



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-4000

15 AUG 2001

FORCE MANAGEMENT
POLICY

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Civilian Academic Degree Training

The attached implements policy pursuant to Section 1121 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 for the payment of costs associated with degrees for civilian employees. This authority is the result of the Congress' interest in the Department's focus on investing in the systematic development of civilian employees in the Department of Defense.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management and Policy) memorandum, "Department of Defense (DoD) Academic Degree Training Policy," October 29, 1993, is hereby canceled. Should there be any questions, please contact Steve Ramp at (703) 697-5421.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. L. Schrader".

J. L. Schrader
Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary
Civilian Personnel Policy

Attachment:
As stated

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DIRECTOR FOR HUMAN RESOURCES, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DoD)
CIVILIAN ACADEMIC DEGREE TRAINING**

A. REFERENCES

1. Section 1121 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001, Public Law 106-398, amending 5 U.S.C. 4107
2. Chapter 41 of title 5, United States Code
3. DoD Directive 5124.7, "Office of the Chancellor for Education and Professional Development," September 27, 1999
4. Chapter 23 of title 5, United States Code
5. Section 983 of title 10, United States Code
6. Part 216 of title 32, Code of Federal Regulations
7. Section 8120 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Pub.L. 106-79)

B. BACKGROUND

1. Before this change in law (reference (1)), Federal agencies could pay for degrees only in order to address recruitment and retention problems in occupations where the agency had or anticipated a shortage of qualified personnel as stated in reference (2). Under this new law, DoD may also now pay for degrees if they are part of a planned program of civilian professional development endorsed by the Department.
2. Section 1121 made three key changes to 5 U.S.C. § 4107:
 - (a) DoD need no longer prove that payment of costs associated with obtaining an academic degree is necessary to assist in recruiting or retaining employees in occupations in which the agency has or anticipates a shortage of qualified personnel, although this authority remains available.
 - (b) Degree payments are authorized as "part of a planned, systematic, and coordinated program of professional development endorsed by the Department of Defense."
 - (c) Under this new authority, degree-granting institutions must be accredited unless accreditation standards do not exist or are not appropriate.

C. DEFINITION

A "planned, systematic, and coordinated program of professional development" is one in which the investment is planned, the program is a sequence of instruction and/or assignments that support organizational objectives, and the results are measurable in terms of individual and organizational performance.

D. POLICY

1. Heads of DoD Components and Principal Staff Assistants of the Secretary of Defense are delegated the authority to approve planned, systematic, and coordinated programs of professional development consistent with this policy, and to pay for academic degree training that is part of such approved programs. Further DoD endorsement is not required.
2. Heads of DoD Components and Principal Staff Assistants of the Secretary of Defense may redelegate this authority in writing.
3. Use of authority to pay for academic degree training shall be consistent with any collective bargaining obligations.
4. Degree payments may be made, at the Component's discretion, for any course of post-secondary education delivered through classroom, electronic, or other means, provided that it shall be administered or conducted by an institution recognized under standards implemented by a national or regional accrediting body, except in a case in which the DoD Chancellor for Education and Professional Development (reference (3)) has determined that such standards do not exist or would not be appropriate for that course.
5. Degree payments may include, at the Component's discretion, such additional expenses as supplies and equipment, application fees, registration fees, and parking fees. However, reference (1) does not allow payment for certifications or licenses.
6. Employees for whom academic degree training is paid under this policy shall sign a continued service agreement that obligates service in the Department of Defense for a period at least three times the length of the education, beginning after academic degree training is completed (reference (2)).
7. Components may not approve academic degree training under this authority for any employee occupying or seeking to qualify for appointment to any position which is exempted from the competitive service because of its confidential policy-determining, policy-making, or policy-advocating character.

8. To administer the authority delegated under this policy, programs of professional development must be consistent with the merit system principles set forth in section 2301(b) of reference (4). In addition, Components must not allow degree-granting institutions which discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, or disability to provide academic degree training to civilian employees.
9. Components shall ensure that, with the exception of a Federal grant of funds made available solely for student financial assistance or related administrative costs, no funds are provided by contract or grant to an institution of higher education (or any subelement of that institution (listed under <http://epls.arnet.gov/>)) if either the parent institution or any subelement of that institution has a policy or practice that prevents ROTC units or student ROTC participation; or prevents military recruiting on campus, or access to student directory information, consistent with references (5), (6) and (7).
10. Defense Components shall exclusively use the modern Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) for recording degree training. DCPDS will be used to evaluate academic degree training.
11. Components shall provide copies of implementing guidance to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy.