

Section I: LEAP Background and Languages

What is the mission of LEAP?

(LEAP) is a career-spanning program to sustain, enhance and posture for utilization the existing language skills of general purpose forces (GPF) USAF Airmen. The objective of LEAP is to develop cross-culturally competent leaders across all Air Force specialties with working level foreign language proficiency per AFI 36-4001, Air Force Language, Regional Expertise and Culture Program.

Who manages LEAP?

The Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) manages LEAP for the Air Force, to include tracking administrative records, executing training, and other related tasks. While multiple offices within the AFCLC provide support for LEAP, the program is primarily managed by a small staff within the Language Division. The AFCLC is under Air University, located at Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

How and why did LEAP originate?

In 2005, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) released the "Defense Language Transformation Roadmap," which charged the services to create a "bench" of language capable personnel within the general purpose force (GPF). The Secretary of the Air Force then emphasized the need to "increase the language inventory from within the force." In October 2009, the LEAP concept was approved, and a pilot program was initiated. In 2010, the U.S. House Armed Services Committee lauded LEAP as the "model" program for the services, and one of the CORONA conference Top Taskers that summer was to institutionalize the program. In the fall of 2010, LEAP sustainment and enhancement training began through eMentor distance learning. Finally, in the fall of 2011, LEAP was accepted as a Program of Record in the FY13-17 POM-FY13 was the first year the program was funded to support LITE immersion training, in addition to a continued eMentor program. The program is still only available for active duty Airmen, but is expected to extend to the Total Force over time.

Where can I find announcements and news for the LEAP Program?

Most information regarding LEAP can be found on the LEAP webpage and in the FAQ. Announcements for upcoming selection boards and new or additional programs will be made through other Air Force public affairs channels, such as the Air Force Portal, base papers, etc.

What languages are included in the LEAP program?

Please refer to the current AF Strategic Language List (SLL). The Air Force SLL is based on the DoD SLL, and is adjusted accordingly to align with validated Air Force requirements. It is used for Total Force in administering testing, training, recruiting and retention incentive programs. The foundational guidance for the DoD SLL is in DoDD 5160.41E, Defense Language Program. As both the AF and DoD SLL are For Official Use Only, customers should contact their local Test Control Officer to receive the most updated copy.

Section II: LEAP Eligibility and Application

What is the first step?

If you've read through all the information on the LEAP webpage, meet the qualifications and think that LEAP is right for you; you will need to submit an application package for the next selection board. LEAP is no longer accepting applications year-round. Specific application windows and board dates will be posted on the AFCLC public website at <http://culture.af.mil/leap>. Applicants must be on an Air Force domain computer with a CAC-reader and an Air University (AU) Portal account to submit a LEAP application. Detailed eligibility requirements and a link to the LEAP application site are available on the AF Portal in the Education/Training/Force Development quick links section.

How can I find the status of my application?

You can check the status of your application by clicking the status tab on the LEAP application site. A link to the LEAP application site is available on the AF Portal in the Education/Training/Force Development quick links section.

When are LEAP Selection Boards held?

Selection Boards are typically held twice a year, once in the spring (Cadet) and once in the fall (Active Duty); all boards are contingent upon Air Force needs and requirements. To find the date of the next board, please check the <http://culture.af.mil/leap>.

What are the qualifications to be eligible for LEAP?

Eligibility requirements are posted on the LEAP webpage at <http://culture.af.mil/leap> and on the LEAP application site. They are subject to Air force requirements and may change.

Are Reservists eligible?

Currently, Air Reserve Component (ARC) members are not eligible for LEAP, but the program is expected to extend to the Total Force in the future, depending on Air Force needs and requirements.

Are enlisted members eligible?

Both active duty officers and enlisted members are eligible to apply for LEAP provided they meet the eligibility requirements.

Are Medical and Legal Airmen eligible for this program?

Medical and Legal personnel are eligible for LEAP.

I don't have performance reports, can I apply?

Only those individuals early their careers that have not yet had the opportunity to receive performance reports are permitted to apply without them; for example, cadets, or those who are in Initial Skills Training (IST) and/or Undergraduate Pilot Training (UPT), or those have not had a full year at their first duty station. For these individuals only, absence of performance reports will not negatively affect their applications. If these individuals have any documentation to support their performance as students, such as training reports, we request they include them

with their application documents. All other individuals are expected to provide performance reports as per the application instructions.

I don't currently speak a language, but would really like to learn. Can I get that training through LEAP?

No. The LEAP program is designed to leverage the skills of Airmen who already have some level of proficiency in a language. It is not an avenue for initial language training (except in cross training situations where there is an AF need and availability of a training slot). NOTE: Applicants must first be accepted into LEAP with a qualifying ability in at least one foreign language before retraining is considered.

I currently have a 3/3/3 or better in a Prevalent in the Force Language, what options are available for me through LEAP?

Depending on what language you speak and what the current Air Force requirements are, you may be able to continue on in your current language. Or you may be asked to cross train into another language if you have shown an aptitude for language learning (via DLAB scores or academic achievement).

I am a native speaker of a foreign language, am I eligible for the LEAP Program?

Yes, if you obtain a qualifying proficiency score on the DLPT. Also, if you show an aptitude for language learning (demonstrated through DLAB scores or academic achievement) you may be asked to learn another language.

Do I have to take the DLPT to qualify for the program? What about the DLAB?

A current DLPT or OPI score (for languages where a DLPT is not available) is required for application and board consideration. It will be very difficult to assess your language proficiency and aptitude against other applicants without this information and failure to provide language proficiency score reports may result in the rejection of your application if your proficiency can not be verified otherwise.

How many times may I apply for the LEAP program?

LEAP is a voluntary program. Provided you meet all the indicated requirements, you may apply as many times as you would like.

If I am accepted to LEAP for a particular language, do I have to reapply to participate in another language?

No. Once you are selected for LEAP participation in a particular language you are "in" the program and need not reapply. It is expected that candidates disclose all their languages capabilities during the application process; typically having DLPT or OPI scores in more than one language increases a candidate's chance of being selected.

When is the best time to apply for the LEAP program?

As soon as possible, the longer you wait to pursue your language skills, the tougher it will be!

Section III: LEAP TRAINING

If I am accepted into the LEAP Program, what is expected of me?

The purpose of LEAP is to sustain, enhance and posture for utilization the existing language skills of general purpose forces (GPF) USAF Airmen. To do this, participants in the LEAP program must be able to satisfy two objectives THROUGHOUT their careers. They must be able to: 1) Satisfactorily complete the appropriate eMentor course based on current proficiency level per LEAP eMentor policy guidelines 2) Participate in Language Intensive Training Events (LITEs) of up to 6 weeks depending on program availability and training needs.

What is the eMentor program?

The eMentor program is LEAP's computer-based online language training. eMentor classes are similar to distance learning courses in that you will be paired with a highly qualified language instructor (the "eMentor") and a cohort of LEAP participants within your language for online language learning sessions.

Am I required to attend eMentor classes?

Participation in these sessions is a mandatory part of the program. However, the eMentor vendor will work with you as much as possible to accommodate your schedule. We also understand that there may be certain times you cannot attend due to duties or personal priorities.

When will the online training take place? Will there be multiple opportunities for me to participate in it?

The training will be run by the eMentors, and it will be up to your specific eMentor to determine the schedule. They try to work around participant availability as much as possible.

How often do I have to attend eMentor classes?

All LEAP participants will attend eMentor classes at certain times throughout their careers. For those with ILR scores 2+/2+/2 or below will be vectored to 48-hour eMentor courses. For those with ILR scores of 3/3/2+ and above will be vectored to 16-hour eMentor assessment courses.

Can I attend eMentor classes during duty hours?

Currently, participation in the eMentor program does not take precedence over your military duties. While many commanders and supervisors are supportive of your participation in this program, some may not be able to allow you to participate in sessions during duty hours. It is highly recommended that you coordinate with your supervisors and/or commanders to see if this can be arranged if you wish to participate during duty hours.

What is a Language Intensive Training Event (LITE)?

A LITE is typically a 4-6 week program that will be devoted to your language training. There are multiple programs you may be participating in both in and outside of classroom training.

What is the objective of a LITE?

LITEs are one of two training vehicles designed to help you enhance and sustain your language and culture skills for the Air Force. All LITEs share this primary objective, and quantitatively, we expect to see DLPT and OPI scores improve (or, if already 3/3/2 or above, at least stay the

same) as a result of LITEs. OCONUS LITEs have an additional objective of cultural immersion-gaining an appreciation for how the "locals" live in a particular culture/region, with insight across several of the AFCLC's recognized 12 domains of culture. OCONUS Advanced LITEs have further objectives of *applying* those language/culture skills and, depending on the type of advanced program, gaining exposure to U.S. host nation dynamics, intra-country processes/programs, and/or inter-country relationships among various players in the region.

Where will my LITE take place?

It can be conducted at a variety of locations to include CONUS and OCONUS training facilities, schools, industry or foreign military installations. Your placement will be dependent on a variety of factors to include language proficiency, time available, available opportunities, etc.

What is a CONUS LITE?

CONUS LITEs typically consist of attending daily language classes, 20-30 hours/week, for approximately four weeks. The courses may be through DLI, a university, or a commercial vendor.

What is an OCONUS Traditional LITE?

OCONUS-Traditional LITEs typically consist of attending daily language classes, 20-30 hours/week, for approximately four weeks in a foreign country. Typically, lodging consists of a home stay with a local host family to enhance the cultural immersion aspect of the LITE and to encourage 24/7 language practice; however, in some cases (i.e. certain security environments), students stay in dorm-style housing, apartments, or hotels.

What is an OCONUS Advanced LITE?

When possible, OCONUS-Advanced LITE opportunities are tailored to the LEAP participant. As a result, these LITEs vary widely, depending on location, language, and individual participant skills/background/ contacts/career path. Some OCONUS-Advanced LITEs are in the form of Area Studies Immersions, which are group language discussion forums and cultural workshops, 20-30 hours/week, for approximately four weeks. Other OCONUS-Advanced LITEs consist of working with a U.S. embassy/consulate and/or Defense Attaché Office (DAO), or through an Exercise in a foreign country where a particular foreign language is practiced.

Who funds LITEs?

LITEs are funded by the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC).

Does the LEAP Program offer any language products to help with my language training (e.g. Rosetta Stone, BYKI, etc.)?

If you are selected for the LEAP program, you will participate in online training called the eMentor program to help you maintain your language skills. This may include the use of supplemental software training methods. However, AFCLC does not fund or advocate the use of software tools as the primary method for language learning. There are a number of tools and websites that may assist in your language training, some of which you can find at the following website: <http://culture.af.mil/language-resources.html>.

Section IV: LEAP and my career

How will participation in the LEAP program affect my career?

As a participant in LEAP, you will be required to take the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT). This will enable career functional managers and assignments officers to identify the language capabilities that make you especially suitable for Language Designated Positions (LDPs) or other needs within your career field or within Air Force. For example, if a Civil Engineer with proficiency in Spanish is needed for a deployment to Honduras, all Civil Engineers with a DLPT score for Spanish proficiency could be given consideration for that deployment. The same is true for special duty and permanent change of station language coded billets. As a participant in LEAP you may be given an SEI. This indicates that you have additional training not only in the language but in the Culture and Region as well.

Is there any additional commitment incurred for participating in the LEAP program?

Participation in LEAP does not incur an additional active duty service commitment (ADSC) although some specialized opportunities or training events that may be part of the LEAP experience for certain participants can incur an ADSC.

Will participation in the LEAP program make me more vulnerable for deployments?

Potentially, if you are given an SEI as a result your participation in LEAP for a language needed by the Air Force, you may be considered first for deployments. However, AFPC will use a number of factors to determine member's suitability for a particular deployment including the date of return from last deployment and the availability of other assets. The benefit of LEAP for the Air Force is that by developing Airmen to grow in their language skills, there will be a ready pool of language-proficient professionals available when needed to accomplish a mission thereby lowering the probability of non-voluntary and repeat deployments.

Does Participation in LEAP require a change to my Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC)?

No, the idea behind LEAP is not to develop linguists, but to develop Airmen from an array of career fields that have strong language capabilities.

Section V: SEI and FLPB

What is a Special Experience Identifier (SEI)?

SEIs are established to identify special experience and training not otherwise identified within the Personnel Data System. SEIs complement the assignment process, but are not substitutes for AFSCs, CEM codes, prefixes, suffixes, SDIs, RIs, or professional specialty course codes. They are established when identifying experience or training as critical to the assignment match, or force management needs, and no other identification is appropriate or available. SEIs can be used to rapidly identify an already experienced resource to meet unique circumstances, contingency requirements, or management needs. They provide a means to track individuals and identify positions requiring or providing unique experience or training that would otherwise be lost.

What is the LEAP SEI?

LEAP SEIs will be added to participants' official Military Personnel Data System (MilPDS)

records to signify an existing foreign language capability, a willingness to use that skill in the execution of the AF mission and satisfactory participation in LEAP activities. The LEAP SEI is “YHQ” for officers and “106” for enlisted.

Will there be any additional Active Duty Service Commitment (ADSC) incurred for being awarded the LEAP SEI?

The LEAP SEI award does not incur any ADSC

I just got selected to LEAP, when can my Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) start and how do I get it started?

Just being in LEAP does not give you FLPB. In fact, the LEAP office does nothing to start or stop FLPB; that is done through your TCO. However, having a LEAP SEI may allow you to be awarded FLPB. For information on FLPB, including how the LEAP SEI may allow you to earn FLPB, please review AFI 36-4002 and speak with your TCO.

Section VI: Commanders and Supervisors

Does allowing my Airman to apply for LEAP mean that they will be taken away from my unit if selected?

Generally speaking, no. LEAP does not require any change in a participant's status or duty station to be part of the program. It is a volunteer program that occurs outside of normal duty requirements. However, the LITEs do require the participant to go TDY for 4-6 weeks every 3 to 4 years funded by the AFCLC. We make an effort to plan a participant's LITE in conjunction with a PCS to minimize disruption in Ops Tempo, and in order to participate in a LITE, a LEAP participant must first obtain Commander approval. If a Commander does not approve participation in the LITE, the participant will not attend. One potential does exist for participation in LEAP to require absence from a duty station. If a participant earns the LEAP SEI and possesses skills in a language needed by the Air Force, he or she may be considered first for deployments. Of course, AFPC will use a number of factors to determine member's suitability for a particular deployment including the date of return from last deployment and the availability of other assets.

Will my Airman have to attend eMentor classes during duty hours?

No. Currently, participation in the eMentor program does not take precedence over military duties. While many commanders and supervisors are supportive of participation in this program, as a commander or supervisor you may not be able to allow your Airman to participate in sessions during duty hours. Although some participants are able to take part in eMentor cohorts during duty or lunch hours, most LEAP participants attend eMentor sessions on their own time.