

POLICY 9.16 - CORRECTIONAL OFFICER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FUND

<p><b>POLICY OF</b>  <b>STATE OF DELAWARE</b>  <b>DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION</b></p>	<p><b>POLICY NUMBER</b>                  9.16</p>	<p><b>TOTAL PAGES: 6</b>                  (One attachment)</p>
	<p><b>RELATED ACA STANDARDS:</b></p>	
<p><b>CHAPTER: 9 HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT RELATIONS</b></p>	<p><b>SUBJECT: CORRECTIONAL OFFICER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FUND</b></p>	
<p><b>APPROVED BY THE COMMISSIONER AND EFFECTIVE THIS DATE:</b></p>		
<p><b>APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE</b></p>		

8/17/2016

- I. **AUTHORITY:** 11 *Del. C.* §6517; 29 *Del. C.* 8903 and 8926
- II. **PURPOSE:** To provide financial assistance to Correctional Officer series employees wishing to advance their education, as well as attract qualified candidates for employment as Correctional Officers to the Delaware Department of Correction (DOC). In accordance with 29 *Del. C.* §8926, the Department may pay for the courses in advance.
- III. **APPLICABILITY:** Correctional Officers (including all Correctional Officer series positions) up to and including the rank of Correctional Captain.
- IV. **DEFINITIONS:**
  - Eligible employees:** Employees in the Correctional Officers series as listed in III. Applicability, and approved to receive funding.
  - Correctional Officer Education Assistance Fund Committee:** The Committee appointed by the Commissioner to review and approve all applications for funding. The Correctional Officer Education Assistance Fund Committee shall consist of the Director of Human Resources, Training Academy Administrator and Chief of the Bureau of Administrative Services.
  - Education standard:** Terms and conditions for approval of assistance/funding.
  - Qualifying courses:** Courses completed at a college or university within the State and related to corrections, public safety, criminal justice, psychology, sociology or related fields. Related fields shall include any courses necessary to complete a degree program in criminal justice, corrections, public safety, psychology or sociology. Correctional officers who work in the food service, mechanical or building trades and maintenance area shall be eligible for reimbursement for classes taken that are related to their field or trade.
- V. **POLICY:** It is the policy of the Department of Correction to provide educational assistance through the Correctional Officer Education Assistance Fund. Qualified

**POLICY 9.16 - CORRECTIONAL OFFICER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FUND**

employees are eligible to receive up to 100% of the costs of qualifying course(s) when funds are allocated in the Department's budget.

**VI. PROCEDURES:**

- A.** The Department shall pay up to 100% of the qualifying courses, not including materials and associated lab fees, based on funding availability. In the event that the total number of qualified applicants exceeds the funding amount of this program, the amount paid shall be prorated between the qualifying applicants based on the availability of funding.
- B.** The total amount paid for any course(s) from all sources combined will not exceed the total cost of the course. If full funding is available to the employee from another source (Grants, G.I. Bill, etc.), resources from the Correctional Officer Education Assistance Fund will not be available.
- C.** The total funds available for tuition assistance will be divided by 40% for the fall semester, 40% for the spring semester and 20% for the summer semester. Unused funds will be carried into the subsequent semester to the extent allowed by the law.
- D.** All applications for the Correctional Officer Education Assistance Fund shall be submitted to the Director of Human Resources within the following application periods each year:
  - Fall semester application period: June 1<sup>st</sup> thru June 30<sup>th</sup>
  - Spring semester application period: October 1<sup>st</sup> thru October 31<sup>st</sup>
  - Summer semester application period: April 1<sup>st</sup> thru April 30<sup>th</sup>

Applications received prior to or after the established application period shall not be considered during that semester.

- E.** Employees shall be responsible to submit an application during each period to maintain eligibility for the Correctional Officer Education Assistance Fund.
- F.** To apply, the following conditions must met:
  1. Employee must have completed his/her initial probationary period with the Department with at least a "meets expectations" rating on annual Performance Review prior to applying for assistance;
  2. Employees shall not have an Absent Without Leave (AWOL) and/or disciplinary resulting in suspension (paper or actual) within 12 months of the date the application was received;
  3. The employee must be an Eligible Employee as set forth in Delaware Code;

**POLICY 9.16 - CORRECTIONAL OFFICER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FUND**

4. Courses must be Qualifying Course(s) as defined herein; and
5. The employee must submit a completed Correctional Officer Education Assistance Fund Application Form (attached) to the Director of Human Resources. This form requires the following supporting documentation:
  - A complete receipt/bill from the college.
  - The school's description of the proposed course. The description may be a copy from the College Catalog or a copy of syllabus from instructor.
  - Letter from college stating the degree program of the employee (if applicable).
- G.** Upon receipt of the application, the Director of Human Resources shall request the following documents from the employee's assigned facility and assemble application packages for review and consideration by the Correctional Officer Education Assistance Fund Committee:
  - A copy of the most recent employee evaluation;
  - Timecard(s) showing the previous twelve months; and
  - Any disciplinary charge letters resulting in suspension (paper or actual) during the past 12 months.
- H.** Once all application packages have been assembled, the Correctional Officer Education Assistance Fund Committee shall be convened to review all applications submitted for the Correctional Officer Education Assistance Fund.
- I.** All candidates shall be notified in writing of approval/denial and the funded amount of course tuition based on availability of funds during the semester period.
- J.** The Director of Human Resources is responsible for processing the paperwork to fund the course(s). Payment of tuition will be made directly to the school, prior to the start of the approved courses, on behalf of the Qualifying Employee after all necessary paperwork is received and approved by the Department.
- K.** Employees who receive funding for course(s) through the Correctional Officer Education Assistance Fund must maintain the minimum of a "C" grade point average or equivalent to remain eligible for the program.
- L.** The employee shall be responsible to submit documentation of grade within 30 days of course(s) completion or as requested by the Director of Human Resources.
- M.** The Department shall not change/adjust the schedules of employees based upon participation in the Correctional Officer Educational Assistance Fund. The participating employee is responsible to ensure his/her ability to complete courses based on currently assigned schedule.

POLICY 9.16 - CORRECTIONAL OFFICER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FUND

- N. The employee must remain employed by the Department through the completion of the course(s).
- O. To be eligible for subsequent semesters, Qualifying Employees must supply documentation of meeting the Education Standard for previously funded courses. If documentation is not submitted, the employee will be ineligible for any additional funds.
- P. An employee who has received funding pursuant to Title 29, *Del. C.* §8926 and is terminated by the Department for cause prior to completion of the current courses or who otherwise fails to comply with any requirement of this policy shall immediately become ineligible to receive education benefits and shall repay the Department for all tuition and fees funded previously, including interest, on a pro rata basis from the time of termination or non-compliance.
- Repayments for active employees must be recovered in full in the same calendar year in which the tuition payment occurred.
  - Repayments for terminated employees must be paid in full prior to the last pay check issued to the terminating employee.
  - If repayment is not received within 10 days of termination, a repayment notification letter shall be sent to the employee's home requesting remittance of the payment in full.
  - Terminated employees have 30 days after receiving the notification to remit payment.
  - Payments not received within 30 days shall be turned over to the Office of the Attorney General to initiate legal process, and the outstanding balance shall accrue interest at the rate of one percent (1%) per month.
- Q. If an employee voluntarily leaves the Department prior to completion of funded course(s), the employee will not be required to repay previously funded tuition but will have to repay the current quarter or semester's tuition.

POLICY 9.16 - CORRECTIONAL OFFICER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FUND

**(Attachment 1)**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION**  
**CORRECTIONAL OFFICER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FUND**  
**APPLICATION FORM**

TO: Director of Human Resources

FROM: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

COURSE TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTION:

COURSE DATES: \_\_\_\_\_

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY: \_\_\_\_\_

SOURCE OF FUNDS: Correctional Officer Education Assistance Fund

Terms and Conditions:

- Employee must have completed his/her initial probationary period with the Department with at least a “meets expectations” rating prior to applying for assistance.
- Employees who receive funding for course(s) through the Correctional Officer Education Assistance Fund must maintain a “C” grade point average or equivalent to maintain eligibility.
- Employee must submit documentation of grade within 30 days of course(s) completion or upon request from the Director of Human Resources.
- Employee must remain employed by the Department through the completion of the course(s).
- An employee who has received funding pursuant to Title 29, *Del. C.* §8926 and is terminated by the Department for cause prior to completion of the current courses or who otherwise fails to comply with any requirement of this policy shall immediately become ineligible to receive education benefits and shall repay the Department for all tuition and fees funded previously, including interest, on a pro rata basis from the time of termination or non-compliance.
- If an employee voluntarily leaves the Department prior to completion of funded courses, the employee will not be required to repay “previously” funded tuition but will have to repay the current tuition paid for the period.

I acknowledge that if I fail to meet all the terms and conditions above; and all areas as written in Department of Correction Policy 9.16, CORRECTIONAL OFFICER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FUND, I will be required to reimburse the Department of Correction all monies disbursed on my behalf for the course(s) listed. To the extent the Department is required to institute legal action to collect for such disbursements, I agree to pay all fees and costs, including attorneys’ fees and court costs, incurred by the Department in collecting the disbursements and consent to jurisdiction and venue in Delaware.

POLICY 9.16 - CORRECTIONAL OFFICER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FUND

Employee Signature/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Human Resources/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Correctional Officer Education Assistance Fund Committee Approval:**

Bureau Chief of Administrative Services/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Training Academy Administrator/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Human Resources/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved:

Disapproved:

Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_