



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

6 December 2024

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: 2025 Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP) Cadet Selection Process

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to inform commanders, cadre, and potential applicants of the 2025 LEAP cadet selection process. Eligible candidates may submit an application during the 2025 LEAP application window, 13 January – 3 March 2025. 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 2025 LEAP cadet selection board is scheduled for 8-9 April 2025. 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 General Purpose Force specialties to enhance the application of air and space power and fill global mission requirements. The AFCLC selects Airmen and Guardians who exhibit demonstrated language ability and commitment, develops and sustains Language, Regional, Expertise, and Culture (LREC) 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.

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

You are preparing to enter the U.S. Air Force or Space 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, the LEAP SEI is used to qualify members for Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) pay. For more information, see [DAFI 36-4005](#).

Attachment 2

Eligibility Criteria and Application Instructions

Who may Apply:

- USAF/USSF officer candidate seniors commissioning in the 2025 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 2024 calendar year and who will not have entered active duty as of 8 April 2024.

Application Site:

- USAFA applicants must submit applications through LEaDeR at <https://leader.cce.af.mil>. Applicants who need to create or update their AU Portal account will be redirected to the AU Portal upon initial attempt to access the site.
- 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): 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. All college transcripts listing all courses taken and the associated grade for each course (unofficial post-secondary copies are acceptable).

B. Certificates from foreign language schools are optional.

C. Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) for Listening and Reading and/or Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) for Speaking. Language tests and score reports can be taken/obtained from your nearest Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS) or military testing location. 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 DLPT scores for both.**
- If either Listening or Reading tests are unavailable for a given language under the DLPT, applicants must provide an OPI (Speaking) 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 2025 Board, the latest DLPT/OPI scores submitted must have been certified on or after 9 April 2023.**
- 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's 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 – The Selection Manager will transcribe AFROTC applications submitted via email, into the LEaDeR program. USAFA applicants will submit applications through LEaDeR at <https://leader.cce.af.mil>.

Step 2 – Once an application is fully completed 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 February 2025, if required.

Step 4 – The AFCLC will review cadet applications thoroughly to determine eligibility/non-eligibility on or after 7 March 2025. Applicants and their Commanders/Supervisors will receive a status update email.

Step 5 – If you do not receive these automated updates by 28 March 2025, your application has not been processed. To check on the status of your application, please 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 service members across Air and Space Force specialties to enhance the application of air and space power in order to 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 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 Airmen 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.

SECTION II - Application

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 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, and 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 in the application will lead to ineligibility or lower board 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 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 a DLPT and/or OPI scores in at least two modalities. For purposes of the 2025 Board, the latest DLPT/OPI scores submitted must have been certified on or after 9 April 2023. 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 in order to fulfill the 2 of 3 modality requirement.

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 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 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-inventory languages. 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 all languages for which the DOD administers DLPTs and/or OPIs.

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: Selection is currently limited to Air National Guard members from certain intelligence fields (1A8X2/1NX/14N). However, regular Air Force LEAP scholars who later transition to the reserves or guard may participate in LEAP (eMentor courses space available) and Reserve 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 and Guardians 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 Guardians 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 and Guardians who qualify. To participate in a LITE a LEAP scholar must first obtain their commander's approval.