



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR FORCE CULTURE & LANGUAGE CENTER
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE

9 January 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY (USAFA) AND AIR FORCE RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS (AFROTC)

FROM: Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC)
551 East Maxwell Blvd, Building 500
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112

SUBJECT: 2023 Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP) Cadet Selection Process

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to inform commanders, cadre, and potential applicants of the 2023 LEAP cadet selection process. Eligible candidates may submit an application during the 2023 LEAP application window, 30 January – 10 March 2023. Application packages must conform to all requirements and must be submitted on time. **This includes submission of scores from a Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) and/or Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), which may take several weeks to schedule at a Department of Defense testing facility.** The 2023 LEAP cadet selection board is scheduled for 11-12 April 2023. Candidates and their commanders will be notified of the results approximately 60 days after the board concludes.
2. LEAP is designed to deliberately develop language-enabled, cross-culturally competent service members across Air Force specialties to enhance the application of air power and fill global mission requirements. The AFCLC selects Airmen who exhibit demonstrated language ability and commitment, develops and sustains Language Regional Expertise and Culture skills throughout a career, and postures them for utilization in assignments, professional military education, and deployments. Please see the Benefits of LEAP (Attachment 1) to learn more about how this program can enhance service members' careers.
3. To become a LEAP scholar, cadets must meet specific requirements identified in the Eligibility Criteria and Application Instructions (Attachment 2) and compete via a board process. Selection to LEAP is based on an applicant's academic history, existing language proficiency, intercultural knowledge, cross-cultural experience, the potential to achieve higher levels of language proficiency, and Department of Defense language requirements.
4. For more information about LEAP, please refer to our Frequently Asked Questions (Attachment 3), visit <https://airuniversity.af.edu/afclc> or email us at afclc.leap.selection@us.af.mil.

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Chief, Language Division

3 Attachments

1. Benefits of LEAP
2. Eligibility Criteria and Application Instructions
3. Frequently Asked Questions

Attachment 1

Benefits of LEAP

#1 Language, Regional Expertise and Culture Skill Development

You are preparing to enter the U.S. Air Force. You are invested in one or more foreign languages through academic study, travel, cultural immersion, living in a foreign country, and/or living in a multi-lingual household. Why put your skills on a shelf? Instead, develop and sustain them as a LEAP scholar (see [LEAP spotlight](#) stories).

LEAP develops and sustains language and cross-cultural skills via two primary means:

eMentor: Online synchronous language courses (targeting growth in all four modalities: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, are developed by exploring culturally relevant topics), scheduled on days/times that work with your schedule, taught by gifted and engaging native-level language instructors.

Language Intensive Training Events (LITEs): Periodic temporary duty (TDY) immersions, averaging 30 days, involving classroom learning with other service members (often in a target language country) and/or via Department of Defense-sponsored bilateral and international exercises, conferences, or mobile training team events.

The Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) provides flexible scheduling for all courses, working around the LEAP scholar's schedule, training, and mission needs. The AFCLC understands that career field requirements and technical training take priority.

#2 Rewarding Assignments and TDYs

Through LEAP, the AFCLC connects service members to language-designated opportunities and events. Being a part of LEAP distinguishes the service member within their career field and opens doors to:

- Serving as a [Foreign Area Officer](#) as a Major thru Colonel at various assignments, including U.S. embassies.
- Supporting air advisory and security cooperation missions worldwide.
- Providing medical advisement and assistance through the [International Health Specialist](#) program.
- Serving as an [Air Force Office of Special Investigations](#) (AFOSI) agent.
- Teaching at an international school such as the [Inter-American Air Forces Academy](#) (IAAFA).
- Participating in a Military Personnel Exchange Program (MPEP).
- Participating in the Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture symposium at Air University.

#3 LEAP Special Experience Identifier (SEI)

LEAP scholars who attain the required level of proficiency and experience are awarded the LEAP Special Experience Identifier (SEI), which force managers use to identify qualified service members for assignments and other opportunities. In addition, LEAP SEI is used to qualify members for Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) pay. For more information, see [AFI 36-4005](#).

Attachment 2

Eligibility Criteria and Application Instructions

Who may Apply:

- USAF officer candidate seniors commissioning in the 2023 calendar year via the Air Force Reserve Officers Training Corps (AFROTC) or the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA).
- Second Lieutenants who commissioned via AFROTC during the 2022 calendar year and who will not have entered active duty as of 11 April 2023.
- Cadets applying for commissioning to the U.S. Space Force are not eligible to apply for LEAP during this application cycle.

Application Site:

USAFA and AFROTC applicants will need to download a Portable Document Format (PDF) of the application from the AFCLC website at <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC/Language-Studies/Application-Info/>. To safeguard Personal Identifying Information (PII):

- **USAFA applicants shall submit a complete application package via encrypted email to AFCLC.LEAP.Selection@us.af.mil.**
- **AFROTC applicants shall provide their complete application to a detachment staff or cadre member for submission via encrypted email to AFCLC.LEAP.Selection@us.af.mil.**

Application Format: The following documents, **saved as PDFs** are required for a complete application package:

A. Application PDF (available here)

<https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/AFCLC/documents/FY23%20LEAP%20Cadet%20Application.pdf>.

B. All college transcripts listing all courses taken and the associated grade for each course (unofficial post-secondary copies are acceptable). Certificates from foreign language schools are optional. Transcripts and certificates must be legible and upright (not upside down or sideways).

C. Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) for Listening and Reading and/or Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) for Speaking. Applicants must provide score reports for all languages in at least two of the three modalities.

- DLPT / OPI scores provide a baseline measurement for all applicants. Scores from other testing systems are not a suitable replacement for a DLPT/OPI score.
- **If the DLPT Listening and Reading tests are available for a given language, applicants must provide scores for both.**
- If either Listening or Reading tests are unavailable for a given language under the DLPT, applicants must provide an OPI score to fulfill the 2 of 3 modality requirement.
- Submission of DLPT/OPI scores is highly encouraged for all languages, which may enhance the applicant's opportunity for selection.

- **For purposes of the 2023 Board, the latest DLPT/OPI scores submitted must have been certified on or after 10 April 2021.**
- DLPT / OPI scores of 1 or higher in two modalities are required. Exceptions: Scores of 1+ or higher in two modalities are required for the following languages only:

Afrikaans	Haitian Creole	Portuguese Brazilian / European
Danish	Indonesian	Romanian
Dutch	Italian	Spanish
French	Malay	Swahili
German	Norwegian	Swedish

D. The applicant's Detachment Commander for AFROTC or Air Officer Commanding (AOC) for USAFA should submit an endorsement directly through the LEaDeR site before the closing of the application window. Endorsements will include an assessment of the applicant's professional qualities and a "push note" statement (maximum 500 characters). AFROTC Detachment Commanders without access to LEaDeR should contact the AFCLC Selection Manager for alternate means of submitting the endorsement at AFCLC.LEAP.Selection@us.af.mil.

E. Endorsement by a supervisor is optional. For the LEAP application process, the supervisor may be one of the cadet's military professors, cadre members, or training instructor.

F. Application Review: The following process will be used to track and determine application eligibility:

Step 1 – AFCLC staff will transcribe all applications submitted via email, into the LEaDeR program.

Step 2 – Once an application is loaded and submitted in LEaDeR, the system will generate a confirmation email with an endorsement invitation to the Det CC/AOC and designated supervisor based on the email inputs provided in the application.

Step 3 – The Commander/Supervisor designated by the applicant will receive an automated endorsement reminder on or after 28 Feb 2023, if required.

Step 4 – The AFCLC will review cadet applications thoroughly to determine eligibility/non-eligibility on or after 11 March 2023. Applicants and their Commanders/Supervisors will receive a status update email.

Step 5 – If you do not receive these automated updates by 31 March 2023, your application has not been processed. To ensure your application is considered, immediately contact the AFCLC at AFCLC.Lead.Selection@us.af.mil.

NOTE: Applications containing incorrectly aligned (sideways or upside down) documents will be marked "ineligible" for consideration.

Attachment 3

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

SECTION I – Program Overview

Q: What is the purpose of LEAP?

A: The purpose of LEAP is to deliberately develop language-enabled, cross-culturally competent Airmen across Air Force specialties to enhance the application of air power and fill global mission requirements. LEAP provides Airmen with the education and training required to reach desired proficiency levels with as little time away from their units and positions at a lower cost over an acceptable time period. LEAP selects willing and able Airmen, develops and sustains Language Regional Expertise and Culture (LREC) skills throughout a career, and postures them for utilization in assignments, contingencies, and deployments.

Q: Who manages LEAP?

A: The AFCLC manages LEAP for the United States Air Force, to include tracking administrative records, executing training, and performing other related tasks. The AFCLC is organized under Air University and Air War College, located at Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

Q: How and why did LEAP originate?

A: In 2005, the Office of the Secretary of Defense released the Defense Language Transformation Roadmap, which charged the services to create a bench of language-capable personnel within the Air Force. In 2009, the Air Force Senior Language Authority (SLA) directed AFCLC to initiate LEAP, a career-spanning program to develop a cadre of Airmen across all specialties with working-level foreign language proficiency and cross-cultural competency. In FY13, LEAP was designated a Program of Record.

Q: Does LEAP support Guardians?

A: The AFCLC provides language courses to U.S. Space Force members selected through the LEAP Board process. However, per Headquarters Air Force guidance, the AFCLC will not select Guardians to LEAP as part of the FY23 selection cycle.

SECTION II - Application

Q: What questions are asked in the LEAP application?

A: Applicants are required to address the following:

- What activities or initiatives have you participated in to maintain or increase your foreign language skills?
- Provide example(s) and key lessons learned from your cadet experience and/or personal life that demonstrates your cross-cultural competency.
- Describe how your LREC experiences have contributed or could contribute to the effective execution of air power.
- List any experience you have using your foreign language in locations outside the U.S., ideally an experience involving the language/culture in which you are applying to LEAP.

Q: What should I address in my application comments?

A: When writing your narrative, address how you have developed your LREC skills and how you intend to further develop and utilize those skills in the future in support of air missions. Give examples that demonstrate the use of language and cultural knowledge on an ongoing basis. Explain your motivation for enhancing your language skills, intercultural knowledge, and cross-cultural competency. Give examples of how you think understanding other nations' languages and cultures might contribute to mission success. Finally, communicate how you see your language(s) and cultural knowledge being a value-added resource to the Air Force.

Q: How important are the application documents?

A. Very important. The application package is the basis on which the board will determine an individual's candidacy. Consequently, attention to detail and compliance with directions are critically important. Both qualities reflect the kind of officer who will excel in LEAP. Board members have limited time to evaluate a candidate; errors will lead to ineligibility or lower scores.

Q: What should my USAFA / AFROTC leadership consider when writing my endorsement?

A: A quality endorsement (push note) highlights the applicant's professional qualities, standing among peers, academic record, leadership qualities, and potential for future growth and development through LEAP. The endorsement (narrative block) is limited to 500 characters.

Q: Do I have to take the DLPT/OPI to apply to the program?

A: Yes. Applicants must possess Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) and/or Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) scores in at least two modalities. For purposes of the 2023 Board, the latest DLPT/OPI scores submitted must have been certified on or after 10 April 2021. If Listening and Reading tests are available for a given language, applicants must provide scores for both. If Listening and/or Reading tests are unavailable for a given language, applicants must provide OPI scores.

Q: Why are minimum DLPT/OPI scores established?

A: Data has shown that cadets who enter LEAP with a DLPT/OPI at the 1 level or higher have a greater chance of success in reaching a 2 or higher proficiency level in accordance with Air Force requirements. Therefore, a score of 1 or higher in two modalities is required for most languages, and a 1+ or higher in two modalities is required for Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Haitian Creole, Indonesian, Italian, Malay, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Swahili, and Swedish.

Q: How do AFROTC cadets schedule a DLPT?

A: AFROTC cadets, with the assistance of detachment staff, are encouraged to plan and schedule their DLPTs (and OPIs, as appropriate) early in the academic year. AFROTC cadets may take the DLPT at any testing location supported by the U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS).

Q: Will the AFCLC consider any of the following:

- Waiver of eligibility requirements
- Extensions or submission of application documents after the deadline
- Change of endorsements after the deadline
- Post-deadline edit of one's application

- Appeals to the board's decision

A: No. The AFCLC will not consider any requests.

Q: How many times may I apply for LEAP?

A: Qualified individuals may apply as often as necessary, providing they meet the program requirements. The AFCLC also annually holds an active duty board for eligible enlisted personnel and officers.

SECTION III - Selection

Q: How many LEAP scholars are selected per year?

A: The AFCLC recruits, selects, and on-boards scholars with the objective of building and sustaining an inventory that exceeds 1% of the active duty force. The total annual selection target for officers, enlisted, and cadets is 400 LEAP scholars per year based on Air Force Senior Language Authority (SLA) guidance.

Q: Who reviews LEAP applications?

A: AFCLC staff members review applications to determine compliance with program guidance. The LEAP Selection Board consists of leaders representing a cross-section of LREC specialist, policy, and force management communities. Board members review applicant packages and assign a score based on their assessment of the applicant's attitude, aptitude, and performance record.

Q: How are applicants selected for LEAP?

A: The AFCLC develops an order of merit list based on each individual's board score and potential to fill future language requirements, including Language-Designated Positions and low-density languages on the Air Force Senior Language List (SLL). The AFCLC assigns each LEAP scholar a "Selected" or Control Language (CLANG) based on the individual's documented proficiencies and service needs. The SLA is the approval authority for LEAP Selection Board results.

Q: What languages does the board consider for the program?

A: The Board considers applicants in languages listed on the Air Force Strategic Language List (SLL). The Air Force SLL dated 1 July 2015 describes languages in which the Air Force has requirements authorized in out-years and strategic languages of interest. The Air Force SLL is based on the Department of Defense SLL and is expanded to align with validated Air Force requirements. The Air Force SLL is For Official Use Only (FOUO) and may be obtained from one's Test Control Officer at each installation's education office.

Q: If I am accepted to LEAP for one of my languages, may I train later in another language?

A: The AFCLC will consider cross-training LEAP scholars in any language listed on the Air Force SLL by meeting either of two conditions: a) the cross-training language is a low-density language, or b) the cross-training language is prevalent in the force, and the member's current or projected assignment requires the requested cross-training language.

SECTION IV - LEAP Commitment

Q: Are Air Reserve Component (ARC) members eligible to participate in LEAP?

A: No. At this time, ARC and ANG-bound cadets are not eligible for selection to LEAP. Active duty LEAP Scholars who transition to the ARC/ANG may continue to participate on a space-available basis.

Q: If selected, will the applicant be reassigned or deployed?

A: The AFCLC does not determine or have any involvement in selecting members for assignments or deployments. However, LEAP scholars may be identified by force managers based on the award of the LEAP Special Experience Identifier (SEI). The LEAP SEI identifies Airmen in the Air Force personnel system for filling language-designated positions via assignments, deployments, and TDYs.

Q: What time commitment is expected of a LEAP scholar?

A: LEAP is a volunteer program that occurs outside of normal duty requirements. Airmen are expected to complete online eMentor courses every 2-4 years, depending on their proficiency level. Courses are delivered in 40-hour and 12-hour modules, with four hours of class every week. In addition, the AFCLC offers Language Intensive Training Events (LITEs), averaging 30 days, to Airmen who qualify. To participate in a LITE a LEAP scholar must first obtain their commander's approval.