DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
441 G STREET NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

18 May 07

CEHR-D

MEMORANDUM FOR Staff Principals, HQUSACE, Commanders/Directors, USACE Commands

SUBJECT: Policy Memorandum – Payment of Expenses to Obtain Professional Credentials

1. Reference CEHR-D memorandum dated 19 August 2003, subject as above.

2. The referenced memorandum forwarded USACE and DA policy regarding payment of expenses to obtain professional credentials for Army civilian employees. Guidance from DA stated that "payment shall be made on a reimbursable basis upon the successful receipt of the credential". This implied that reimbursement to an employee for the costs associated for sitting for an exam could not be reimbursed until the credential was awarded. DA has clarified that when an employee is working towards a credential that requires multiple exams, the employee may be reimbursed after each exam that is successfully completed. An example is the multiple part exam required of Architects prior to applying for licensure.

3. Reimbursement of expenses for professional credentials is not an entitlement and the agreement between the supervisor and employee to obtain or renew specific professional credentials must be in writing prior to the employee incurring the expense. Supervisors must ensure that the employee has successfully obtained the credential or successfully completed the exam or parts of an exam prior to approving reimbursement of costs incurred by the employee. Proper documentation (i.e. invoice and receipt of payment) is required for any expense in excess of $75.00.

4. Point of contact is Julalee Sullivan, (202) 761-8997.

Susan Duncan

SUSAN DUNCAN
Director of Human Resources

CF:
MSC Human Resources Directors

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

19 Aug 03

CEHR-D

MEMORANDUM FOR HQ STAFF PRINCIPALS, MSC/FOA/IRA COMMANDERS

SUBJECT: Policy Memorandum – Payment of Expenses to Obtain Professional Credentials

1. Reference Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) Memo, 20 June 2003, Payment of Expenses to Obtain Professional Credentials for Army Civilian Employees.

2. Effective immediately, you are hereby delegated authority to approve payment for professional credentials as described in section 5757, Title 5, United States Code. Payment will be made from the appropriation that pays the employee's salary. This authority is not retroactive to expenses incurred prior to the date of this memorandum. HQ Department of Army and DOD implementing guidance are attached. In addition, this memorandum transmits Corps implementing policy and instructions and a list of questions and answers to assist in communicating this new benefit to the workforce.

3. Please direct your questions to Ms. Pat McNabb, 202-761-8998.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Susan Duncan

Encls

SUSAN DUNCAN
Director of Human Resources

CF: MSC Human Resources Directors

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Policy and Guidelines on Payment of Expenses to Obtain Professional Credentials

References:

a. Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) Memo, 20 June 2003, Payment of Expenses to Obtain Professional Credentials for Army Civilian Employees. (Attachment 1).

b. Section 1112 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002, Public Law 107-107, amending Title 5, United States Code, Section 5757

c. Questions and Answers (Attachment 2)

Policy/Guidance:

1. These instructions must be used in conjunction with the references cited above.
2. Commanders may further delegate this authority, in writing, to managers and supervisors.
3. Payment is authorized for job-related expenses only.
4. Broad use of this authority is encouraged, with judicious use of appropriated funds. The authority will be applied fairly and consistently. Approving officials should consider use of this authority in support of Corps Human Capital goals and Campaign Plan.
5. The Individual Development Plan will be used, as a minimum, to document the agreement between employee and management to obtain or renew specific professional credentials and will serve as an authorizing document. However, subordinate commands may wish to require memoranda or other approval formats.
6. Appropriate CEFMS coding is mandatory. Reimbursement will be made through a SF1164 using the resource code is PROFCRED.
7. Appropriate coding in DCPDS is mandatory. Instructions to be sent under separate cover. *In the interim, approval authorities must maintain paper copies of approvals for future input into DCPDS.*
8. This authority covers Corps staff members in all pay categories, to include prevailing rate, general schedule, demonstration projects, SES, and ST. However, this authority may not be exercised on behalf of any excepted service Schedule C political appointees or non-career Senior Executive Service.
9. Implementation of this policy and guidance must be accomplished in accordance with all statutory and contractual labor relations obligations.

Attachments

1. USACE Q&As
2. Reference a

ATTACHMENT 1

PAYMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS – U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Q 1: Will this policy be applied uniformly Corps-wide?
A 1: The USACE commander's intent is that this authority will be implemented as broadly as possible, however it is not an entitlement. Commanders, managers and supervisors will have considerable discretion in applying the authority, depending on funding, missions, workforce composition and other local factors. The authority must be applied fairly and consistently throughout a command.

Q 2: Does this authority apply to military personnel?
A 2: No, the law only covers civilian employees.

Q 3: How should an employee obtain management approval for payment for expenses for professional credentials?
A 3: The Individual Development Plan will be used, as a minimum, to document the agreement between employee and management to obtain or renew specific professional credentials and will serve as an authorizing document. However, subordinate commands may wish to require memoranda or other approval formats. Note: Non-USACE CP-18 employees should follow their command policy.

Q 4: Is this authority only for employees in positions requiring professional licensure, registration or certification?
A 4: No. Professional certification, licensing or registration is encouraged for all USACE employees since it signifies technical competence and professional integrity, and enhances the reputation and credibility of the Corps. Hence, any employee in a career field that has a job-related license, registration or certification is eligible. However, the priority for payment of expenses will be for persons in positions where licensing, registration or certification is required by job description, regulation or law.

Q 5: What is meant by "professional"?
A 5: Professional is broadly interpreted to mean any occupation. Hence, this authority is equally applicable to engineers, attorneys and industrial hygienists as it is to electricians, chauffeurs and engineering technicians.

Q 6: What is meant by "job-related"?
A 6: "Job-related" refers to skills and abilities required to perform the duties of the currently occupied position.

Q 7: Which expenses can be reimbursed by the Government?
A 7: Fees for examination preparation courses (to the extent the training is job-related), examination fees, registration fees (initial and renewal), and travel and per diem costs to take an examination.

Q 8: What funding is used to reimburse these expenses?
A 8: Payment will be made from the appropriation that pays the employee's salary.

Q 9: What is the effective date for reimbursement to start?
A 9: Expenses for professional credentials that have been approved in advance by management and incurred on or after the date of the official policy guidance from HQUSACE can be reimbursed. Reimbursement of prior expenses is not authorized.

Q 10: How does an employee file a claim for reimbursement?
A 10: The employee must have written approval from the appropriate approving official prior to incurring the expense. Reimbursement shall be made upon the successful receipt of the credential. Reimbursement will be made through a SF1164 in CEFMS. The resource code is PROFCRED. Receipts must be provided for any expenses of $75.00 or more.

Q 11: What happens if an employee doesn't pass a licensing or certification examination?
A 11: There is no risk to the Corps since an employee is only reimbursed for expenses after successfully passing the examination.

Q 12: Can the Corps pay for more than one professional license or certification for an employee?
A 12: Generally, the Corps will pay for only one registration, license or certification that is most closely related to an employee's duties. However, management may authorize payment for more than one registration, license and/or certification if justified by mission requirements.

Q 13: Can the Government pay for continuing education required to maintain and renew a license or certification?
A 13: Yes, if the courses are job-related and will enhance the employee's performance, and if funding permits. The training must be on the employee's approved IDP.

Q 14: Will the Corps pay for renewing a license or certification even if the Corps didn't pay for the original license or certification?
A 14: Yes, provided that the license or certification is job-related and management approves reimbursement for the renewal in advance.

Q 15: Does an employee have to take annual leave to take a license or certification examination?
A 15: No. Management can grant administrative leave to take an examination.

Q 16: Can the Corps pay for individual memberships in professional organizations and societies?
A 16: No. The Department of Army policy prohibits paying *individual* membership fees in private organizations.

ATTACHMENT 2

20 June 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Payment of Expenses to Obtain Professional Credentials for Army Civilian Employees

In order to provide an incentive for recruiting and retention of civilians, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002, permits agencies to pay expenses for employees to obtain professional credentials. The Department of Defense policy authorized the military Services to capitalize on this opportunity for both appropriated and nonappropriated fund employees. This policy permits agencies to pay expenses for employees to obtain and renew professional credentials, including expenses for professional accreditation, professional licenses, certification, and examinations to obtain such credentials.

I am delegating the authority to you to approve payment for professional credentials, as described in section 5757, Title 5, United States Code. You may use this authority, funding permitted, when it benefits the systematic development and enhances the job performance of employees in support of Army mission and goals. This authority may be further delegated, in writing, to the lowest practicable level. The Defense Civilian Personnel Data System must be used to record payments made pursuant to this authority. Authorization of payment must be in complete compliance with Department of Defense policy contained at Enclosure 2 and Army requirement at Enclosure 1. Local bargaining unit obligations must be met prior to implementation.

You may contact Mr. Mike Okin at 703-325-6563 if you have questions concerning this issue.

// ORIGINAL SIGNED //

Reginald J. Brown
Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Manpower and Reserve Affairs)

Enclosures

DISTRIBUTION:
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

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SUPERINTENDENT, U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY

CF:
DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (CIVILIAN PERSONNEL POLICY)
DIRECTOR, CIVILIAN PERSONNEL OPERATIONS CENTER MANAGEMENT AGENCY
NAF PERSONNEL PROGRAM OFFICE, ARMY
FUNCTIONAL CHIEF REPRESENTATIVE:
CIVILIAN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
COMPTROLLER
SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT
SUPPLY MANAGEMENT
CONTRACTING AND ACQUISITION
QUALITY AND RELIABIILITY ASSURANCE
ENGINEERS AND SCIENTISTS (NC)
MATERIEL MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT
ENGINEERS AND SCIENTISTS (RC)
PHYSICAL SECURITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT
FUNCTIONAL CHIEF REPRESENTATIVE (Continued):
QUALITY ASSURANCE SPECIALIST (AMMUNITION SURVEILLANCE)
PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA
TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT
MANPOWER AND FORCE MANAGEMENT
HOUSING MANAGEMENT

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/CIVIL RIGHTS OFFICE
EDUCATON SERVICES
TRAINING
AMMUNITION MANAGEMENT
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT
GENERAL INTELLIGENCE
MILITARY PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

ENCLOSURE 1 TO ATTACHMENT 2

Army Requirements for Payment of Expenses to Obtain Professional Credentials

References:

a. Department of Defense (DoD) Policy – Civilian Licenses, Certifications, and Related Expenses (Enclosure 2)

b. Section 1112 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002, Public Law 107-107, amending Title 5, United States Code, Section 5757

Reference a. delegates the authority to approve payment for licenses, certification, and related expenses, with the ability to further delegate this authority in writing. The Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) delegated this authority to major Army commands, independent reporting activities, and to the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army. This authority may be further delegated in Army, in writing, to the lowest practicable level.

All authorization on payments under this authority must completely comply with DoD policy contained at Enclosure 2 and with the following Army requirements.

1. Payment of expenses under this authority is NOT an entitlement. Continued payment of expenses associated with licenses and certification is discretionary and not guaranteed.

2. Priority for payment for expenses associated with licenses and certification and related expenses will be given when it is required by appropriate local, state, or Federal Government authority to perform the work required by an employee's position.

3. This authority does not apply to payment for academic degrees or fees for membership in professional societies or associations

4. Payment shall be made on a reimbursable basis upon the successful receipt of the credential. Reimbursement will be through the completion of the SF 1164 and will be paid from the appropriation that pays the employee's salary.

5. Reimbursement of expenses covered under this authority may not be retroactive. The employee requesting reimbursement under this authority must have written approval from the appropriate approving official prior to incurring the expense.

6. Payment of certification expenses for a non-appropriated (NAF) fund employee will be from the funds used to pay other pay and benefits to that employee. If a NAF employee is paid with NAF funds exclusively, then NAF funds will be the exclusive source of funds for those payments. If a NAF employee is paid with NAF funds derived from contributions made from appropriated funds, then the contributions from appropriated funds to non-appropriated funds for that employee could include any certification expenses incurred by that employee. In every case the payments will come from NAF.

7. Functional chiefs and career field proponents may issue guidance on payments to employees in their respective career programs and career fields for career related professional credentials, professional accreditation, licenses, professional certification, and examinations to obtain such credentials.

8. To ensure oversight of this program, the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1 (DCS, G-1) will provide an annual report, effective March 2004, to the ASA (M&RA), evaluating the effectiveness of this program. This will include, at a minimum, payments made (by MACOM) by job series and grades. RNO data will also be reflected.

9. Local bargaining unit obligations must be met prior to implementation.

The point of contact for payment of expenses to obtain professional credentials is Mike Okin, 703-325-6563 or DSN 221-6563. Email is Michael.Okin@asamra.hoffman.army.mil

ENCLOSURE 2 TO ATTACHMENT 2

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DoD) POLICY
CIVILIAN LICENSES, CERTIFICATIONS, AND RELATED EXPENSES

REFERENCES

Title 5, United States Code, section 5757, enacted by section 1112 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002.

Chapter 23 of title 5, United States Code

BACKGROUND

Prior to enactment of 5 U.S.C. § 5757 (reference (1)), the Comptroller General had interpreted federal law as prohibiting payment for expenses related to licenses and certifications. There were exceptions for requirements established in law or for qualifications set by the Office of Personnel Management.

Section 5757 now permits agencies to use appropriated funds or funds otherwise available to the agency to pay for "expenses for employees [in any federal pay system] to obtain professional credentials, including expenses for professional accreditation, State-imposed and professional licenses, and professional certification; and examinations to obtain such credentials." This authority may not be exercised on behalf of any employee "occupying or seeking to qualify for appointment to any position that is excepted from the competitive service because of the confidential, policy-determining, policy-making, or policy-advocating character of the position." This authority is discretionary on the part of agencies and is not an entitlement or benefit of employment.

DEFINITIONS

Licensing is the process by which an agency of [federal, state, or local] government grants permission to an individual to engage in a given occupation upon finding that the applicant has attained the minimal degree of competency required to engage in that occupation.

Certification is recognition given to individuals who have met predetermined qualifications set by an agency of government, industry, or a profession.

DoD Components are the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Military Departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Inspector General of the Department of

Defense, the Defense agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and other organizational entities of the Department of Defense.

POLICY

Heads of DoD Components with appointing authority may approve payment for licenses, certifications, and related expenses consistent with this policy. This authority may be redelegated in writing.

The Director, Washington Headquarters Services (WHS), is delegated the authority to approve payment for licenses, certifications, and related expenses, consistent with this policy, for the Office of the Secretary of Defense and those organizations receiving civilian personnel services from WHS.

Use of this authority shall be consistent with any collective bargaining obligations.

Components may use this authority where it is beneficial to the systematic development and enhanced job performance of employees in support of Administration management objectives, Departmental national security, or Component mission imperatives and goals. Components shall develop criteria for implementation of this authority and provide those criteria to the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy.

Payment for licenses and certifications, and their subsequent renewals, may include, at the Component's discretion, such additional expenses as membership fees, fees for preparation for examinations, examinations, registration fees, and travel and per diem costs.

Components shall ensure that criteria for payment of expenses to obtain professional credentials are applied consistent with merit system principles as set forth in 5 U.S.C. § 2301. All criteria shall be reviewed at regular intervals, as established by each Component.

Unless permitted by law or regulations, Components may not establish minimum qualification requirements based upon the presence or absence of a license or certification.

Components may not use this authority to obtain licenses or certifications from organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, parental status, or disability.

Components shall use the Modern Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) for recording payments for licenses, certifications, and related expenses. The Modern DCPDS will be used to evaluate such payments.