

Person Affiliations Explained

Introduction

The eduPersonAffiliation and eduPersonPrimaryAffiliation person attributes provide data about how people are affiliated with Virginia Tech, but each is meant for a different audience. This paper will clarify what each attribute is meant to be used for, what their possible values are, and give some examples of when they might be used.

Primary Affiliation

The eduPersonPrimaryAffiliation attribute is an attribute used to communicate, **to other institutions**, the most basic affiliation a person has with Virginia Tech. This attribute is used in conjunction with systems like Shibboleth* to allow other universities to make authorization decisions about this person. This attribute should **NEVER** be used by internal Virginia Tech systems for purposes of authorization, it is strictly meant as an external, to VT, facing attribute.

The values

- **alum** – This value is set for any person who is an alumnus of Virginia Tech
- **student** – This value is set for any person who is currently taking a class at Virginia Tech. If a student is not currently taking a class, for whatever reason (e.g. during the summer), they are not marked as a student in their primary affiliation
- **faculty** – Any active, meaning not retired, faculty of Virginia Tech
- **staff** – Any active, meaning not retired, staff of Virginia Tech
- **affiliate** – A person who is temporarily associated with Virginia Tech such as extension personnel or ROTC officers.

Example uses

As mentioned above this attribute is not to be used by internal VT applications but is instead used when communicating with other universities. Here are a few examples of how it may be used.

1. Virginia Tech has setup up an agreement to allow its students to use restricted resources at the University of Virginia's library. When an authenticated VT user attempts to access the restricted information UVA checks that person's primary affiliation. If the user is a student UVA allows access, if not the user is denied access.
2. In order to keep the most accurate and timely information for the number of faculty and staff currently working at Virginia Tech (for ranking purposes), VT

* See here for more information on Shibboleth,
<http://www.middleware.vt.edu/projects/shibboleth/index.html>

allows certain college review bodies to view its directory and get the number of faculty and staff currently active at VT.

Standard Affiliations

The eduPersonAffiliation attribute gives all the affiliations a person associated with Virginia Tech has with the university. This attribute is meant to be used by internal applications, and will often be used in authorization logic. It's vitally important to realize that this attribute can, and almost always will, have more than one value, which is a change from the current affiliation tracking systems.

Also, unlike the current affiliation tracking systems, the Enterprise Directory tracks affiliations of individuals not traditionally affiliated with VT. Therefore to differentiate between these other individuals and traditional VT affiliates a namespace identifier has been pre-pended to the affiliation names. Current the two namespaces identifiers are "vt" which identify people traditionally affiliated with VT and "vcom" which identifies individuals affiliated with the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM).

The Affiliation Hierarchies

Many affiliations form hierarchies. These hierarchies are shown below. With the hierarchies a person of a given affiliation is also listed as having affiliations of those ancestors of their affiliation. For example, using the VT hierarchy diagram below, a person who is a vt-employee-prehire, is also a vt-employee and vt-active-member. These hierarchies are constructed such that as you ascend them the affiliations become more broad and inclusive.

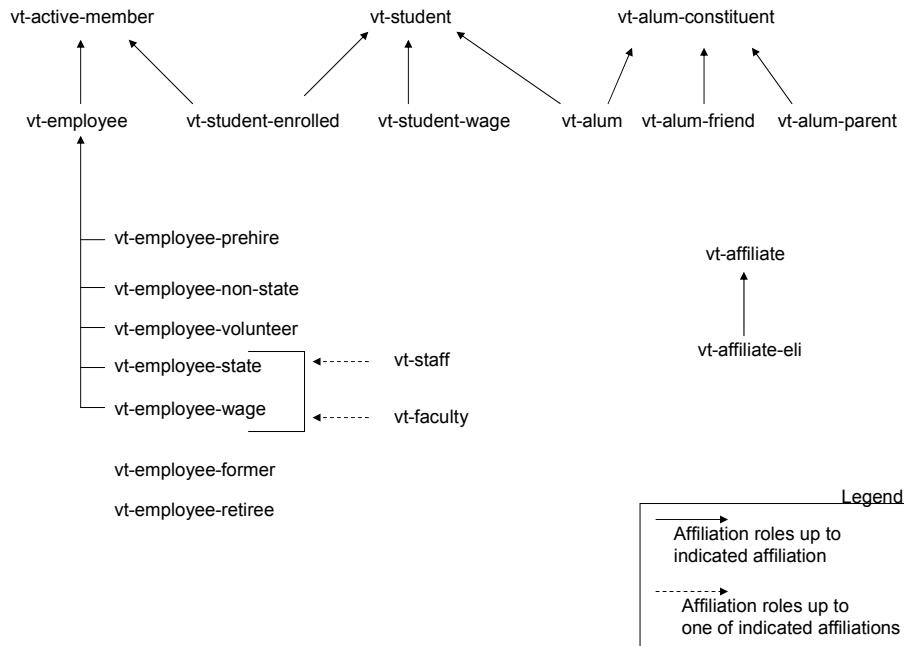


Figure 1: Virginia Tech Affiliations

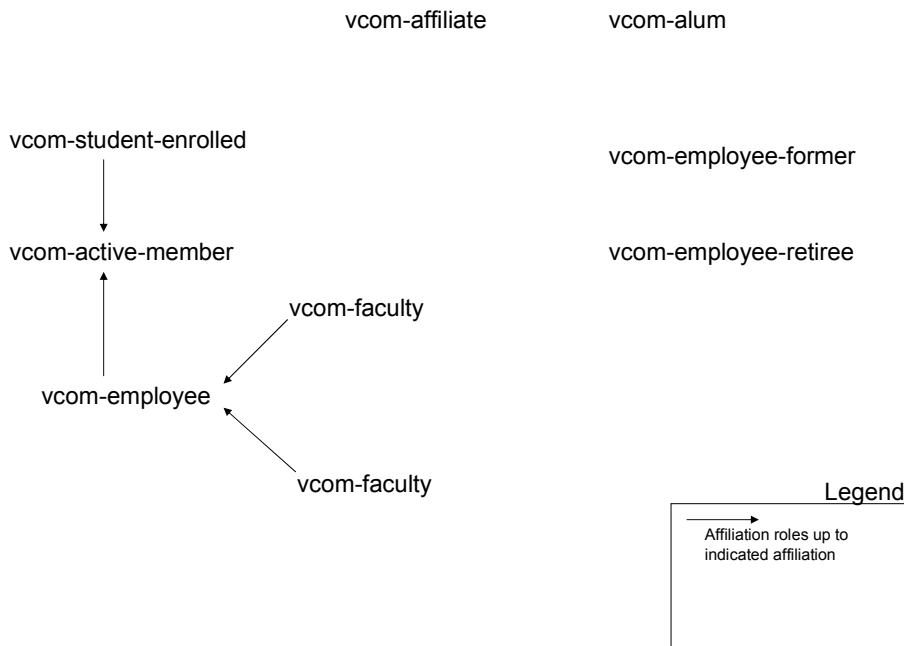


Figure 2: VCOM Affiliations

The values

VT Affiliations

- **vt-alum:** any person who has graduated from Virginia Tech or been granted the status of alumnus
- **vt-alum-friend:** anyone who has been designated as an alumni friend
- **vt-alum-parent:** anyone who has been designated as a parent of a student or alumnus
- **vt-alum-constituent:** any person who meets the requirements for vt-alum, vt-alum-friend, or vt-alum-parent
- **vt-student:** any person who has ever taken a class, or is scheduled to take a class in the future, from Virginia Tech, includes any person who is listed as a vt-student-enrolled, vt-student-wage.
- **vt-student-enrolled:** any person enrolled in a class for the current term at Virginia Tech
- **vt-student-wage:** any student who works for Virginia Tech in a wage position that does not act in the capacity of a faculty or staff member
- **vt-employee-prehire:** an individual who has been offered employment but has not yet completed all the paper work to the employment process
- **vt-employee-wage:** any person who works for Virginia Tech and is payed a waged salary who operates in a faculty or staff capacity

- **vt-employee-state:** any person who works at the university and is payed with state dollars
- **vt-employee-non-state:** any person who works at the university but is not payed with state dollars such as visting scholars
- **vt-employee-volunteer:** a person who teaches or works at Virginia Tech but is not paid for their service
- **vt-employee-former:** a person who was an employee but no longer works for Virginia Tech
- **vt-employee-retiree:** a retiree from Virginia Tech
- **vt-employee:** a person who meets the requirements for either the vt-employee-prehire, vt-employee-wage, vt-employee-state, vt-employee-non-state, or vt-employee-volunteer affiliation
- **vt-faculty:** a faculty member at Virginia Tech
- **vt-staff:** a staff member at Virginia Tech
- **vt-active-member:** a person who meets the requirements for vt-student-enrolled or vt-employee
- **vt-affiliate:** a special case person who is only temporarily associated with Virginia Tech
- **vt-affiliate-eli:** a person taking a class from the English Language Institute

VCOM Affiliations

- **vcom-alum:** any person who has graduated from the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM)
- **vcom-student-enrolled:** any person enrolled in a class for the current term at VCOM
- **vcom-employee:** any person who meets the qualifications for vcom-faculty or vcom-staff
- **vcom-employee-former:** a person who was an employee but no longer works for VCOM, includes any person who is listed as a vcom-employee-retiree
- **vcom-employee-retiree:** a retiree from VCOM
- **vcom-faculty:** a faculty member at VCOM
- **vcom-staff:** a staff member at VCOM
- **vcom-active-member:** a person who is meets the requirements for at least one of the following affiliations: vcom-student-enrolled, vcom-employee.
- **vcom-affiliate:** a special case person who is only temporarily associated with VCOM

Example Uses

The affiliations above can be used, in conjunction with other person information stored in the Enterprise Directory, to construct very powerful authorization and personalization logic in an application. Here are some examples of this:

1. MyVT checks the person a person's affiliations when they log in. The person has the following affiliations: vt-active-member, vt-student, vt-student-enrolled, vt-alum. From this information MyVT can determine that the student it authorized

- to use MyVT, since any active-member, or alum is allowed access. It can also construct a personalized view of the portal by adding elements designed for students and alumnus into the standard layout for people.
2. The Dean of Students office wants to only allow new freshmen to view a certain section of their website. Their website inspects an authenticated person's affiliations and undergraduateLevel. If the person has an affiliation of vt-student-enrolled and an undergraduateLevel of freshmen they are allowed to view the website.
 3. A department wishes to only allow only department employees to view a special section of their website. They setup the website such that you must have an affiliation of vt-employee and a department equal to their department name.