

POLICY
MEMORANDUM

MISSISSIPPI STATE PERSONNEL BOARD



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Policy Memorandum No. 6 - FY 2003
Revised June 18, 2002

TO: Elected Officials, Agency Directors and Personnel Officers
State Service Agencies

FROM: *J. K. Stringer, Jr.*
J. K. Stringer, Jr.
State Personnel Director

DATE: April 25, 2002

SUBJECT: **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE AWARD OF
MONETARY BENCHMARKS FOR COMPLETION OF TRAINING AND
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.**

A. **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

It is the intent of the State Personnel Board to establish policies governing the award of monetary benchmarks for completion of employee training and development programs. These policies are for the purpose of providing employees opportunities to continue acquiring professional skills, knowledge, and expertise.

These provisions shall supersede all conflicting policies and procedures for the administration of educational benchmark awards published in the Mississippi State Personnel Board Policy and Procedures Manual and any additional or replacement manuals, effective close of business June 30, 2002, and shall become an official attachment to the Mississippi State Personnel Board Policy and Procedures Manual.

The statutory increase or decrease of any salary under the salary setting authority of the State Personnel Board shall comply with the policies below, except where the Legislature may otherwise provide.

B. **COVERAGE OF THESE POLICIES**

1. These policies shall govern educational benchmark awards for:
 - a. State Service employees and



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- b. Non-state service employees excluded from the state service by Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, Section 25-9-107 (c) but subject to State Personnel Board salary setting authority as listed below:
- (1) Part-time employees [Refer, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, Section 25-9-107 (c) (xi)];
 - (2) Time-limited employees [Refer, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, Section 25-9-107 (c) (xiv)];
 - (3) Administrative officers, deputies, bureau chiefs, and directors [Refer, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, Section 25-9-107 (c) (xvi)];
 - (4) Non-state service positions of associate director, deputy directors, and bureau directors within the Department of Agriculture and Commerce [Refer, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, Section 25-9-107 (c) (xix)];
 - (5) Non-state service positions of deputy superintendents, associate superintendents and divisional directors within the State Department of Education [Refer, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, Section 37-3-13(2)]; and
 - (6) Non-state service positions of associate directors, deputy directors and bureau directors within the Mississippi Development Authority [Refer, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, Section 57-1-5(3) (c) (xi)].
2. Agencies or employees whose positions are excluded by statute from the salary setting authority of the State Personnel Board are not subject to the policies of this memorandum and are listed below:
- a. Employees serving in non-state service agencies [Refer, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, Section 25-9-107 (c) (I) (ii) (iii) (iv) (vii) (viii) (xvii)]; and
 - b. Employees serving in non-state service occupations [Refer, Mississippi Code



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of 1972, Annotated, Section 25-9-107 (c) (v) (vi) (ix) (xiii)].

3. Salaries set by statute (including the Omnibus Pay Bill) shall be implemented strictly in accordance with legislative intent [Refer, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, Sections 25-3-31, 25-3-33, and 25-3-35].
4. Employees in information technology positions are covered under Policy Memorandum No. 5 which delineates the Administrative Policies and Procedures for the Special Compensation Plan for Information Technology Classifications.

C. GENERAL POLICY PROVISIONS

The State Personnel Director shall have exclusive authority to approve/disapprove educational benchmarks for certifications, licenses, and/or degrees and determine the maximum benchmark percentage amounts awarded. To be eligible for an Educational Benchmark salary increase, an employee must complete requirements which exceed the level of minimum qualifications for education, licensure, or certification listed for the employee's present job class which the employee possessed at the time of appointment into his or her present job class.

1. General Policies
 - a. Requests for Educational Benchmark awards are made at the discretion of the agency head and are restricted to two (2) years from the date the incumbent acquired certification, completed degree requirements, or attained licensure.

In extraordinary circumstances, an agency may request the State Personnel Director waive the two (2) year restriction if failure to award a benchmark was due strictly to budgetary constraints.
 - b. No Educational Benchmark shall be awarded for degrees, licensure, certification or registration which the incumbent possessed at the time of hire.
 - c. If the employee being awarded an Educational Benchmark is currently at the



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end salary of his or her classification, or should the benchmark cause an employee's salary to exceed end salary, that portion of the benchmark exceeding end salary shall be paid as a one-time lump-sum payment.

- d. Any new hire flexibility, recruitment flexibility, or other discretionary compensation awarded for educational achievement, licensure, or certification shall not result in a subsequent award of an Educational Benchmark for the same achievement.
- e. Educational Benchmarks shall not be awarded for degrees, licensure, certifications or registrations which are required by law for performance of job duties.

2. Degrees

Increases in increments of up to five percent (5%) may be awarded to employees obtaining the following degrees: Associate's, Bachelor's [in no case shall the cumulative award for the achievement of an Associate's Degree and a Bachelor's Degree exceed five percent (5%)], Master's, Specialist and/or Doctoral.

3. Licensure/Certification/Registration

Increases of up to five percent (5%) may be awarded to employees acquiring licensure, certification, or registration directly related to their jobs.

Although an employee may be eligible to receive more than one (1) licensure, registration or certification in a twenty-four (24) month period, in no case shall an employee receive more than a five percent (5%) increase in any twenty-four (24) month period. However, in extraordinary circumstances, agencies may award more than five percent (5%) within a twenty-four (24) month period, upon approval of the State Personnel Director. Requests of this nature must fully justify in writing why it is of greater value to the agency for the employee to obtain the licensure, certification, or registration.

The program of licensure, certification, or registration must require a test. A test is defined as any pass/fail measure of applied knowledge.

4. Basic Supervisory Course (BSC);



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Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program; and
Administrative Support Certification Program

In addition to benchmarks for educational degrees and for one (1) licensure/certification/registration, employees may receive an Educational Benchmark for the Administrative Support Certification Program, Basic Supervisory Course and certification in the Certified Public Manager program.

5. Educational Benchmarks for Executive Directors

In accordance with Section 25-3-34, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, as amended, in addition to the salary provided in Section 25-3-33, any appointive state and district official and employee provided therein shall receive the award of an educational benchmark as defined in State Personnel Board rules for the possession or attainment of any of the following:

- a. The Certified Public Manager designation;
- b. A job related PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) degree which is not required as a minimum qualification of the position;
- c. A job related certification, licensure, or registration requiring the passage of an examination, which is not required as a minimum qualification of the position.
- d. No such official or employee may receive more than a total of three (3) eligible benchmarks, only one of which may be for a job related certification, licensure or registration.

D. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

The State Personnel Board will appoint, from a list of nominees submitted by the State Personnel Director, a Professional Development Review Committee (PDRC) to review agency requests for monetary benchmarks for completion of employee training and development programs. The PDRC will provide recommendations for action to the State Personnel Director. This committee shall act in an advisory capacity to the State Personnel Director and is established pursuant to the statutory authority of the State Personnel Board. The PDRC shall be established by precept and members shall be appointed in accordance



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with the procedures in Attachment 1.

Governing Policies:

1. The PDRC will review requests for benchmarks for advanced degrees, job related licensures/certifications/registrations, the Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program, Basic Supervisory Program (BSC), and Administrative Support Certification Program.
2. The PDRC will have latitude to make recommendations regarding the percentage of benchmark to be awarded based on historical data and professional discretion.
3. The PDRC will solicit input from agencies other than the requesting agency who may be affected by the benchmark prior to recommending a percentage award.
4. Agencies will be provided a policy manual regarding the submission of requests for benchmark awards to the PDRC prior to submission.
5. The PDRC will work with agencies to meet the criteria for the award of up to a five percent (5%) benchmark when possible.

Should you have any questions concerning the policies set forth in this memorandum, please contact the Office of Classification and Compensation at 359-2764.

Attachment 1

Professional Development Review Committee

- I. The Professional Development Review Committee (PDRC) is chartered by the State Personnel Board (SPB) and serves the SPB in an advisory capacity regarding the benchmarks for training and certifications for all classifications statewide under the purview of SPB.

- II. **The composition of the PDRC is as follows:**
 - A. The committee will consist of seventeen (17) members.
 - B. In order to have a quorum for a meeting of the Committee, at least nine (9) members must be present.
 - C. The State Personnel Director, or a SPB staff member designated by the State Personnel Director, will be a permanent member of the PDRC and will serve the committee as chairperson.
 - D. The other sixteen (16) members of the committee will be appointed by the State Personnel Board from a list of nominees submitted by the State Personnel Director as follows:
 1. One (1) additional staff member from SPB.
 2. Fifteen (15) Human Resources Directors, **or their designees**, from state service agencies other than SPB.

- III. **The length of term for the PDRC members is as follows:**
 - A. The initial PDRC will be established with three (3) year terms for five (5) members, two (2) year terms for five (5) members, and a one (1) year term for five (5) members. New members will be appointed for three (3) year terms as replacements are necessary for those members whose terms are complete. The sixteenth member will be an employee of the State Personnel Board as assigned by the State Personnel Director. The seventeenth member will be the State Personnel Director, or his/her designee.
 - B. If an individual on the committee leaves state government, changes agencies, or transfers out of his/her Human Resources Director position, a new member will be appointed to fill the remainder of that individual's unexpired term.

- IV. **The scope of the PDRC's review and recommendations:**
 - A. Review and make recommendations regarding relevance of certifications, licenses, and/or degrees in regard to educational benchmarks for classifications.

- B. Determine maximum benchmark percentage amounts for certifications, licenses, and/or degrees.
- C. Maintain consistency among certifications, licenses, and degrees for various classifications in regard to availability, percentages, and time frames.

V. Meeting Schedule:

- A. Agencies will submit information regarding certifications, licenses, and degrees to SPB for review by the PDRC.
- B. The PDRC will meet as necessary to establish the initial guidelines for existing certifications, licenses, and degrees and then on a quarterly basis on the first Thursday of August, November, February, and May to review and make recommendations regarding agency requests.
- C. If there are no pending requests for the committee's review, the PDRC will not meet.
- D. Ad hoc meetings of the PDRC can be called at any time at the request of the chairperson of the committee.