

Policy 1327 Employee Suggestion Program

Date of Current Revision: November 2008
Responsible Officer: Director of Human Resources

1. PURPOSE

The Employee Suggestion Program (ESP) is designed to encourage employees to make suggestions for improving university operations by saving money, making operations more efficient or effective, increasing revenue, or improving safety; to assess the potential value of the suggestions; and to reward employees whose suggestions are approved for implementation.

2. AUTHORITY

This policy is in accordance with Virginia Department of Human Resources Management Policy 1.21, Employee Suggestion Program.

3. DEFINITIONS

Agency ESP Coordinator

An employee designated to facilitate and promote the Employee Suggestion Program (ESP), to serve as liaison with the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM), and to forward suggestions to an appropriate evaluator when they are received for evaluation.

Awards

Cash payments, days of paid leave, and/or certificates of recognition given to employees by the university for suggestions adopted because they have identifiable value to one or more agencies and/or to state government generally.

Eligible Employee

Full and part-time employees, including hourly wage and faculty employees, of the university; eligible employees may submit suggestions and are eligible for a certificate, cash, or paid leave, except that wage employees are not eligible for paid leave time. Employees who leave state service before an award is made remain eligible for a certificate and/or cash award for one year from the date of final disposition.

Evaluation

The analysis of a suggestion that documents the feasibility and merit of its adoption, including expected savings or revenue increases, or reasons for non-adoption.

Suggestion

A proposal made by an eligible university employee on the [Employee Suggestion Form](#) that may produce the following results: increased productivity, reduction in expenditures, increased revenues, improved quality of services, or enhanced operational safety.

4. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all eligible university employees.

5. POLICY

The Virginia Employee Suggestion Program encourages employees to exercise initiative beyond their basic job requirements to develop suggestions that improve the performance and quality of

their work while achieving university and Commonwealth of Virginia objectives. Outstanding suggestions that identify specific problems and propose valid solutions to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the university through increased productivity, reduced costs, improved and safer working conditions, conservation of resources, and improved public services are considered. Additionally, the suggestion program establishes open communication of ideas and maximizes employee talents.

6. PROCEDURES

6.1 JMU Department of Human Resources facilitates the Employee Suggestion Program by receiving suggestions, monitoring the evaluation process to ensure fair and appropriate evaluations, and approving the issuance of awards. Any suggestion that is cost saving, practical, constructive, and of benefit to the state will be eligible for review as long as it identifies a problem area, recommends a solution or action, is consistent with program criteria, and is submitted properly.

6.2 Awards

Awards of cash are authorized only for eligible employees whose ideas

- are adopted and implemented and
- result in quantifiable dollar savings or increased revenue.

NOTE: Cash payments will not be made in cases where federal regulations or local fund restrictions prohibit such payments.

Cash awards are based on savings and/or revenue actually generated in the first year of implementation of the suggestions. If all anticipated savings/revenues are generated within the first year, the calculation and award may occur at that time and before the full year has elapsed.

The active life of a valid suggestion shall be one (1) year from receipt by Human Resources or until final disposition of the suggestion, if longer than one year. Based on the evaluator's and/or the Senior Vice President for Administration & Finance's estimate of quantifiable (tangible) net cash savings or revenue generated during the first year of implementation, awards are calculated as follows:

Net 1st-Year Savings/Revenue	Award
Over \$20,000	\$5,000 + 1% of amt over \$20,000
\$501-\$20,000	25% of the savings/revenue
\$101 - \$500	25% or 1 day of leave (employee opt)
\$100 or less	No cash award is made.

State and federal tax laws require the withholding of taxes from awards. The decisions of Human Resources, acting for the Commonwealth, are final and binding. This includes all questions of policy, procedure, entitlement to an award and the nature and amount, if any, of such award.

Eligible classified employees may receive non-cash awards of one to five days of paid leave for suggestions that result in significantly improved processes, programs, services, or safety, for which benefits are not quantifiable.

Human Resources will use the following six factors in estimating the point value of a suggestion:

- degree of improvement in operations, forms, facilities, or equipment;
- degree of improvement in employee relations, working conditions, safety, service to the public, or public attitude;
- extent of application;

- completeness of proposal;
- effort involved in developing the idea; and
- cost of adoption.

ESP leave not taken within 12 months will be forfeited. Active ESP leave balances will be paid when the employee leaves university service.

Employees will submit their suggestions to the Employee /Suggestion program at the Department of Human Resource Management. The suggestion form is available at the [ESP website](#), It may be completed and submitted through the web. The form may also be found in the ESP Procedures Manual, Appendix I, and may be submitted by email (esp@dhrm.virginia.gov) or sent in hard copy to Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM).

- Suggestions receive a number when submitted. This number identifies the suggestion throughout the evaluation process. Every attempt will be made to ensure the anonymity of the employee who submits the suggestion until it is approved for adoption.
- DHRM will forward the suggestion to the ESP Coordinator of the agency selected to evaluate the suggestion.

The evaluator will return the completed evaluation to DHRM who will then notify the suggestor and agency of the evaluation result.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

Human Resources is responsible for coordinating the program and the process of suggestion consideration.

8. SANCTIONS

Not applicable

9. EXCLUSIONS

Suggestions that cannot be considered include those which:

- Would normally be expected in the performance of the employee's job, or which the employee can implement without higher-level approval.
- Constitute a personal grievance or complaint.
- Concern a change in salary or position classification.
- Do not include a solution or plan for improvement.
- Result from assigned or contracted audits, studies, surveys, reviews or research.
- Involve routine requests for maintenance or supplies and services that should be processed through established channels.
- Concern proposals that management can document as already under active consideration.
- Duplicate another suggestion under consideration or for which an award previously has been granted.
- Propose following established procedures that are not being followed.

10. INTERPRETATION

The authority to interpret this policy rests with the President, and is generally delegated to the Director of Human Resources.

Previous version: March, 2007

Approved by the President: April, 2002

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