



Election Day voting and political activity

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 2. Virginia Tech is supportive of all employees exercising their right to vote in the upcoming elections.

Election Day is a staff-only holiday, meaning the university is open. Based on business needs, staff should work with their supervisor to schedule time off to observe the holiday or work and earn compensatory time.

Other employees should work with their supervisors so they can exercise their right to vote. Employees are asked to work with their supervisor should their work hours need to be adjusted.

While the university encourages civic engagement, all political activity should be kept separate from the workplace. Political opinion should not be shared as a Zoom background, email tag line, poster, or in other forms in the workplace. The Statement of Business Conduct Standards says the following under the Professional & Personal Integrity section:

“The university encourages interest in civic affairs. The only restriction placed upon such activities is that such activities not interfere with the employee’s job responsibilities. Employees must take care to ensure that their university related activities are kept separate from their political activities; it must be clear that they act as citizens in such activities, not as representatives of the university. Further, employees must not use university resources, including computer and network systems and university work time to promote political positions or political campaigns.”

For questions, contact the HR Service Center at hrrservicecenter@vt.edu or at 540-231-9331.

For specific questions about voting, contact your local Voter Registration office. For in-person voting, polling hours throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia are 6 a.m.-7 p.m. on Election Day. As long as you are in line by 7 p.m., you will be able to vote.

Employees encouraged to receive COVID-19 vaccination booster shot

Booster shots are now available for those who have had Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson vaccines. These booster shots have been authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and endorsed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Eligible individuals who completed a single dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine more than two months ago and are 18 or older, and individuals who completed a two-dose series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine more than 6 months ago can get a booster. The following groups are eligible:

- 65 years and older.
- Age 18+ who live in long-term care settings.
- Age 18+ who have underlying medical conditions.
- Age 18+ who work or live in high-risk settings.

The Virginia Department of Health has determined that all employees at institutions of higher education qualify for boosters. Virginia Tech encourages all employees, including student employees, to receive a booster shot. While Virginia Tech does require employees to either receive the COVID-19 vaccine or apply for a vaccine exemption, receiving a COVID-19 booster is not a required condition of employment at this time.

The New River Health District is not planning large vaccination events for booster shots at this time. To get a vaccine, people can go to one of the Health Department sites listed at <https://www.nrvroadtowellness.com/where-to-get-vaccinated>, visit a local pharmacy, or find a vaccine through vaccinefinder.gov. You may also call 1-877-VAX-IN-VA (877-829-4682).

In addition, the Virginia Department of Health has opened a Community Vaccination Center in Roanoke at the old Sears store in Valley View Mall. All COVID vaccines and boosters are available. Appointments are available Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Visit vaccinate.virginia.gov or call 877-VAX-IN-VA (877-829-4682) for an appointment. Although appointments are encouraged, walk-ins will also be accepted. Please consider getting your annual flu vaccine when you get your booster shot.

Reminder to employees: Plan now to use your annual leave

As a reminder, the last day to use your accrued 2021 leave is Jan. 9, 2022. While you may not have taken leave you normally would have taken this year, it’s important to take time away from work for your mental health and wellness.

Remember that you’ll need to cover Dec. 27–30, 2021, with appropriate leave types during the university’s Winter Closing. For example, a full-time employee working eight hours Monday through Friday will need 32 hours of leave for these four

days. The most common types of leave used for this period are annual, family personal, and compensatory (holiday comp, overtime comp). Sick leave is not appropriate to use for these days unless you have a documented illness or doctor's appointment during that time. (See below more information on upcoming Virginia Tech holiday breaks.)

We encourage you to work with your managers/supervisors to plan ahead and ensure you can use your leave and reduce your annual leave balance by Jan. 9, 2022.

More information about leave carryover limits for different positions is available on the HR Leave website at <https://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/leave.html>. For more information on Virginia Tech holidays please refer to University Policy No. 4315: Guidelines on Holidays.

Questions about leave and leave usage? Please contact your college or department's HR representative or contact the HR Leave Team at hrleave@vt.edu.

Upcoming holiday closings:

- Thanksgiving break: University is closed from noon on Wednesday, Nov. 24, through Friday, Nov. 26, and reopens on Monday, Nov. 29.
- Winter break: University is closed from Thursday, Dec. 23, through Friday, Dec. 31, 2021, and reopens on Monday, Jan. 3, 2022.

A full list of university holidays is available at <https://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/leave/holiday-closing-schedule.html>.

Designated holidays: The following days are designated holidays for eligible faculty and staff. You do not need to use annual leave on these days.

- Thanksgiving break: Wednesday, Nov. 24, starting at noon, through Friday, Nov. 26.
- Winter break: Thursday, Dec. 23; Friday, Dec. 24; and Friday, Dec. 31.

Families of employees receive scholarships funded by employee donations

Thanks to the generosity of Virginia Tech employees and donors, the 2021 employees' spouse and dependent scholarship helped make Virginia Tech education a little more affordable for six students. Each student received \$1,000 for the 2021-22 academic year.

An annual scholarship reception is held each fall semester to recognize the awarded students, their families, and the donors. This year's reception was held in August to provide an opportunity for the students to meet the scholarship committee, donors, and other recipients.

"It was great to come together in person to meet and recognize the recipients," said Robin McCoy, executive director of finance and operations for the Division of Human Resources and chair of the employees' spouse and dependent scholarship committee. "The only scholarship specific to Virginia Tech employees, it is an honor to

continue this award in recognition of their dedication and family choosing to attend Virginia Tech."

Since 2000, when the scholarship was established, more than 250 incoming students have received assistance. Each year the amount and number of recipients differ, based on the available funds. This year, 22 students submitted their applications for the scholarship and six were selected.

Scholarship donations are funded mainly from Virginia Tech employees, but anyone is welcome to donate. Visit the Employees' Spouse and Dependent Scholarship web page at <https://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/optional-benefits/continuing-education/scholarship.html> to learn more about the program, including how to apply for assistance or to give to the fund through payroll deduction.

Flu season is coming; protect yourself and others with a flu vaccine

Thank you to all of the members of our community who have received their COVID-19 vaccine. Your commitment to your health as well as the health of your family and others in the community is a critical part of the fight against COVID-19.

While fighting the pandemic continues to be an important focus, fall is the time when other respiratory illnesses, like flu, begin to spread. It's important that we all take the necessary steps to reduce the spread of these seasonal illnesses too. That's why Virginia Tech is encouraging all employees and students to get a flu vaccination.

As a service to all employees, Hokie Wellness offers flu vaccination clinics each fall. The clinics are for employees only to limit the number of visitors on campus. Families/dependents of employees may be vaccinated at the drive through clinic on Oct. 30; see below for more information.

- Salaried faculty and staff who are covered by state health insurance plans must show their insurance card to receive a free vaccine.
- Non-student wage employees may also receive a free flu vaccine at the clinics by showing their Hokie Passport.
- Salaried F&S who are not covered by state health insurance plans may receive a flu vaccine at the clinics; be prepared to pay \$25 by cash/check at the clinic.

Flu vaccination clinics run through Oct. 30 at locations across campus. Registration is required for the flu clinics. Following is information on the clinics:

- North End Center: Oct. 28, 8 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- North End Center – drive through clinic: Oct. 30, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.; Families/dependents of employees may attend this clinic.

More information and the registration link can be found at <https://vtx.vt.edu/notices/2021/09/hokie-wellness-flu-clinics-2021.html>.