

Tuition Assistance and Other Training Expenses

Agencies may also pay, or reimburse employees for, all or part of the necessary expenses of training, without regard to section 3324 (a) and (b) of Title 31, including among the expenses the necessary costs of (5 U.S.C. 4109(a)(2)(A-F)):

- Travel and per diem;
- Transportation of immediate family, household goods and personal effects;
- Tuition and matriculation fees;
- Library and laboratory services;
- Purchase of rental of books, materials and supplies; and
- Other services or facilities directly related to the training of the employee.

Tuition assistance programs, including individual courses, are NOT considered part of an agency's academic degree program. Within a tuition assistance program, agencies pay for individual courses/classes. Employees are not required to undergo a competitive process like the academic degree program. Supervisors should adhere to the definition of training (5 U.S.C 4101(4)) when choosing which classes/courses to pay for.

As an example, an employee is working as a financial analyst and would like to enhance his skills and knowledge. He is also pursuing a Master of Business Administration (MBA). He enrolls in two finance courses at a university to enhance his job-related knowledge and skills. The finance courses would also count towards his MBA degree. The agency may pay the employee's finance courses from the agency's training funds — it would be considered part of a tuition assistance reimbursement program and not part of the agency's academic degree program.

What is the difference between an academic degree program and a tuition assistance program?

An academic degree program is part of a planned, systemic and coordinated agency employee development program linked to accomplishing the strategic goals of the agency, meeting an identified agency training need or accomplishing goals in the strategic plan. Employees must undergo a competitive process, consistent with 5 CFR 410.308(c), before selection to an academic degree program. Agencies should only establish academic degree programs under the conditions of 5 U.S.C 4107. Agencies may NOT select employees for academic degrees for the sole purpose of providing the degree or to qualify for appointment to a position where the academic degree is a basic requirement. Tuition assistance programs, including individual courses, are NOT considered part of an agency's academic degree program. Within a tuition assistance program, agencies pay for individual courses/classes. Employees are not required to undergo a competitive process. Supervisors should adhere to the definition of training (5 U.S.C 4101(4)) when choosing which classes/courses to pay for