



LEAP JAPANESE SCHOLAR DEVELOPMENT PATH

INTRODUCTION >>>

LEAP Japanese Scholar,

The purpose of this guide is to provide you a path to improving and maintaining your language proficiency. Specifically, the Department of the Air Force (DAF) is invested in your achievement and maintenance of a 3-level or higher Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT)/ Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) score in Japanese and development of interpretation and translation skills. Japanese is a DAF strategic language, critical to furthering US national security interests and key to global partnerships and interoperability particularly in the United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR). With this as the backdrop, the Development Path guide will provide recommendations on timelines, resources, and tools to improve your proficiency and utilize your skills to advance operational success with building interoperability and adversary understanding. We welcome inputs that may enhance the usefulness of this guide for the Japanese LEAP community.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS >>>

SCHOLARS WILL ACHIEVE & MAINTAIN GOOD STANDING IN LEAP BY:

- Utilizing the Language Enabled Development Resource (LEaDeR) site at <https://leader.cce.af.mil>. On an annual basis or as changes occur, update profile to include personal contact information, unit commander's contact information, and training availability/preferences. Access LEaDeR periodically to monitor DLPT/OPI scores and course expiration dates. Update instances of language experiences and utilization annually, at a minimum.
- Maintaining current DLPT/OPI scores in at least two modalities (listening/reading/speaking)
- Completing an initial and follow-on eMentor course at intervals required by LEAP policy
- Obtaining and maintaining a LEAP Level
- Completing at least one Language Intensive Training Event (LITE) or LITE equivalent
- Striving to attain and maintain a 3/3 Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) level (see <https://www.govtilr.org>) and attaining and maintaining the LEAP SEI
- Presenting a professional image of the United States when engaging with military partners

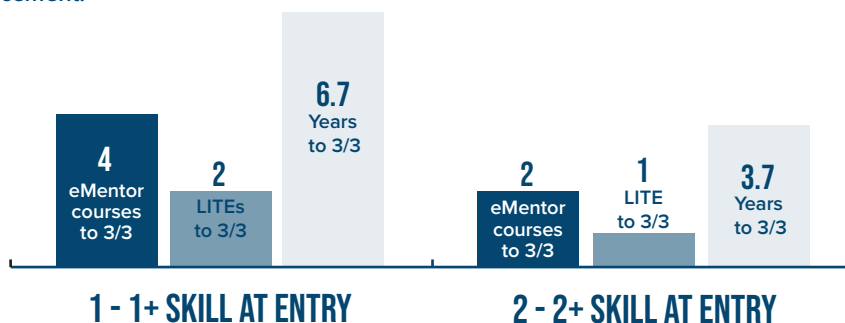
SCHOLARS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ALSO:

- Volunteer for language-focused assignments, deployments, ad hoc taskings, and Training Partnership Requests (TPR)
- Network with other language enabled service members through LEAP Chapters and other groups
- Further LEAP outreach by mentoring subordinates, sharing one's LEAP story with peers, and advocating to leadership

Refer to [DAFI 36-4005](#) Total Force Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture Program for details on how the Department of the Air Force utilizes LEAP to build and utilize language capability across the force and Language Division Policy in the resources section of [LEaDeR](#) for details on each of the processes listed above that the AFCLC employs to manage LEAP.

COHORT DEMOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY

**Path to 3/3 is based on data AFCLC gathered through successful scholar surveys, LEaDeR data, and research on language proficiency level advancement.*



(22 current Japanese LEAP Scholars that entered the program below a 3/3 and achieved a 3/3 through LEAP were analyzed.)

1 - 1+ SKILL LEVEL AT ENTRY

100 level / 40 hrs	Traditional Development eMentor
150 level / 40 hrs	Traditional Development eMentor
200 level / 4 wks	LITE-University (CONUS)
200 level / 40 hrs	Traditional Development eMentor
200 level / 3 wks	Traditional LITE (CONUS, OCONUS, or Virtual)
250 level / 40 hrs	Traditional Development eMentor



AT LEAST 3 HOURS
of self-study spread
across the week

Average time in LEAP to 3/3



For the full AFCLC LEAP Course Catalog visit
<https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC/>

2 & ABOVE SKILL LEVEL AT ENTRY



AT LEAST 3 HOURS
of self-study spread
across the week

Average time in LEAP to 3/3



200 level / 40 hrs	Traditional Development eMentor
200 level / 4 wks	LITE-University (CONUS)
250 level / 40 hrs	Traditional Development eMentor

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3/3 ATTAINED / AT ENTRY

- **300-400 level / 12 hrs** | Advanced Assessment eMentor
- **300 level / 12 hrs** | Special Project eMentor
- **400-500 level / 1-6 wks** | Advanced LITE

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OPPORTUNITIES

The Training Partnership Request (TPR) provides a means by which DoD or other governmental organizations identify LEAP scholars through a request to the AFCLC to serve in bilateral or international military education and training events, such as SSgt Gary Leach's TPR with COPE NORTH (see pg.5).

Advanced LITEs enhance and sustain the LEAP Scholar's language skills in an application setting. During an Advanced LITE, participants study alongside partner militaries or facilitate inter-cultural communication for a mobile training team or inter-cultural conference. Advanced LITEs typically last between one and six weeks, depending on the activity.

IN 2025, THE AFCLC TRACKED THE FOLLOWING ON JAPANESE LANGUAGE ENABLED AIRMEN:

- 283** LEAP Scholars studying Japanese (selected or cross-trained)
- 18** Foreign Area Officers (FAOs)
- 15** Assigned to Language Designated positions
- 137** Connected by AFCLC to exercises, mobile training, and conferences across the US and INDOPACOM AOR

SPECIAL EXPERIENCE IDENTIFIER



LEAP scholars who attain the required level of proficiency and experience are awarded the LEAP Special Experience Identifier (SEI), which serve as an indicator to force managers of those qualified for language assignments.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY BONUS (MAY QUALIFY)



LEAP scholars who earn the LEAP SEI and attain the required level of proficiency qualify for Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) pay. Please reference [DAFI 36-4005](#) for more information.

Use our courses and resources to grow your skills, network with other scholars, and find ways to get utilized! Your Japanese language skills are key to the interoperability of air and space capabilities.

NETWORK

Use the Networking tab in LEaDeR to find Japanese LEAP scholars at your base and around the world

TECH VOCAB

Review the Japanese glossary under Resources / Military and Technical Vocab and help add to our library

CHAPTERS

Get involved with your base's LEAP Chapter or charter one if no chapter exists

<https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC/LEAP-Chapter-Directory/>

MOBILE APP

Reference the Japan Field Guide, Japan Culture Course, and Asia-Pacific video content on our mobile app



App Store



Google Play

SUGGESTED SELF-STUDY TOOLS



APPS

- **WaniKani** • Tofugu
- **DuoLingo**
- **Anki**
- **Renshuu**
- **Japanese News**



MEDIA

- **DLI Resources** at <https://www.dliflc.edu/elearning>
- **Crash Course World History**
- **Conversation**
- **Podcast**
- **Italki/Private Tutor**



BOOKS

- **Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society** • Victoria Bestor
- **The Japanese Mind: Understanding Contemporary Japanese Culture** • Roger Davies
- **Ways of Forgetting, Ways of Remembering: Japan in the Modern World** • John Dower
- **Asia's New Geopolitics: Military Power and Regional Order** • Desmond Ball
- **Shigeru Mizuki's 'Showa' Graphic Novel Series** • Shigeru Mizuki
 - **Showa: A History of Japan, 1926 - 1939**
 - **Showa: A History of Japan, 1939 - 1944**
 - **Showa: A History of Japan, 1944 - 1953**
 - **Showa: A History of Japan, 1953 - 1989**
- **A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present** • Andrew Gordon
- **Rising East Asia: The Quest for Governance, Prosperity, and Security** • Chien-Pin Li

These are suggestions from LEAP Scholars and FAOs, and are not tested or endorsed by AFCLC.



CAPTAIN JOSHUA S. SANTINI

“As one learns another language and culture, one understands that those two completely intertwine with the other. Language shapes culture, culture shapes language.”

Captain Joshua S. Santini is a Spacecraft Electronic Engineer. Before his acceptance into LEAP in May 2019, Capt Santini excelled within the language program at USAFA. Capt Santini’s experience at USAFA hosting multiple international cadets inspired him to apply to LEAP prior to his graduation. In his first four years in LEAP, Capt Santini has completed two eMentor courses, one vLITE course, and has participated in a Power Immersion LITE. Capt Santini said of his time in LEAP: “these events helped hone my language ability and guarantee my skills did not degrade by the next time I went back to Japan. These classes also introduced me to more aspects of Japanese culture and history that helped me gain a better grasp of the language.” Capt Santini was able to utilize his learned skills when he was given the opportunity to brief the Japanese Chief of Staff of the Air Self-Defense Force on how the US military involvement in the launch enterprise ensures mission success.

SSGT GARY LEACH



“LEAP Scholars are exposed to regional-specific geopolitics and a very specific vernacular when participating in these Advanced LITEs. These opportunities have also prompted me to purchase a variety of texts in my target language in order to continue [to] further my Japanese language and regional studies.”

SSgt Gary Leach is an Independent Duty Medical Technician (IDMT). SSgt Leach applied and was accepted to LEAP as a 2+/2+ Japanese Scholar as soon as he was eligible in October 2020. Before becoming a LEAP Scholar, SSgt Leach self-studied Japanese language and culture, including volunteer translation and interpretation services as well as utilizing the Host Nation Language Program to earn an undergraduate certificate in Foreign Language Area Studies in Japanese. Beyond the numerous local interpretation services he has performed at his current duty station, SSgt Leach jumped right into LEAP resources and opportunities. He completed three eMentor courses, one vLITE course, and has participated in an Advanced LITE Training Partnership Request event where he provided interpretation and translation abilities for the COPE NORTH Initial Planning Conference. SSgt Leach says, “exposure to these and the repetition of these concepts have improved both my Japanese language skill set and my awareness of the region.” His language proficiency has increased to a 3/3 DLPT score which is a direct reflection of his diligence in both self-study and formal LEAP course participation.