I. POLICY:

The Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) encourages employees to take advantage of additional educational and training opportunities that elevate and broaden job-related knowledge and skills, increase career opportunities within GDC, and/or enhance employees' overall value to the Department and the State of Georgia. To motivate and provide a monetary incentive for employees to pursue higher education, a lump sum incentive payment based on annual base salary, contingent upon availability of funds, is provided for employees who obtain an Associate, Bachelor and/or a Masters degree as described below.

II. APPLICABILITY:

All full-time employees of the Georgia Department of Corrections.

III. RELATED DIRECTIVES:

A. State Personnel Board Rule 13, Training and Education Incentive Compensation

B. GDC SOP IVO07-0001, Basic Salary Regulations

IV. DEFINITIONS:

Incentive Payment: A one-time lump sum payment that does not become a part of base salary and is given when an employee meets specified criteria.

V. ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 - Incentive Payment - Education Compensation Plan Approval and Repayment Agreement form

Attachment 2 - Incentive Payment - Education Compensation Payment Approval form

VI. PROCEDURE:
A. Employees must obtain prior approval from the Department Personnel Director, through their Appointing Authority, for their specific field of study by completing the Incentive Payment – Education Compensation Plan Approval form (Attachment 1). If prior approval is not obtained, payment will not be granted.

B. To be eligible for an incentive compensation payment, an employee must meet the following criteria:
   1. Be a full-time employee of the Department of Corrections;
   2. Have obtained an Associate’s, Bachelor’s or Master’s Degree from an accredited college or university, in a field of study required by the Department, during the employee’s current period of continuous employment with the Department.

   NOTE: An employee may receive an incentive compensation payment for each type of degree (Associate, Bachelor or Masters) obtained while employed with the Department. However, employees may only be compensated under this program for an initial degree. Those who already possess a degree and are earning a second degree of the same type (e.g. a second Bachelor’s degree) are not eligible to receive incentive compensation.

   3. Be recommended for the incentive compensation by the Appointing Authority, based on verification of the degree awarded and the determination that the degree will enable the employee to substantially improve the performance of their current job or increase their career opportunities within GDC.

   4. If a clear determination of eligibility cannot be made, the final decision will be made by the Director, Human Resources.

C. Full-time employees of the Department who obtain a degree and meet all specified criteria are eligible for the lump sum incentive compensation payment as follows:
   1. Three percent (3%) for obtaining Associate Degree
   2. Five percent (5%) for obtaining Bachelor Degree
   3. Five percent (5%) for obtaining Masters Degree
D. Employees who meet the requirements are eligible for the incentive compensation, however, payment is not automatic. The following procedures must be accomplished:

1. The Appointing Authority will complete the Incentive Payment – Education Compensation Payment form (Attachment #2), confirming the employee's eligibility for the compensation. This form and copies of document(s) used to confirm degree obtained must be submitted to the HR Programs Unit of Central Personnel Administration by the established field cut-off date for the pay period. Payment will be processed by CPA staff with no further paperwork required.

E. An incentive compensation payment will not be given before a degree is obtained. The Appointing Authority must confirm that the employee has already obtained the degree prior to approving the payment.

F. Retroactive incentive compensation payments are not permitted. Payment for degrees earned prior to the effective date of this procedure will not be given.

G. Should an employee voluntarily resign during the initial 12 months following receipt of the incentive compensation, the former employee will be required to repay a portion of the incentive compensation according to the schedule below. GDC reserves the right to recover repayments from an employee’s accrued annual leave balance. If repayment is not received upon request, further legal action may be taken.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the employee resigns within the following number of days after payment:</th>
<th>He/she must repay the following percentage of the incentive compensation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 days</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 – 90 days</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 – 180 days</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181 – 365 days</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VII. RECORD RETENTION:

Attachment 1 - Incentive Payment – Education Compensation Plan Approval and Repayment Agreement form
Retain permanently in the official and local personnel files.

Attachment 2 - Incentive Payment – Education Compensation Payment Approval form
Retain permanently in the official and local personnel files.