition Award for Advanced College Degrees ~~Earned After the Effective Date of This Policy~~

- A. An Educational Recognition Award is a one-time, lump sum payment that will be awarded to full-time non-instructional employees of the college who have been employed at the college for a minimum of six months and subsequently earned a degree from a regionally accredited institution provided the academic degree was not a required qualification of the employee's current position. (Note: Employees who received their degree prior to the conclusion of the six-month eligibility requirement are not eligible for this award.)
- B. Eligible full-time non-instructional employees who wish to apply for this award must follow the appropriate procedures and instructions as listed on the Educational Recognition Award application. The employee will be compensated for only one award per academic degree earned in the categories listed below. For example, an employee who earns a second Master's degree after having received an award of \$3,000 for the first will not receive another \$3,000 for the second Master's degree.
- C. The schedule for this award is as follows:

Degree	Amount
Associate's Degree	\$500
Baccalaureate's Degree	\$1,500
Master's Degree	\$3,000
Doctorate Degree (including Juris Doctorate)	\$6,000

(The lump sum is considered taxable income and it is not attributable towards retirement.)

~~III. Non Instructional, Full-Time Employees Intending to Enroll or Currently Enrolled to Earn an Advanced College Degrees Prior to the Effective Date of This Policy~~

~~A. Currently, the college provides a 5% increase to base pay for administrative and professional employees and a 7.5% increase to base pay for those employees on the technical pay schedule for advance degrees earned in accordance with the terms and conditions of applicable policy and implementing procedures.~~

~~B. Employees who are currently pursuing an advanced degree and:~~

- ~~1. have an approved plan of study in place as required by current policy (and the plan is documented in Human Resources) by October 31, 2016, AND~~
- ~~2. if the degree being sought by the employee is conferred by December 31, 2019,~~
- ~~3. the college will honor the current percentage increase provided the employee completes the degree as scheduled in the plan of study.~~

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**Procedure  
History:**

Adopted 11-2-16; Amended 11-21-16; Amended 3-23-17; Amended 4-17-18; Amended 05-07-26

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**Date of Last Procedure Review:**

04-17-201805-07-2026