



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR UNIVERSITY (AETC)

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MEMORANDUM FOR US AIR FORCE AND US SPACE FORCE MEMBERS

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) Officer and Enlisted Selection Process

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to inform commanders and potential applicants of the FY21 LEAP Officer and Enlisted selection process. Eligible candidates may submit an application during the FY21 LEAP Officer and Enlisted application window, 3 May – 16 July 2021. Application packages must conform to all requirements and must be submitted on time. **This includes submission of the results of a Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) and/or Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), which often takes several months to schedule at a Department of Defense testing facility.** The FY21 LEAP Enlisted selection board is scheduled for 17 – 18 August 2021, and the FY21 LEAP Officer selection board is scheduled for 19 – 20 August 2021. Approximately 60 days after the board convenes, the Air Force Personnel Center will release results via a Personnel Services Delivery Memorandum.
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 Guardians, develops and sustains their 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) on how this program can enhance service members' careers.
3. To become a LEAP scholar, applicants 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 job performance, 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.

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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 - Develop / Maintain Your Language, Regional Expertise and Culture Skills

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](#) series).

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 explore culturally relevant topics and are 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](#) (Regular Air Force or Reserve).
- Serving as a [Bilateral Affairs Officer](#) in the Air National Guard (ANG) in support of a State Partnership Program (SPP).
- 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 schools such as the [Inter-American Air Forces Academy](#) (IAAFA) and [United States Air Force Academy](#).
- 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, the LEAP SEI is used to qualify LEAP scholars for Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) pay. For more information, see [AFI 36-4005](#).

Attachment 2

Eligibility Criteria and Application Instructions

Eligibility Factors	Enlisted	Officer
Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular Air Force (RegAF) ▪ Regular Space Force 	
Ranks	SrA thru CMSgt	All ranks
Minimum Time in Service (TIS)	4 years as of 17 August 2021	No minimum TIS
Maximum TIS or Commissioned Service	Applicants who have more than 16 years TIS as of 17 August 2021 will be considered on a case-by-case basis	Applicants who have more than 16 years commissioned service as of 19 August 2021 will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
Remaining TIS	Applicants must indicate their intent to remain in the service for an additional two years or more	
Technical Training	Completion of 5-Skill Level and Career Field Education and Training Plan (CFETP) requirements	N/A
AFSC Exclusions	1N3 and 1A8X1 career fields	16F - Foreign Area Officers

Application Site: Applying through the Language Enabled Airman Development Resource (LEADeR) will require use of a Common Access Card (CAC) and Air Force (AF) Portal account. Applicants must submit applications through LEADeR at <https://leader.sso.cce.af.mil>. Applicants that need to create or update their AF Portal account will be redirected to the AF Portal upon initial access attempt.

Application Format: An application submitted via LEADeR with the following attachments is required:

- A. Single Unit Retrieval Format (SURF).
- B. Three most recent, signed / finalized Performance Reports (OPR/EPR), Training Reports, or combination.
- C. College transcripts listing all courses taken and the associated grade for each course (unofficial post-secondary copies are acceptable). If an officer or enlisted member has degrees listed on their SURF, they must provide the transcripts for those degrees. Certificates from foreign language schools are optional.
- D. DLPT and / or OPI score report. Applicants must possess scores in at least two modalities with scores of 0+ or higher in both 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. **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 16 July 2018. Scores of 2+/2+ or lower must have been certified on or after 16 July 2019.
- E. An endorsement from Commander / Director is **mandatory** for all applicants and should be submitted directly through the online application site, prior to the closing of the application window. Endorsement, submitted through the online application site by a supervisor, is optional but highly encouraged for all applicants.

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 Guardians 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 Guardians 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 Guardians, 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: Can United States Space Force Guardians apply to LEAP?

A: Yes, enlisted and officer Guardians assigned to the United States Space Force may apply.

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 military experiences 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 having 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 or enlisted member 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 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 16 July 2018. For scores of 2+/2+ or lower, they must have been certified on or after 16 July 2019. Contact your Base Education Office for more information related to scheduling DLPT/OPI testing.

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

A: The AFCLC highly encourages all applicants to take the OPI, but this is not mandatory unless the applicant is using the OPI as one of their two modalities.

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: Are Air Reserve Components (ARC) members eligible to apply for LEAP?

A: No. For FY21 boards, ARC members will not be allowed to apply via the LEAP board.

Q: Why are Foreign Area Officers (FAO) and Bilateral Affairs Officers (BAO) ineligible to apply for LEAP?

A: Regular Air Force (RegAF) FAOs receive development and sustainment training through the Secretary of the Air Force for International Affairs. RegAF / Reserve FAOs and Guard BAOs are already eligible to participate in AFCLC eMentor courses alongside LEAP scholars, on a space available basis.

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 RegAF. The total annual selection target for officers, enlisted, and cadets is approximately 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 application and program guidance. The LEAP Selection Board consists of leaders who represent a cross-section of LREC specialist, policy, and force management communities. Board members assess 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: What time commitment is expected of a LEAP scholar?

A: LEAP is a volunteer program that occurs outside of normal duty requirements. Airmen and Guardians are expected to complete online eMentor courses every 2-4 years, depending on their proficiency level. Courses are delivered in 48-hour and 16-hour modules, with four hours of class every week when courses are in session. The AFCLC offers Language Intensive Training Events (LITEs), averaging 30 days, to Airmen and Guardians who qualify. In order to participate in a LITE a LEAP scholar must first obtain their commander's approval. When scheduling LITEs and eMentor, the AFCLC will work around the member's mandatory training, flying schedule, and/or mission ops tempo.

Q: May RegAF LEAP scholars who transition to the ARC participate in LEAP?

A: Yes. Regular Air Force members who transition to ARC units can continue in LEAP as ARC LEAP.

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 and Guardians in their respective personnel systems for filling language-designated positions via assignments, deployments, and TDYs.

Q: Do LEAP scholars receive Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB)?

The LEAP Special Experience Identifier (SEI) is used to qualify LEAP scholars for Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB). To qualify for the LEAP SEI, scholars must obtain a LEAP Level 3 and complete at least one LITE. Once a LEAP scholar is eligible for the LEAP SEI, AFCLC will generate an AF Form 2096 awarding the SEI. The member will then complete a second AF Form 2096 signed by their Commander requesting FLPB. The member will take both AF Form 2096s to their Test Control Officer (TCO) at the education office to initiate their FLPB. For more information on FLPB, please see [AFI 36-4005](#).