



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR UNIVERSITY (AETC)
MAXWELL AFB ALABAMA

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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: Fiscal Year (FY) 21 Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP) Cadet Selection Process

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to inform commanders, cadre, and potential applicants of the FY21 LEAP cadet selection process. Eligible candidates may submit an application during the FY21 LEAP application window, 11 January – 5 March 2021. 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 often takes several months to schedule and requires cadet access to a Department of Defense testing facility.** The FY21 LEAP cadet selection board is scheduled for 14 – 15 April 2021. Candidates and their commanders will be notified of the results approximately 60 days after the board convenes.
2. LEAP deliberately develops language-enabled, cross-culturally competent service members across General Purpose Force specialties to enhance the application of air and space power and fill global mission requirements. LEAP selects willing and able Airmen and Space Professionals who exhibit demonstrated ability and commitment, develops and sustains Language Regional Expertise and Culture skills over the course of a career, and postures them for utilization in assignments, contingencies, and deployments. Please see the Benefits of LEAP (Attachment 1) for how this program can enhance service members' careers.
3. To become a LEAP scholar, individuals must meet specific requirements identified in the Eligibility Criteria and Application Instructions **(See revised 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 and 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.Language@us.af.mil.

JORGE H. AVILA, Lt Col, USAF
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 Develop / Maintain Your Language, Regional Expertise and Culture Skills

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

LEAP develops and sustains language and cross-cultural skills in two primary ways:

eMentor: Online synchronous language courses (targeting growth in all four modalities: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which 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 Obtain 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](#) at a major agency or US embassy.
- Supporting mobility advisory and security cooperation missions.
- 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).
- Contributing through your primary Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) as the subject matter expert on language and culture.

#3 Earn the 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 is used by force managers 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:

A. USAF officer candidate seniors commissioning in the current academic year via the Air Force Reserve Officers Training Corps (AFROTC) or the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA).

B. **(Added)** Second Lieutenants who commissioned via AFROTC during the previous academic year and who will not have entered active duty as of 15 April 2021.

Application Site:

Applying through the Language Enabled Airman Development Resource (LEADeR) will require use of a Common Access Card (CAC) and Air University (AU) Portal account.

USAFA applicants must submit applications through LEADeR at <https://leader.sso.cce.af.mil>. Applicants that need to create or update their AU Portal account will be redirected to the AU Portal upon initial attempt to access the site.

(Revised) AFROTC applicants who do not have a CAC may download a Portable Document Format (PDF) of the application from the AFCLC website at <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC/Language-Studies>. To safeguard Personal Identifying Information (PII), AFROTC applicants should provide their complete application to a detachment staff or cadre member for submission via encrypted e-mail to afclc.language@us.af.mil.

Application Format: The following documents, saved as PDFs if not completed via LEADeR, are required for a complete application package:

A. Application form (online in LEADeR or 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.

C. Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) and/or Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) score report. Applicants must possess scores in at least two modalities with scores of 0+ or higher in both modalities. AFROTC cadets are highly encouraged to consult with their detachment staff early in the academic year regarding test scheduling (see FAQ on testing in Attachment 3). If Listening and Reading tests are available for a given language, applicants must provide scores for both. If Listening and/or Reading tests are not available for a given language, applicants must provide OPI scores. Submission of OPI scores is highly encouraged for all languages. For purposes of the FY21 Board, scores of 3/3 or higher must have been certified on or after 5 March 2018. Scores of 2+/2+ or lower must have been certified on or after 5 March 2019. See AFI 36-4005, Total Force Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture Program, for additional information regarding DLPT and OPI currency requirements.

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

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

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

Step 1 – 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.

Step 2 – The Commander/Supervisor designated by the applicant will receive an automated endorsement reminder on or after **1 March 2021**, if required.

Step 3 – The AFCLC will review applications to determine eligibility/non-eligibility on or after **10 March 2021**. Applicants and their Commanders/Supervisors will receive a status update email.

Step 4 – If you do not receive these automated updates by **15 March 2021**, your application has not been processed. To ensure your application is considered you must contact AFCLC at AFCLC.Language@us.af.mil immediately.

NOTE: Applications that contain one or more unreadable or 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 and Space Professionals across the General Purpose Force (GPF) specialties to enhance the application of air and space power and fill global mission requirements. LEAP provides Airmen and Space Professionals 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 and Space Professionals, develops and sustains Language Regional Expertise and Culture (LREC) skills over the course of a career, and postures them for utilization in assignments, contingencies, and deployments.

Q: Who manages LEAP?

A: The Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) manages LEAP for the United States Air Force and United States Space 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 GPF. 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.

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 / space power.
- List any experience you have using your foreign language in locations outside the US, 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 and/or space missions. Give examples that demonstrate the use of language and cultural knowledge on an on-going basis. Explain your motivation for seeking to enhance your language skills, inter-cultural knowledge, and cross-cultural competency. Give examples of how you think an understanding of other nations' languages and culture

might contribute to mission success. Communicate how you see your language(s) and cultural knowledge being a value added resource to the Air Force and/or Space 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 a limited amount of 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 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. If Listening and Reading tests are available for a given language, applicants must provide scores for both. If Listening and/or Reading tests are not available for a given language, applicants must provide OPI scores. For purposes of the FY21 Board, scores of 3/3 or higher must have been certified on or after 5 March 2018. For scores of 2+/2+ or lower, they must have been certified on or after 5 March 2019. **Note: In addition to DLPT scores, submission of an OPI score(s) is highly encouraged for all languages.**

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 US Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS). (Note: test administration may be limited due to COVID-19 or other factors.) As an alternative option, a qualified staff member at their Detachment can monitor administration of the exam. For information on obtaining access to facilitate DLPT administration, the Detachment staff may contact the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) at afpc.dsyx@us.af.mil.

Q: Will the AFCLC consider any of the following:

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

A: No. The AFCLC will not consider any of the foregoing requests or other similar requests.

Q: How many times may I apply for LEAP?

A: Qualified individuals may apply as often as necessary given they meet the program requirements.

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 one percent 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 who represent 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 record of performance.

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 as well as 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 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: Yes. Cadets commissioned into the Reserves or Guard as well as ARC Foreign Area Officers may participate in LEAP (eMentor courses space available).

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 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 and Space Professionals 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. The AFCLC offers Language Intensive Training Events (LITEs), averaging 30 days, to Airmen and Space Professionals who qualify. In order to participate in a LITE a LEAP scholar must first obtain their commander's approval.

Q: Does applying and/or being selected into LEAP influence pilot selection or base assignments?

A: No it does not. Applying or being selected into LEAP is a separate process, conducted by separate organizations and do not influence each other.