DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC 20330-1040

21 Jun 99

MEMORANDUM FOR MAJCOM EDUCATION DIRECTORS

FROM: HQ USAF/DPDE
1040 Air Force Pentagon
Washington DC 20330-1040

SUBJECT: Guidance on the Use of the Government Purchase Card to Pay Tuition Assistance (TA) and Non-Personal Service Contract (NPSC) Invoices

On 20 Jul 98, the Deputy Secretary of Defense signed a memo expanding the use of the government purchase card throughout the Department of Defense. This memo directed, among other initiatives, the use of the purchase card, specifically the International Merchant Purchase Authorization Card (I.M.P.A.C.), as a method of payment for training and education invoices. While the purchase card is a method of payment, it does not obviate the need for TA forms (such AF Form 1227) to authorize procurement of education.

It is important that MAJCOM and base level education and training officers coordinate with their Contracting and Financial Management counterparts using the attached guidelines to establish specific procedures. This will increase the likelihood that mission and program requirements are met, as well as successful implementation of this new process. Attached is guidance about implementation and use of the I.M.P.A.C. card program. This new guidance will be incorporated into applicable Air Force directives and instructions. This is a coordinated HQ USAF/DPDE, SAF/FMPC and SAF/AQCO policy. Points of contact are Ms. Marylee Baker, AF/DPDE, DSN 225-7586; Mr. Geoff Brougham, SAF/FMPC, DSN 225-0140; and Mrs. Barbara Odgers, SAF/AQCO, (703) 588-7029.

Patricia L C Priest

PATRICIA L. C. PRIEST, Colonel, USAF
Chief, Education and Training Division
Directorate of Personnel Force Development

Attachments:
1. Guidance
2. Comparison Chart

cc: MAJCOM/DRU/FOA/FM/LGC

EDUCATION AND TRAINING
I.M.P.A.C. Operating Procedures for Tuition Assistance and Non-Personal Services

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The **I.M.P.A.C.** Card will be used to pay TA invoices that do not exceed a consolidated total of $500K. Every effort should be made to encourage vendors to accept the purchase card as a method of payment. In the event a vendor does not accept payment via the purchase card, an AF Form 616, a Fund Cite Authorization Form, will be requested. This will allow the Education and Services Flight Chief (ESFC) to certify funds and authorize payment via DFAS on the AF Form 1227, the Authorization for Tuition Assistance Form. Invoices will be forwarded to DFAS from the ESFC through the Base Financial Services Office (FSO) for payment.

Each MAJCOM and Education Services Flight Chief (ESFC) will work with it's respective contracting and financial services communities in the development of command-wide/base-level operating procedures commensurate with their specific program requirements to ensure the successful implementation of the I.M.P.A.C. program. These procedures must ensure all the requirements in the guidance "Air Force Internal Procedures for Using the I.M.P.A.C. Card" are met. Specific tasks listed below must be included in the procedures.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

1. The ESFC or designee will accomplish all required applications to establish the required accounts. The ESFC will establish the required fund controls and submit an AF Form 4009, the Government Purchase Card Fund Cite Authorization Form, for each account required through the FSO for processing.

2. Tuition Assistance Funds will be requested using an AF Form 1227. Internal procedures will be used to monitor and track all obligations and will follow the "Air Force Internal Procedures For Using The I.M.P.A.C. Card". The AF Form 4009 commits the funds. When the bill comes in and the FSO authorizes payment through DFAS, the obligation is recorded at that point. The AF Form 1227 must be used as an approval document but not an obligating document.

3. Education Service Flights will receive school invoices after each add/drop period for the applicable school term. ESFCs, or designee, will reconcile each invoice to ensure it is accurate and complete. Discrepancies will be questioned and corrected with the school prior to payment of any invoice. In addition to maintaining the cardholder's purchase log, a record of each transaction will be maintained with each invoice. Each record of transaction must include a statement certifying the accuracy and receipt of services. Once reconciled, the ESFC, or designee, will provide the I.M.P.A.C. account number to the school. The reconciled school invoice will be forwarded to the school for submission to the bank.

4. Upon receipt of the monthly bank invoice or statement, each I.M.P.A.C. cardholder will review the statement, reconcile it to the purchase log, sign it, and forward it to the approving official.

5. The Education Center I.M.P.A.C. approving official will review each monthly billing statement, validate each cardholder's statement, certify accuracy of each statement, and forward it to the FSO within three working days of receipt. Under the Air Force pay and confirm procedures, the FSO will process the billing for payment to DFAS within 5 days of receipt.

ACCOUNTING AND REGULATORY INFORMATION

1. Effective immediately, Education Services Flights (ESF) will implement I.M.P.A.C. card procedures for paying TA and NPSC invoices. Each EFSC, or designee, will establish the appropriate I.M.P.A.C. EEIC accounts for each PEC managed.

a. PEC 89732 will have the following categories:

(1) Tuition Assistance (TA) (EEIC 55101, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09,10, 11, 12, 13)
(2) Printing, Supplies and Equipment (61950)

b. An EEIC account for PEC 88716F (EEIC 55314) is required for bases disbursing funds in support of the Command Training Requirement (CTR).

2. More than one card may be issued to the same person. EFSCs will work closely with the installation FSO to establish the most appropriate procedures and lines of accounting. Careful planning and coordination with the FSO will improve funds control and reporting. Different cards may be used to facilitate tracking and reporting expenditures. (NOTE: The number of cards should be kept at a minimum. Each account represents a transaction and a DFAS charge of $16.68 for each payment of an account.) ESFs must ensure cards are clearly identified with the applicable EEICs. Cards used to pay for TA or CTR must have the following merchant codes:

a. 8220 - Colleges, universities, junior colleges, and professional schools
b. 8241 - Correspondence schools
c. 8244 - All business/secondary schools
d. 8249 - Vocational/trade schools
e. 8299 - Default

3. The Merchant Activity Type (MAT) for training/educational institutions is #684.

CONVENIENCE CHECKS

The use of Convenience Checks will be used only in limited circumstances. For example, a convenience check may be used for direct reimbursement to a student for tuition costs incurred as a result of non-resident study (correspondence courses, etc.) over 18 weeks in length. This method of payment can also be used to correct erroneous collection of a TA debt to the government. I.M.P.A.C. checks will only be used for non-recurring purchases as a last resort when the purchase card cannot be used or accepted by the vendor. Strict compliance with the

SAF/AQC memorandum, Air Force Convenience Check Guidelines, dated 1 Mar 99, is mandatory.

NON-PERSONAL SERVICES

The use of the Government Purchase Card pertains to commercial invoice payments. Education Services/Training Flight personnel are not authorized contracting agents for the Federal government. The approval/issuance of Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPA) and Non-Personal Service Contracts (NPSC) remains the responsibility of the local Contracting Office. It is the responsibility of Education Services personnel to develop a Statement of Work (SOW) for non-personal services as authorized in AFI 36-2306 and follow local Contracting Office guidelines for the acquisition of such services.

The card may be used to pay for non-personal services; however, these services must be procured through the local contracting organization and must be on a contract, BPA, or purchase order. Local contracting procedures will be used to determine the process.

The applicable guidance, "Air Force Internal Procedures for Using I.M.P.A.C." and the USAF/AQC, Air Force Convenience Check Guidelines are available on the World Wide Web at http://www.safaq.hq.af.mil/contracting/policy/AQCO/part13/impac.shtml.

COMPARISON OF PROCEDURES

CURRENT PROCEDURES	I.M.P.A.C. PROCEDURES
1. Education Center requests AF Form 616. • Accounting Liaison processes commitment	** 1. Education Center requests AF Form 4009. • Accounting Liaison processes commitment
2. Funds obligated by AF Form 1227. Student takes AF Form 1227 to the school to enroll. • Balance monitored by internal system at Education Center • Forms/obligation request forwarded to DFAS through Accounting Liaison • DFAS posts obligation to accounting system by EEIC	** 2. Funds Payment of I.M.P.A.C. bills obligates the funds from those committed on the AF Form 4009. Student takes AF Form 1227 to the school to enroll. • Balance monitored by internal system at Education Center
3. After school's add/drop period, Education Center reviews school invoices to ensure: • Invoice itemized by TA number • Includes all students enrolled that term	* 3. After school's add/drop period, Education Center reviews school invoices to ensure: • Invoice itemized by TA number • Includes all students enrolled that term
4. Education Center reconciles invoice by verifying TA number, courses, and amounts are accurate for each student. • Discrepancies corrected with school • Withdrawals de-obligated upon verification	** 4. Education Center ensures invoice (list) is accurate for each student. • Discrepancies corrected with school • Withdrawals noted and deleted from invoice • I.M.P.A.C. account number provided to school
5. Education Center forwards invoice and supporting documents to DFAS through Accounting Liaison for payment. • DFAS inputs to payables system • Education Center Reviews open document listing for proper update, notifies accounting of any errors • Invoices not to exceed 25K	** 5. Education Center forwards I.M.P.A.C. billing statement to FSO monthly with certification that all charges are appropriate/accurate and the bill can be paid. • Invoices not to exceed 500K
6. Payment is processed in 30 days by DFAS.	** 6. Upon receipt of monthly bank statement, Education Center: • I.M.P.A.C. cardholder reviews monthly statement, reconciles it to the purchase log, sighs it and forward to approving official • Education Center I.M.P.A.C. approving official reviews monthly summary billing statement, validates each cardholder statement, certifies it proper and correct, forwards to FSO
7. Follow up by Education Center. • Institutions not paid • Partial Payments • Lost records/documents • Track Reimbursements	* 7. Follow up by Education Centers. • Institutions not paid • Partial Payments • Lost records/documents • Track Reimbursements

* -- This step did not change.
** -- This step is new and/or has differences from the current procedure.