



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

12 May 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACTIVE DUTY MEMBERS

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) Officer and Enlisted Selection Process

**NOTE: Supersedes memo dated 27 February 2023. Changes are highlighted in Attachment 3.**

1. Highly motivated and capable Active Duty Airmen are encouraged to apply to LEAP. Eligible candidates may submit an online application during the period of 1 May 2023 thru 14 July 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 often takes several months to schedule at a Department of Defense testing facility. The 2023 enlisted selection board is scheduled for 15-16 August 2023, and the officer selection board will take place 17-18 August 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 through strengthened partnerships, interoperability, and adversary understanding. The AFCLC selects Airmen who exhibit demonstrated language ability and commitment, develops and sustains their Language Regional Expertise and Culture (LREC) skills throughout a career and postures them for utilization in assignments, professional military education and deployments. LEAP provides Airmen with the education and training required to reach desired proficiency levels and utilize their skills with little time away from their units and positions.

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.leap.selection@us.af.mil](mailto:afclc.leap.selection@us.af.mil).

CHRISTOPHER R. CHESSER, GS-13, DAF  
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

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 and events, 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.
- Serving as an enlisted international affairs specialist.
- 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.

For examples of how Airmen have contributed to air and space missions through LEAP, see spotlight stories at <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC>

#### #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, the 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

Eligibility Factors	Enlisted	Officers
Components	Regular Air Force (RegAF)	Regular Air Force (RegAF)
Ranks	SrA thru CMSgt	All ranks
Minimum Time in Service (TIS)	4 years as of 14 August 2023	N/A
Maximum TIS or Commissioned Service	Applicants who have more than 10 years from their Total Active Federal Military Service Date (TAFMSD) as of 14 August 2023 will be considered on a case-by-case basis	Applicants who have more than 10 years commissioned service as of 14 August 2023 will be considered on a case-by-case basis
Remaining TIS	Applicants must not have a pending separation or retirement	Applicants must not have a pending separation or retirement
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/16Z Foreign Area Officers

#### Application Site:

Applying through the Language Enabled Development Resource (LEaDeR) will require the use of a Common Access Card (CAC) and Air Force (AF) Portal account. Applicants who need to create or update their AF Portal account will be redirected to the AF Portal upon initial access attempt. An application submitted via LEaDeR at <https://leader.sso.cce.af.mil> with the following is required:

- a. Responses to four areas (200 words maximum per area) that address one's LREC skill development and their plan for further development and utilization of those skills in support of air and/or space missions
- b. Single Unit Retrieval Format (SURF). Can be retrieved from the Assignment Management System (AMS). The Career Data Brief, located from virtual MPF will not be accepted.
- c. DLPT and/or OPI score report. The Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) is the benchmark for measuring language proficiency and can be taken at a nearby Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) or nearest military installation testing center. The SURF and OPIc will not be accepted as a replacement for the DLPT and OPI respectively. **The following guidelines have been updated for 2023, so applicants are advised to read carefully:**
  1. If listening and/or 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.
  2. All Arabic language applicants must provide test scores for Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Applicants are also highly encouraged to provide test scores in an Arabic dialect.
  3. For purposes of the 2023 Board, the latest DLPT/OPI scores submitted must have been certified on or after 14 August 2021.

4. 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. Three most recent, signed Performance Reports (OPR/EPR), Training Reports or combination of.
- e. 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.
- f. Commander endorsement. The unit commander, director, or civilian equivalent for each applicant must complete an endorsement form which assesses the applicant's professional qualities, standing among peers, academic record, leadership qualities and potential for future growth and development through LEAP. The narrative block is limited to 500 characters.
- g. Supervisor endorsement. The immediate supervisor (if different from the commander) of each applicant must complete an endorsement form which assesses the applicant's professional qualities, standing among peers, academic record, leadership qualities and potential for future growth and development through LEAP. The narrative block is limited to 500 characters.

**Failure to heed and acknowledge the information below will result in the application being marked ineligible for the board**

**Applicants must convert PDF documents to a non-XFA PDF format to ensure cross-browser/LEaDeR software compatibility.**

Please see the tutorial link below:

<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/872053/leap-application-upload-tutorial>

**As previously stated, failure to perform these steps may result in the application being marked ineligible due to non-viewable documents. Additionally, applications that contain 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 in 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 board and select Guardians to LEAP as part of the FY23 and FY24 selection cycles.

**Q: Why are Guardians ineligible to compete for LEAP in FY23?**

A: The United States Space Force (USSF) is assessing their service's language requirements. A foreign language enabled Guardian program partnership with the AFCLC is under consideration. Updates will be provided in FY24.

#### SECTION II - Application

**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 Airman who will excel in LEAP. Board members have limited time to evaluate a candidate; errors will lead to ineligibility or lower scores.

**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 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 support of air missions. Give examples that demonstrate your 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: 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. Applicants are encouraged to discuss their reasons for wanting to participate in LEAP with their commander and supervisor. Some commanders and supervisors may not be fully aware how LEAP furthers Airmen's careers and supports air and space missions. They also may not be fully aware of the importance of their endorsement in determining the applicant's board score.

**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 that address at least two modalities (listening, reading, and or speaking). For purposes of the 2023 Board, the latest DLPT/OPI scores submitted must have been certified on or after 14 August 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 under the DLPT, applicants must provide an additional OPI score to fulfill the 2 of 3 modality requirement.

**Q: Why are minimum DLPT/OPI scores established?**

A: Data has shown that Airmen 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 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 holds an annual cadet board for eligible AFROTC and USAFA cadets.

**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: Should I submit scores in multiple languages?**

A: Applicants are encouraged to take the DLPT/OPI and submit scores in multiple languages, which may help the AFCLC align their language abilities with more than one requirement.

**Q: Can I apply to the program if I haven't received a performance report?**

A: Yes. Applicants are required to submit the most recent three performance reports in their records. It is understood that some applicants may not have received performance reports due to their limited TIS. For these specific instances, applicants are encouraged to provide what they can. If applicants have Training Reports or prior service performance reports to validate and support their job or academic performance they should provide them with the application.

**SECTION III - Selection**

**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 Strategic 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 applications that contain languages listed on the Air Force Strategic Language List. 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 Force Reserve Command (AFRC) and Air National Guard (ANG) members eligible to participate in LEAP?**

A: No. Currently only Regular Air Force members are allowed to apply. However, RegAF LEAP scholars who later transition to the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) or Air National Guard (ANG), may participate in LEAP (eMentor courses space available) and AFRC Foreign Area Officers may participate in eMentor courses.

**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.