

INFORMATION PAPER

MCHR-P
9 January 2012

SUBJECT: Civilian Tuition Assistance Program, Academic Degree Training, and the Student Loan Repayment Program

1. Purpose: To provide information regarding the Civilian Tuition Assistance Program, Academic Degree Training, and the Student Loan Repayment Program.

2. Facts:

a. The Civilian Tuition Assistance Program, the payment of Academic Degree Training, and the Student Loan Repayment Program, may be used by agencies: as recruitment and retention tools for hard-to-fill positions, to improve morale, and to enhance employee skills in occupations.

b. Civilian Tuition Assistance Program. Agencies may offer employees tuition assistance to attend academic courses that are job-related during non-duty hours.

1. Agencies may fund up to 100% of tuition costs for college/university courses if the course meets one of the following criteria:

- a. Supports the organization's mission
- b. Improves an employee's current job performance
- c. Supports development of an employee's core competencies
- d. Allows for expansion or enhancement of an employee's current job
- e. Enables an employee to perform needed duties outside his/her current job at the same level of responsibility
- f. Meets organizational needs

2. Employees seeking tuition assistance must submit a request to the approving official prior to the course enrollment/start date.

3. Employees whose request for tuition assistance has been approved must:

- a. Sign a Tuition Assistance Service Agreement.
- b. Successfully complete each course.

4. Tuition Assistance is funded by the employing organization's operating Budget, and paid directly to the college/university.

c. Academic Degree Training (ADT). ADT is defined as training or education with the stated objective of obtaining an academic degree.

1. The academic degree must be related to the performance of official duties and part of a planned and coordinated program or professional development, endorsed by the Army.

2. Short-term academic training (120 days or less) may be approved by managers and supervisors for short term training including individual college/university courses when the required knowledge, skills, and abilities from the classes bear a direct relationship upon the performance of duties.

3. If the purpose of the job-related training is to obtain a degree, prior written approval must be obtained from the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. Requests for academic degree training must be submitted through command channels.

d. Student Loan Repayment Program. The Student Loan Repayment Program permits agencies to repay federally insured student loans as a recruitment or retention incentive for candidates or current employees of the agency.

1. Agencies may make payments to the loan holder of up to a maximum of \$10,000 for an employee in a calendar year and a total of not more than \$60,000 for any one employee.

2. An employee receiving this benefit must sign a service agreement to remain in the service of the paying agency for a period of at least 3 years. Employees must reimburse the agency for all benefits received if he or she is separated voluntarily or separated involuntarily for misconduct, unacceptable performance, or a negative suitability determination under 5 CFR part 731. In addition, an employee must maintain an acceptable level of performance in order to continue to receive repayment benefits.

a. The Civilian Nurse Loan Repayment Program is covered by MEDCOM Reg 40-56, and is centrally funded by MEDCOM. Student Loan Repayment Program funding for all other employees is borne by the employing organization's operating budget.

b. As with any incentive, the authority to use the Civilian Tuition Assistance Program and Student Loan Repayment Program is discretionary, and not an employee entitlement.

3. References:

- a. 5 USC, Chapter 41, Subchapter 4107
- b. 5 CFR, Part 410
- c. AR 690-400, Chapter 410
- d. OPM Training Policy Handbook: Authorities and Guidelines
- e. 5 USC, Subchapter 5379
- f. 5 CFR, Part 537

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