



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
Defense Contract Management Agency

INSTRUCTION

Academic Tuition Assistance

Human Capital Directorate
DCMA-HCD

DCMA-INST 615
June 26, 2014

Administratively reissued, October 27, 2014

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction:

a. Reissues DCMA Instruction (DCMA-INST) 615 (Reference (a)) to comply with DCMA-INST 501, "Policy Publications Program" (Reference (b)).

b. Provides necessary guidance for the application, approval, payment, and reimbursement of academic tuition on behalf of DCMA employees.

c. Is established in accordance with DoD Directive 5105.64, "Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA)" (Reference (c)).

2. APPLICABILITY. This Instruction applies to DCMA Headquarters, Operations, Special Programs, International, Contract Management Offices, and their subordinate offices.

3. MANAGERS' INTERNAL CONTROL PROGRAM. In accordance with DCMA-INST 710, "Managers' Internal Control Program" (Reference (d)), this Instruction is not subject to evaluation and testing.

4. RELEASABILITY – UNLIMITED. This Instruction is approved for public release.

5. PLAS CODE. 223B-Personnel Management

6. POLICY RESOURCE WEB PAGE. <https://home.dcma.mil/policy/615r>

7. EFFECTIVE DATE. By order of the Director, DCMA, this Instruction is effective June 26, 2014, and all applicable activities shall be fully compliant within 60 days from this date.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen A. Butera".

Kathleen A. Butera
Executive Director
Human Capital

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REFERENCES

- (a) DCMA-INST 615, "Academic Tuition Assistance" April 2, 2013 (hereby cancelled)
- (b) DCMA-INST 501, "Policy Publications Program" May 12, 2014
- (c) DoD Directive 5105.64, "Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA)," January 10, 2013
- (d) DCMA-INST 710, "Managers' Internal Control Program," April 21, 2014

CHAPTER 1

POLICY

1.1. POLICY. It is DCMA policy that employees may have their academic degree training and educational expenses reimbursed when taking academic courses that meet the criteria. This process is handled through DCMA Human Capital Strategic Learning Division (HCD). Academic Tuition Assistance (TA) may be provided for employees to:

1.1.1. Meet an identified agency training need; resolve an identified agency staffing problem; aid in accomplishing goals in DCMA's strategic plans; and/or serve as part of a planned, systematic, and coordinated agency employee development program linked to accomplishing the strategic goals of DCMA.

1.1.2. Meet Defense Acquisition Workforce requirements; positive education requirement for entrance into the Defense Acquisition Corps. This allows the Agency to fund courses that, even though not position specific, lead to a position with specific positive education requirements. Degrees and courses that do not lead to Defense Acquisition Corps positive education requirements must meet a specific agency training need.

1.1.3. Enhance the professional and individual development of DCMA employees. Tuition assistance may be provided to employees taking courses during off-duty hours. Academic courses must be provided by an accredited college or university that is nationally recognized and which is a regional, national, or international accrediting organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE).

CHAPTER 2

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. EMPLOYEE. DCMA employees will:

2.1.1. Be responsible for self-development, for successfully completing and applying authorized training, and for fulfilling continued service agreements. They share with DCMA the responsibility to identify training needed to improve individual and organizational performance, and identify methods to meet those needs effectively and efficiently.

2.1.2. Request TA by completing and forwarding an electronic Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training (SF 182) form without including personnel identifiable information (PII), through their supervisor and training coordinator to ensure that HCD receives the request (administratively correct) 30 to 45 days prior to class start date or payment due date (whichever occurs first). Late or incomplete requests may be returned without action, so employees should plan accordingly. If a supervisor or training coordinator is on leave or temporary duty (TDY), their assigned backup may sign in their place, but an employee is ultimately responsible for following up to make sure it is submitted to HCD on time. Requests that are returned for correction or because they are missing documentation must still meet the 30- to 45-day window. They will not be processed simply because the original incorrect request met the deadline.

2.1.3. Submit applications for TA without completing blocks 3, 4, and 5 of the SF 182 to their supervisors by e-mail. Use the following format for the subject line: TA-182-Last Name-First Name-Course Number-Course Start Date, or Date Payment is Due (whichever is sooner)-Name of School. For example, TA-182-Smith-Joan-ENG101-10Jan2008-Strayer University.

2.1.4. Follow the date format on the SF 182 (YYYY-MM-DD). Do not modify.

2.1.5. Fill out and attach the SF 182, proof of credit hours, and proof of cost per credit hour (scanned pages from the school catalog) to the e-mail and make sure the attachments are labeled "Proof of Credits" and "Cost per Credit." Label the attachment for the SF 182 as "SF 182."

2.1.6. **Not** attach additional documents.

2.2. SUPERVISOR. The Supervisor will:

2.2.1. Approve requests by signing the SF 182 electronically.

2.2.2. Review the documents for PII to ensure it is not transmitted electronically and forward the entire e-mail to their training coordinator for processing. Do not change the name of the documents or the subject line of the e-mail, as changing the name of the SF 182 prevents the electronic signature from being added to the document attached to the e-mail.

2.2.3 Return it to the employee, if disapproving the request, with the reasons for disapproval.

2.2.4. Process all requests within 48 hours of receipt.

2.3. TRAINING COORDINATOR. The Training Coordinator will:

2.3.1. Ensure the request for TA has been properly vetted by Supervisors. For employees seeking TA to participate in a course or degree program at an institution outside of the continental United States (OCONUS), the institution must be listed on the DOE's Federal School Code List. The list of eligible foreign schools begins on page 145 of the document. A copy of the document is posted on the Workforce Development web page.

2.3.2. Verify the applicant is in good standing to meet the educational requirements of their chosen academic institution. If the applicant is not in good standing, contact the Workforce Development Tuition Assistance Program Manager for further guidance. Employees applying for TA for their first course are assumed to be in good standing.

2.3.3. Advise the employee that failure to verify the school payment information in paragraph 3.3. may cause a delay in payment processing.

2.3.4. Ensure the employee filled the forms out correctly, provided the required attachments, used the correct subject line format, and obtained supervisor's approval.

2.3.5. Sign the SF 182 form electronically and forward all documentation minus PII information to the Tuition Assistance Inbox using the same e-mail subject line format; for example, TA-(182 or 1034)-Smith-Joan-ENG101-10Feb2008-Strayer. Do not change the name of the documents, changing the name of the SF 182 form prevents the electronic signature from being added to the document attached to the e-mail. Process all requests within 48 hours of receipt.

2.3.6. Forward the approved SF 182 form (once the applicant's TA is approved) to the employee and verify course completion and final grade to ensure the applicant remains in good standing.

2.3.7. Track, on a fiscal year basis, each employee's progress toward the annual limit defined in paragraph 3.2. Notify HCD when an employee has reached the limit and return all submissions after that date to the employee with no action taken.

2.4. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (HCDD). HCDD will:

2.4.1. Forward the authorized SF 182 form to the Human Capital Funds Execution and Evaluation Team (HCBF), commonly referred to as FEET, for payment and provide a copy of the approval to the applicant's training coordinator within 48 hours of receipt (when payment by credit card is authorized).

2.4.2. Approve the SF 182 form and forward it to the Training Coordinator (when reimbursement is authorized), so the employee can submit the SF 1034 Public Voucher for Purchases and Services Other Than Personnel. Upon receipt of the SF 1034 voucher, HCDD will forward it to HCBF for processing through Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) and copy the applicant's training coordinator.

2.4.3. Return the request (when TA is not authorized) to the applicant's Training Coordinator with the following statement: "Returned without action with explanation."

2.4.4. Process actions within 48 hours of receipt.

CHAPTER 3

PROCEDURES

3.1. ELIGIBILITY.

3.1.1. All *permanent* DCMA civilian employees are eligible to receive TA.

3.1.2. Military service members receive TA from their respective services.

3.1.3. Foreign National employees may receive TA for a course or courses leading to a degree directly related to their duty position, but not to achieve the positive education requirement for entrance into the Defense Acquisition Corps.

3.1.4. Interns are eligible to apply for TA as long as a course or courses do not interfere with their development training. Under no circumstance will an intern be allowed to cancel or reschedule a training event required on their development plan in order to attend a college course using TA.

3.2. FUNDING LIMITS.

3.2.1. For undergraduate studies, assistance is limited to \$250 per semester hour (\$166 per quarter hour), up to a maximum of \$4,500 per employee per fiscal year.

3.2.2. For Master's and Doctoral studies, assistance is limited to \$325 per semester hour (\$187.50 per quarter hour), up to a maximum of \$6,000 per employee per fiscal year.

3.2.3. TA is to be used to offset tuition and laboratory fees only; all other costs are the personal responsibility of the employee.

3.3. METHODS OF PAYMENT.

3.3.1. The only payment methods for TA are payment to the school using the Agency's government purchase card, or reimbursement to the applicant by SF 1034 voucher. If the employee elects payment by purchase card, he or she must personally call the school (do not rely on Websites) and verify the following prior to submitting requests for TA:

3.3.1.1. The school is accredited by an organization recognized by the DOE. A listing of recognized institutions can be found in the U.S. DOE Database of Accredited Post-secondary Institutions and Programs, as well as on the Workforce Development Web page.

3.3.1.2. The school will accept payment from DCMA via a government purchase card.

3.3.1.3. The school will provide a receipt to the purchase card holder rather than the student for the tuition payment.

3.3.1.4. The school does not use a third party (such as Pay Pal) to process purchase card payments.

3.3.1.5. The school will provide DCMA with full access to the student's financial records upon request.

3.3.1.6. The vendor telephone number for the purchase card holder to call and make payment (item 1c, Section B, SF 182 form).

3.3.2. If the school does not meet the criteria in paragraphs 3.3.1. above, payment by purchase card is not viable. Applicants can request reimbursement; however, reimbursement requests must be approved in advance of the start course date to ensure adequate funds are set aside for payment upon favorable completion of the course. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted using the SF 182 form. After the request for reimbursement is approved by HCDD, the employee can pay for the course with personal funds and then submit the SF 1034 voucher for reimbursement. Note in both cases (tuition paid up front or via reimbursement), the institution must be accredited as described within the U.S. Department of Education Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutes and Programs, <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/index.aspx>.

3.4. AUTHORIZING TA FUNDS.

3.4.1. HCDD must authorize TA before employees enter into any financial agreements or obligations with schools. HCDD is the only authorizing official for TA funds.

3.4.2. Employees should register for classes when they submit their applications for TA; however, no employee is authorized to begin taking classes until they have an approved SF 182 form signed by the Tuition Assistance Program Manager.

3.4.3. Employees who begin taking classes without authorization may be denied TA, including reimbursement.

3.4.4. HCDD must also approve any course substitutions (for classes already approved) before an employee begins taking classes.

3.4.5. By applying for TA, an applicant is agreeing to authorize DCMA full access to their school financial records. Many schools require the student's written permission to allow this, so applicants must provide this permission to their school financial office before submitting requests for TA.

3.5. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS.

3.5.1. Employees must achieve a passing grade of "C" (or its numerical equivalent) or higher for undergraduate courses, and "B" (or its numerical equivalent) or higher for Master/Doctoral level courses. If the grading system is "Pass/Fail," a "Pass" grade must be achieved.

3.5.2. Proof of grades must be submitted to the training coordinator within 30 calendar days of course completion.

3.5.3. Employees will be required to reimburse the government if they:

3.5.3.1. Fail to achieve a passing grade.

3.5.3.2. Withdraw from a class for which DCMA has incurred expenses, unless the reason(s) for the withdrawal are due to a serious (long term) illness, call to active duty in the Guard/Reserves, or a Government directed reassignment.

3.5.3.3. Change to an audit (or non-credit) status for any course for which DCMA has incurred expenses.

3.5.3.4. Any other event, not covered above, where the Government has incurred an expense.

3.5.4. DCMA will not pay for an employee to re-take a class which is not passed satisfactorily.

3.6. DUPLICATE DEGREES. Once an employee achieves a bachelor's or master's degree, TA will only be authorized for that level of degree again if the course of study is directly related to improving the employee's performance in their present position (as a result of a change in duty position), or is required to meet the positive education requirements for Defense Acquisition Corp membership.

GLOSSARY

ACRONYMS

DCMA-INST	DCMA Instruction
DOE	Department of Education
HCBF	Human Capital Funds Execution and Evaluation Team
HCD	Human Capital Strategic Learning Division
HCDD	Workforce Development
PII	personnel identifiable information
PLAS	Performance Labor Accounting System
SF	standard form
SF 182	Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training
SF 1034	Public Voucher for Purchases and Services Other Than Personal
TA	tuition assistance