I. Policy

   A. The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education encourages employees to obtain job related education and training. The granting of paid leave to obtain such training or education and the payment of any expenses shall be at the discretion of the employer. The extent of the employer's support for training and education shall be based on an analysis of costs and benefits to the agency, and the dollars available to support training activities.

      1. Benefits to the agency which shall be considered by the employer when assessing requests for education and training shall include but are not limited to: a) whether the education or training is necessary to enable the employee to meet agency expectations in accomplishing performance objectives; b) how likely it is the education or training will improve the employee's job performance; c) how likely it is the education or training will improve performance of potential job duties; and d) to what extent the education or training will contribute to meeting current and future agency goals and objectives.

      2. Costs to the agency which shall be considered by the employer when assessing requests for education and training include, but are not limited to: a) actual costs of education or training, including tuition, fees, transportation, and per diem; b) costs to the agency in time lost by the employee including loss of the employee's productivity, and other costs such as overtime; c) the impact on the agency budget and the dollars available for training; and d) whether the education or training may be provided in another fashion which would be more cost efficient.

      3. Consideration should be given to potential inequities which may result when education and training is provided by the agency to some, but not all, similarly situated employees. To the extent feasible, similarly situated employees should be given equal opportunities for education and training.

   B. When the employer requires an employee to attend training as a condition of employment, the agency shall pay all appropriate costs including: regular salary while on leave and overtime or compensatory time where appropriate for nonexempt employees, all tuition and fees (including required texts), and transportation and per diem where appropriate.

   C. The employer is not required to pay costs of courses required for professional certification. However, such costs may be paid where funds are available and the content of a specific course is sufficiently job-related.

   D. Leave or expenses granted for education or training not required by the employer should be in proportion to the anticipated benefits to the agency and may range from no leave and no expenses paid to paid leave and full expenses. At the discretion of the employer, an employee may be allowed leave with pay, leave without pay, or use of accumulated compensatory time or annual leave to attend training or education courses. With approval of the employee's supervisor, employees may be allowed to modify their normal work hours in order to make up lost work time due to attendance at approved education or training.
II. Procedures

A. Employees who desire employer support for education or training shall submit a request in writing to their immediate supervisor. The request shall include the nature of the training or education, the dates and times of the training or education, the cost of the training or education, the location of the training or education, the level of support desired, and a discussion of the benefits of the education or training to the agency. Supervisors shall recommend approval or disapproval of the requested training and forward the request up through the chain of command. The Commissioner of Higher Education or the Director of Guaranteed Student Loan Program (GSLP) must approve all requests for training.

B. Payment of expenses for education or training will be conditioned upon successful completion of coursework. Successful completion of educational coursework is defined as the receipt of a C grade or better; in cases of ungraded training or education successful completion shall be defined at the time the training is approved. This requirement may be waived in exceptional circumstances upon recommendation of the supervisor and approval of the Commissioner of Higher Education or Director of GSLP.

C. Payment of expenses for education or training may be conditioned upon the employee's promise to continue to work for the agency for a specified period after completion of the education or training. In such instances, a written agreement will be entered into prior to the commencement of the training or education.

D. In cases where payment of expenses for education or training is conditioned upon successful completion or a promise to continue to work for the agency for a specified period, the employee will be required to reimburse the agency for the amount of money received by the agency in the event the required conditions are not met. If reimbursement is not made, the amount due will be withheld from the employee's paycheck.

E. Employees who attend employer subsidized training or education may be required to prepare a report or make a presentation in order to share the information received through the training or education.