# Foreign Service Personnel Management Manual
## Subchapter 800-2
### Foreign Commercial Officer Foreign Language Training

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Section 1. Purpose and Authority

The purpose of this document is to establish the U.S. Department of Commerce (Department) policies and procedures for foreign language training of Foreign Service employees of the Department. These policies are based on: 1) the premise that foreign language skills are vital to the effective accomplishment of the goals and objectives of the U.S. Department of Commerce; and 2) the requirements of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended (Public Law 96-465, October 17, 1980).

.01 General Provisions of the Act

These policies and procedures apply to all American Foreign Service employees of the Department.

a. Section 101(a) (4) of the Act states that "The members of the Foreign Service should be representative of the American people, aware of the principles and history of the United States and informed of current concerns and trends in American life, knowledgeable of the affairs, cultures, and languages of other countries, and available to serve in assignments, throughout the world…"

1. Section 101(b) (7) establishes the Senior Foreign Service, and stipulates that it be characterized by foreign language expertise.
2. Section 701 requires that the Foreign Service Institute, to the extent practicable, provide training to meet the needs of all the foreign affairs agencies.

b. Section 702 of the Act requires the establishment of “foreign language proficiency requirements for members of the Foreign Service (Service) who are to be assigned abroad in order that [Foreign Service] posts abroad will be staffed by individuals having useful knowledge of the language or dialect common to the country where the post is located…”

c. Section 702 also requires foreign affairs agencies to provide “…appropriate language training of members of the Service by the Foreign Service Institute or otherwise…”

.02 Delegated Authorities

a. The Director General, CS /US&FCS, utilizing the Foreign Service personnel system, in consultation with OFSHC and others as appropriate, authorized to use the Foreign Service personnel system, may authorize foreign language training in accordance with the provisions of
this policy and the delegations of authority contained in Departmental Administrative Order (DAO) 202-250 – *Delegation of Authority for Human Resources Management*.

b. In accordance with DAO 202-250, and with various Memoranda of Understanding, the Commercial Service Human Capital (OFSHC), U.S. Commercial Service (CS), International Trade Administration (ITA), shall provide personnel training services to all Department of Commerce operating units utilizing the Foreign Service personnel system.

**.03 Special Incentives**

a. Section 704(b) (3) of the Act authorizes special monetary or other incentives to encourage members of the Service to acquire or retain proficiency in designated foreign languages.

b. Subchapter 800-2 of this Manual addresses the Department of Commerce Language Incentive Program. It describes the special monetary incentives that encourage members of the Foreign Service to acquire or retain proficiency in designated foreign languages.

c. Subchapter 800-2 of this Manual addresses the Department of Commerce Language Maintenance Incentive Program. It describes the special monetary incentives that encourage members of the Foreign Service to maintain proficiency in designated foreign languages.

**Section 2. General Policies**

**.01 Assignment to Language Designated Positions**

In only rare cases will an officer be assigned to a language designated position (LDP) without having attained the required language proficiency test score. For the needs of the Service an exception may be granted by the Director General, or equivalent official authorized to utilize the Foreign Service personnel system, pursuant to a written request for a waiver of the language requirement as described in Section 2.06 below.

**.02 Availability of Language Training**

The Director General, CS/US&FCS, utilizing the Foreign Service personnel system, in consultation with OFSHC and others as appropriate, can curtail or terminate all training programs discussed in this policy, with no prejudice to the employee, when required by budget constraints or the needs of the Service.

**.03. Language Training Funding Only Authorized in Metropolitan Washington, DC Area**

OFSHC will authorize funding for language training only in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Possible exceptions will be authorized only on a case-by-case basis by the Director OFSHC.
.04 Language Training Requirements for Untenured Officers

a. Untenured officers will receive training to meet language proficiency requirements for commissioning and tenure before proceeding to their first language-designated assignment.

b. Untenured officers, with or without a qualifying proficiency score, are required to language train in Washington, D.C., for their first language-designated assignment.

c. Untenured officers who do not bring a current (reference Section 6.06 of this policy), and requisite, (meaning as required in the officer’s reassignment orders) language proficiency score upon entering the Service, will receive language training to attain the language requirements for commissioning and tenure.

d. When necessary, untenured officers will receive training to meet language proficiency requirements for commissioning and tenure prior to their first language-designated assignment.

e. Career candidates will begin and complete their language training with one vendor. Any exception to this policy must be requested through and authorized by the Director of OFSHC.

.05 Language Training for Limited or Non-Career Officers

a. Personnel appointed on non-career limited appointments, referred to as Limited Officers, are expected to be fully qualified at the time of appointment for the position, including any required language proficiency. Full time language training to acquire basic or required proficiency will not be provided by OFSHC for limited officers unless so specified in the most current and signed Memorandum of Understanding with relevant Department of Commerce agencies.

.06 Responsibilities of OFSHC and Officers

a. OFSHC is responsible for providing employees with suitable language proficiency training opportunities, at U. S. Government expense, to acquire designated level of language proficiency.

b. Employees are responsible for achieving and maintaining the required foreign language proficiency for each posting.

.07 Language Training Waivers

a. To assume a language designated position, the officer must attain the required level of proficiency as stated in the reassignment orders unless a written waiver is granted by the Director General. In the rare case when a waiver is granted, the employee must enroll in part-time language training at post, and must achieve the required proficiency level within six months of arrival at post. For those granted a waiver, language proficiency tests will be administered by phone with a certified-tester every three-months. The waiver may be extended an additional six months to a maximum of one year to attain the required proficiency score.
b. To make application for a waiver, an officer must have attained a proficiency score from OFSHC’s authorized vendor for testing, of only one-half point less than the required score in either reading or speaking but not both. If a language-designated position requires a 3/Reading and 3/Speaking and the officer attained a proficiency score of 2+/Reading and 2+/Speaking, the officer would not be eligible to request a waiver but would return to or remain in Washington, DC, to take additional language training and retest to attain the required 3/3 prior to proceeding to post.

.08 Continued Service Agreements

To finalize funding authorization for enrollment in language training, an officer must sign and return a completed Continued Service Agreement (CSA) to OFSHC. The original CSA will be prepared by OFSHC and provided to the officer as part of his enrollment process. A sample CSA may be referenced in Appendix D.

Section 3. Language Requirements

.01 Commissioning and Tenure

a. To be eligible for Commissioning and Tenure, career candidates must demonstrate, through an authorized test, that the required proficiency in a Departmental language was attained during the candidate’s probationary period. A Departmental language is either:

1. The national language of a country in which OFSHC utilizing the Foreign Service personnel system maintains a presence, and proficiency in that language has been determined to be necessary for the successful performance in the officer’s position (i.e., a language designated position); or,

2. The national language of a country in which the OFSHC utilizing the Foreign Service personnel system maintains a presence, but proficiency in that language, while useful, is not necessary for successful performance in the officer’s position.

b. Language proficiency for career candidates must be tested in accordance with Section 6 of this policy.

.02 Language Designated Positions (LDPs)

a. Every three years, the Director General of OFSHC, shall identify those positions that require foreign language proficiency, and designate the required proficiency level for each. At the same time, a review of the languages eligible for incentive pay and maintenance incentive pay will be identified.

b. Only those positions where proficiency is essential, rather than merely helpful or convenient, will be language designated. Positions that require proficiency in a “world” language (Romance or Germanic) normally are designated S3/R3, in terms of the Foreign Service
Institute/Interagency Language Roundtable (FSI/ILR) proficiency levels. Positions requiring proficiency in a “complex” language range from S2/R1 to S3/R3, in terms of the FSI/ILR proficiency levels. Definitions of the various levels of language proficiencies may be referenced in Appendix A.

c. For bidding purposes a proficiency score valid for an additional 18 months may be used to bid on LDPS, including year-out bids.

d. An on-cycle officer wishing to bid on a LDP, for which he or she holds certified, expired proficiency in the relevant language, must re-test to achieve a current score as a prerequisite to bidding on the target position.

.03 Language Incentive Program

a. Purpose: The Language Incentive Program, provided for in FSPMM Subchapter 800-1, is designed to encourage officers to attain and maintain proficiency in certain complex languages for which the Department has a recurring requirement. FSPMM Subchapter 800-1 and Languages Eligible for Incentive Pay may be referenced in Appendix B.

b. Policy: To qualify for incentive payment, the certified test score must have been achieved within one year prior to arrival at the incentive language post, or during the assignment. Arrangements for all language proficiency testing shall be authorized by OFSHC.

c. Payment Levels: Incentive payments are authorized for proficiency in an incentive language while serving in a country where the primary language is the incentive language according to the following percentages:

- 2S/2R proficiency score provides incentive pay at 5 percent of base salary
- 3S/3R proficiency score provides incentive pay at 10 percent of base salary
- 4S/4R and above proficiency score provides incentive pay at 15 percent of base salary

d. Incentive Payments: Terms and conditions for authorizing incentive payments are as follows:

1. Eligible recipients will receive payment at the beginning of the first full pay period after the recipient's arrival at post.
2. If qualifying proficiency score is attained after arrival at post, payment will be effective at the beginning of the first full pay period after the qualifying test is taken.
3. If a language is added to the incentive language list, payment for eligible recipients will begin at the beginning of the first full pay period after the language is added to the list.
4. Language incentive payments end on the last day of the pay period during which the recipient departs the post.
5. No incentive payments will be authorized until OFSHC receives official certification of the employee's qualified test score.
e. Incentive Pay and Limited Appointments: Personnel appointed on non-career limited appointments, referred to as Limited Officers, are not eligible to receive incentive pay unless so specified in the most current and signed Memorandum of Understanding.

**.04 Language Maintenance Incentive Program**

a. Purpose: The Language Maintenance Incentive Program is designed to maintain a cadre of language-proficient officers who previously attained a required or desired proficiency level and thereby would reduce the number of training hours required to attain the LDP for reassignment and to provide incentives to officers who independently retain their language proficiency levels.

b. Eligibility Requirements

1. Eligible languages are: Arabic, Chinese Mandarin, Czech, Greek, Hungarian, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Servo-Croatian, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese; reference Appendix B.

2. Proficiency requirements: Officers who maintain the required score or better in an eligible language by testing no earlier than within one year of the five-year anniversary date of their original certification are eligible for monetary recognition;

3. An officer must be serving in an assignment where the eligible language, in which the officer seeks maintenance incentive pay, is not spoken;

4. An officer must not have been authorized funding prior to the last four years for training in that language in which maintenance incentive pay is sought;

5. An officer may receive maintenance incentive only once in a four-year cycle per language; and,

6. The officer must obtain authorized testing certification through OFSHC.

The dollar amounts for maintenance incentive pay according to proficiency levels are as follows:

- 2/2 and above equal $3,500
- 3/3 and above equal $4,500
- 4/4 and above equal $5,500*

*Since 5/5 scores, as well as 4/4 scores twice certified within two or more years apart, are valid indefinitely, once an individual has achieved either, he or she is no longer eligible for a language maintenance incentive payment.
Section 4. Language Proficiency Testing, Scores, and Recordkeeping

.01 Purpose

Accurate measure of foreign language proficiency is required for making assignments, determining compliance with LDP requirements; identifying training needs; determining commissioning and tenure; and, authorizing incentive pay and maintenance incentive pay.

.02 Proficiency Test Administration

a. Foreign language proficiency tests will be administered in Washington, D.C. If an officer is not located in Washington, D.C. the test will be conducted electronically at a date and time convenient to the officer. Officers located in the Washington, D.C. area may arrange with OFSHC to schedule an in-person, walk-in test. Only officers enrolled at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) will test at FSI. Funding for the cost of a proficiency test will be authorized by OFSHC. Travel costs to Washington, D.C. for proficiency testing purposes are not authorized.

.03 Proficiency Test Authorization

a. A proficiency test may not be authorized within six months of a previous test in the same language, except to:

1. achieve required proficiency for commissioning and tenure;
2. record a possible maximum proficiency when an officer is transferred directly to another post, which is outside his or her current language-designated area; or
3. assess language proficiency for an ongoing assignment.

b. A proficiency test may not be authorized prior to six months of a previous test to authorize eligibility for a language incentive payment or an increase in an incentive payment.

c. A final proficiency test must be taken immediately upon completion of the authorized number of training hours. A final proficiency test may be taken prior to the completion of all authorized training hours only with the concurrence of the vendor’s training supervisor and the language training program manager in OFSHC.

d. Within 14 days of completing the final proficiency test an officer must proceed directly to post. Approval to proceed to post beyond 14 days for any extenuating circumstance will be requested of and approved by the Director OFSHC on a case-by-case basis.

.04 Foreign Service Institute/Interagency Language Roundtable (FSI/ILR) Definitions of Proficiency Scores

a. The Department uses the scales and definitions developed by the Foreign Service Institute/Interagency Language Roundtable (FSI/ILR). Speaking proficiencies range from S0 (S
Zero) to S5, and reading proficiencies range from R0 (R Zero) to R5. Short versions of the
definitions are presented in Appendix A. Additional information regarding the scales is provided
in the Foreign Affairs Manual, Volume 3, Section 872.2.

b. FSI/ILR also assigns intermediate scores, or half points, which are indicated by a plus (+) sign.

.05 Split Proficiency Scores

a. Split scores occur when an officer attains the required level of proficiency in either the
speaking or reading portion of the proficiency test but not both; and, upon retesting, attains the
required level in the portion of the test that was previously deficient, while scoring below the
required proficiency level in the previously passed portion.

b. Split scores also may occur when an employee attains the required level of proficiency in
either the speaking or reading portion of the proficiency test but not both; and, upon retesting
only in the deficient portion, attains the required level (only in the previously deficient portion),
and then combines the two proficiency scores to attain the required reading and speaking score.

c. In both cases, the combination of two split scores will credit the officer with meeting the
language proficiency requirement if the tests are no more than 6 months apart.

d. Combined split scores are not accepted for establishing eligibility for incentive language
payments or maintenance incentive payments.

e. Combined split scores are not accepted for bidding purposes.

.06 Validity Duration of Proficiency Test Score

Proficiency test scores are valid according to the following timelines:

a. S5/R5:  valid indefinitely for all purposes.

b. S4/R4 or better:  two scores two or more years apart, are valid indefinitely for assignment to
LDPs that require scores of S3/R3 or lower.

c. S3/R3 or lower: valid for 5 years for commissioning and tenure and assignment to LDPs.

d. Combined split scores: valid for 5 years, based on the date of the older of the two tests.

e. Scores eligible for incentive language payments:  any proficiency level below S5/R5 (or two
scores of 4/4 two or more years apart) if established by proficiency testing one year or less
before arrival at post.

f. Proficiency test date validity for career candidates is determined as of the date tenure is
recommended by the Commissioning and Tenure Board.
g. Proficiency test date validity for employees assigned to language-designated-positions is determined according to the date of proficiency certification.

.07 Recordkeeping

OFSHC maintains records of language training enrollments and proficiency scores. Proficiency scores are used to certify assignments to language designated positions, evaluate training needs and are provided to the annual selection boards to evaluate an officer’s achievements during language training. Individual proficiency test results and mid-term and end-of-training reports are filed in the officer’s electronic Official Performance File to provide to the annual selection boards.

Section 5. Training Location and Types

01. Officers will Language Train in Washington, D.C.

Officers reassigned to a language designated position will language train in metropolitan Washington, D.C. from among several designated vendors located within the area. Language training at FSI is authorized only on a case by case basis.

02. Types of Language Training for Officers

a. Familiarization and Short Term (FAST)

FAST courses are offered to officers in many languages and are designed to introduce him or her to the language of a host country and provide basic linguistic skills as may be necessary to fill an Urgent Vacant Post. Spouses may be authorized enrollment in a FAST course for up to a maximum of 150 hours per posting, as funds may permit.

b. Distance-Learning Language Training

If the needs of the Service cannot provide sufficient time for an officer to enroll in full-time language training prior to proceeding to post for reassignment, the officer may be authorized short-term or FAST language training in Washington, D.C. or an online, interactive version of FAST provided via internet at post.

c. Post Language Program (PLP)

1. The Post Language Program (PLP) is designed to help officers improve and maintain their proficiency in the host country language while at post. The program is also open to Adult Eligible Family Members (EFMs) (spouses) of officers who have accompanied the officer to post.
2. PLP funding is authorized only on the hourly rate for group training. PLP is managed through the Department of State, and is administered by the Post Language Officer (PLO) to maintain effective and economical instruction. PLP instruction is authorized only on a group basis. PLP is not funded on the hourly rate for one-on-one training. Budget constraints do not allow OFSHC to authorize funding for one-on-one training at post. Exceptions to this policy of group training must be approved by OFSHC on a case-by-case basis as funding permits.

3. Officers and EFMs may request authorization of PLP group-funding to study the language of their post of assignment from arrival at post up until one year prior to their departure from post. The total number of training hours per posting may not exceed 150 hours. These stipulations are intended to manage cost and to ensure officers’ best use of the training benefits during their current assignment.

4. Under no circumstance may any individual begin language training prior to receiving funding authorization from their regional office. OFSHC cannot authorize funds retroactively.

d. Immersion Training

Intermittently, FSI offers immersion training in several languages. To qualify for participation in immersion training an officer enrolled at FSI must have attained a minimum proficiency certification of 2+/2+, assuming a 3/3 required score, prior to requesting OFSHC authorization for participation. OFSHC will maintain authorization of funding for FSI weekly tuition costs during the immersion training. All other costs related to an officer’s participation in immersion training are the responsibility of the officer.

Section 6. Assignment and Duration of Language Training

.01 Selections and Assignment

a. Funding authorization for enrollment in language training must be approved by the Director, OFSHC, based on the officer's re-assignment orders and the needs of the Service.

b. Departmental policy stipulates that career candidates must meet the language proficiency requirements before they can be tenured. A career candidate’s language training to meet language probation requirements will be curtailed or postponed only when there is no reasonable alternative for meeting urgent staffing needs of the Service or when there is no reasonable expectation that the officer will achieve the required level. Any curtailment or postponement must be recommended by the OFSHC Director and approved by the Director General, utilizing the Foreign Service personnel system, based on the needs of the Service and the vendor’s written training progress report and recommendations.
c. Based on the needs of the Service, employees may be assigned to full-time language training if they are completing an overseas tour with no immediate ongoing assignment, returning to duty from leave without pay; returning from a detail assignments; or completing other training assignments,

d. Employees assigned to language training for more than six months will be reassigned to the Training Complement in Washington, D.C., and those assigned for six months or less will be assigned to TDY. If the needs of the Service require, OFSHC may extend the TDY up to 60 days beyond the six-month period.

.02 Enrollment, End-of-Training Reports and Attendance Records

a. OFSHC will enroll all personnel for language training as required by their reassignment orders.

b. Language training records will be provided to the annual Selection Board by insertion in the officer’s Official Performance File and will include attendance records and End of Training Reports and certification of final language scores.

.03 Reporting Time and Attendance to Language Training Vendor and Web T/A

a. Throughout language training, an officer is required to complete a 40-hour week by attending class 6-hours daily of in-classroom instruction and training independently 2-hours daily, Monday through Friday.

b. Language training must be received in the vendor’s classrooms. Training outside the classroom must be requested in advance from and approved by OFSHC. Training via Skype or distance learning is not considered in-classroom-training, and will only be authorized at such times as a) an announcement by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) of alternative work schedule, b) an officer is reassigned on a UVP basis and authorized online FAST language training, or c) approved by OFSHC on a case-by-case basis.

c. Absences during language training are highly discouraged. Officers must report their absences to the vendor in accordance with their language training vendor’s policy to avoid forfeited tuition.

d. Officers’ language training vendors will report an officer’s absences to OFSHC and this record must concur with the officer’s Web T/A (time and attendance) records.

Section 7. No Annual Leave Authorized during Language Training

01. Annual Leave Policy for Officers in Language Training

a. Annual leave is not authorized during language training.
b. Possible exceptions include a request for compassionate leave to attend such events as births, graduations, marriages or deaths within the officer’s immediate family.

c. All requests for compassionate leave must be authorized by OFSHC within Web T/A prior to the officer’s absence from class and will be identified as annual leave. Training vendors must be advised of approved absences prior to the officer’s leave to avoid forfeiture of tuition.

d. Annual leave may be requested for the following: (a) the Friday following Thanksgiving; and, (b) any five consecutive days during the final two weeks of the calendar year.

e. No “use or loose” leave is authorized during language training.

f. Without exception, participation in other training(s) and or work-related event(s) or assignment(s), including major conferences, and trade-related events, will not be authorized during language training.

g. All federal holidays are observed. All official closures of the federal government announced by OPM for holidays and hazardous weather and other exceptional situations provide an excused absence from language training. In this regard, Section 7.02(a) provided below.

h. If sick leave must be requested during language training, it is necessary to comply with the vendor’s reporting requirements to avoid forfeiting tuition. Sick leave must be reported to the vendor as early as possible (24 hours in advance to avoid forfeiture) and submitted by email to Chief, Training and Development (T&D) for approval within Web T/A.

02. Telework Agreement Required for Officers during Language Training

a. Officers in language training must submit to Chief, T&D a completed and signed (a) Telework (TW) Application and (b) Voluntary Agreement (ITA-2069 Rev.7/15). Officers in language training are expected always to be telework ready.

03 Number of Training Hours Authorized

a. A table of the normal and maximum number of hours authorized per language per proficiency requirement for language training enrollment is provided in Appendix C.

b. Enrollments will be authorized for the indicated “normal” length of training, unless the needs of the Service justify a shorter or longer enrollment.

04 Extensions, Curtailment and Termination of Language Training

a. Extension of Training

The Director, OFSHC may extend training up to the maximum length indicated in Appendix C if the progress reports from the training vendor indicate that the extension would provide a high probability of reaching the required level of proficiency and if such extension is compatible with
the needs of the Service. Any extension beyond the maximum provided in Appendix C shall be based on compelling circumstances to meet the needs of the Service, and can only be approved by the Director General.

b. Curtailment of Training

If the officer is certified as having attained the required level of proficiency before the estimated authorized training time is completed, the training is curtailed immediately following the midterm or final proficiency testing. If the officer is unable to proceed to post immediately after attaining the required proficiency due to needs of the Service, he or she will report to the appropriate regional office in Headquarters until authorized by that office to proceed to post.

c. Termination of Training

1. The Director General, utilizing the Foreign Service personnel system, in consultation with the Director, OFSHC, and others as appropriate, may terminate language training at any time if: 1) there is insufficient time remaining within the officer's limited career-candidate appointment to reasonably expect achievement of the level of proficiency required for commissioning and tenure; or 2) the student is not making adequate progress; or 3) the needs of the Service so require. A decision to terminate training shall include the judgment of the instructors and proficiency test results achieved over a reasonable period of time.

2. Career-candidate appointments can be terminated if the officer does not achieve the proficiency level required for commissioning and tenure during the maximum training period listed in Appendix C. When language training is terminated for career-candidates, they may be retained in the Service for the remainder of their appointment or tour of duty. However, such a continuation of service shall not in any way restrict the right of the Department to terminate the employee’s limited career candidate appointment at any time as provided in section 611 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980.

3. Career officers assigned to an LDP will be authorized the normal length of training time indicated in Appendix C. OFSHC will evaluate the officer’s progress mid-way through the training, and approximately three-quarters of the way through the scheduled end of the training. If the officer is experiencing difficulty learning the language at the latter point of training, OFSHC will report this fact to the Assignments Panel. If the officer has achieved a proficiency level one level below the target level or better by the three-quarters mark, training may be extended up to the maximum time for the language as shown in Appendix C.
Section 8. Language Training for Eligible Family Member

.01 Authority to authorize language training for Eligible Family Member (EFM)

Section 704(c) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 permits the Department to “...provide to family members of members of the Service or of employees of the Department or other agencies, in anticipation of their assignment abroad or while abroad appropriate orientation and language training...”

.02 General Policy on Language Training for an EFM

a. For purposes of this policy, an EFM is understood to be a spouse only.

b. Language training for an EFM who is expected to accompany the officer to post is an optional expenditure. When the budget permits, OFSHC will allocate funding to each regional office for such EFM training as may be authorized by the relevant regional office with the concurrence of OFSHC.

c. Officers may request funding authorization for their EFM to study the language of their post of assignment from arrival at post up until one year prior to their departure from post.

d. The total number of hours of PLP training may not exceed 150 hours per posting. These stipulations are intended to manage cost and to ensure officers and EFMs use the benefits of training during their current assignment.

e. The maximum number of language training hours for which funding may be authorized for an EFM either in Washington, D.C. or at post, or both, is a combined total of 150 hours per posting, providing funding is available.

f. Language training for an EFM may be authorized, prior to an officer proceeding to post, only after the relevant officer has begun authorized language training in Washington, D.C.

g. An EFM will not be authorized to tandem language train with an officer; an EFM will only be authorized language training separate from the officer.

h. Under no circumstances may individuals start language training prior to receiving OFSHC authorization. OFSHC cannot authorize funds retroactively.
APPENDIX A: LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY RATING SCALES

SCALE VALUE AND DEFINITION

SPEAKING PROFICIENCY SCALE

S0  No proficiency; unable to function in the spoken language.

S1  Elementary proficiency; able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.

S2  Limited working proficiency; able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements.

S3  General professional proficiency; able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics.

S4  Advanced professional proficiency; able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs.

S5  Native proficiency; speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate. Well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

READING PROFICIENCY SCALE

R0  No proficiency; no practical ability to read the language.

R1  Elementary proficiency; sufficient comprehension to read very simple connected written material in a form equivalent to usual printing or typescript.

R2  Limited working proficiency; sufficient comprehension to read simple, authentic written material in a form equivalent to usual printing or typescript on subjects within a familiar context.

R3  General professional proficiency; able to read within a normal range of speed and with almost complete comprehension a variety of authentic prose material on unfamiliar topics.

R4  Advanced professional proficiency; able to read fluently and accurately all styles and forms of the language pertinent to professional needs.

R5  Native proficiency; reading proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a well-educated native reader.
No writing system pertinent to the needs of the Service. This indicates that either no writing system exists or that knowledge of the writing system is not necessary for successful job performance.

No reading score required. This requirement can vary within the same language. For example, to meet the proficiency requirement for commissioning and tenure in Mandarin a test score of S2/R1 is required. However, to be eligible for an incentive payment in Mandarin, a proficiency level of at least S2/R2 is required.

**Languages Identified by Category by Complexity**

**Category I Languages:** French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish

**Category II Languages:** German, Indonesian and Romanian

**Category III Languages:** Bulgarian, Czech, Greek, Hungarian, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Servo-Croatian, Turkish, and Vietnamese

**Category IV Languages:** Arabic, Chinese Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, Thai
Languages Eligible for Incentive Pay and Maintenance Incentive Pay are as follows:

Arabic
Chinese Mandarin
Czech
Greek
Hungarian
Indonesian
Japanese
Korean
Polish
Romanian
Russian
Thai
Turkish
Servo-Croatian
Ukrainian
Vietnamese
APPENDIX C: LANGUAGES ELIGIBLE FOR INCENTIVE PAY AND MAINTENANCE INCENTIVE PAY; PROFICIENCY RATING SCALES

CATEGORY I LANGUAGES

LANGUAGE PROGRESSION
(CLASS WEEKS TO ILR GOAL)

Legend:
- 20-HR WEEK
- 25-HR WEEK
- 30-HR WEEK

PROGRESSION RATES FOR CAT I LANGUAGES (GIVEN IN HOURS AND WEEKS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FROM R/S</th>
<th>TO R/S</th>
<th>HOURS (PER STEP)</th>
<th>HOURS (CUMULATIVE)</th>
<th>20-HR WEEKS</th>
<th>25-HR WEEKS</th>
<th>30-HR WEEKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
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<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0+</td>
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<td>75</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1+</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
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<td>125</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>125</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>650</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Category II Languages

#### Language Progression

*Legend*
- 30-HR Week
- 25-HR Week
- 20-HR Week

#### Progression Rates for Category II Languages

*Given in Hours and Weeks*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From R/S</th>
<th>To R/S</th>
<th>Hours (Per Step)</th>
<th>Hours (Cumulative)</th>
<th>20-HR Weeks</th>
<th>25-HR Weeks</th>
<th>30-HR Weeks</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0+</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1+</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>175</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>175</td>
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<tr>
<td>2+</td>
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<td>175</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td><strong>900</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CATEGOR III LANGUAGES

LANGUAGE PROGRESSION
(CLASS WEEKS TO ILR GOAL)

Legend
- 20-HR WEEK
- 25-HR WEEK
- 30-HR WEEK

PROGRESSION RATES FOR CAT III LANGUAGE (HOURS AND WEEKS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FROM R/S TO R/S</th>
<th>HOURS (PER STEP)</th>
<th>HOURS (CUMULATIVE)</th>
<th>20-HR WEEKS</th>
<th>25-HR WEEKS</th>
<th>30-HR WEEKS</th>
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<td>1100</td>
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<td>44</td>
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Albanian Latvian
Armenian Laotian
Azeri Lithuanian
Bulgarian Macedonian
Burmese Persian
Cambodian Polish
Croatian Russian
Czech Tagalog
Dari Tajik
English Tausug
Estonian Turkish
Finnish Urdu
Georgian Uzbek
Greek Vietnamese
Hebrew and many others
Hungarian
Kazakh
Kurdish
Kyrgyz
CATEGORIES IV LANGUAGES

LANGUAGE PROGRESSION
(CLASS WEEKS TO ILR GOAL)

Legend
- 20-HR WEEK
- 25-HR WEEK
- 30-HR WEEK

CAT IV LANGUAGES
Arabic
Chinese
Japanese
Korean
Pashto

PROGRESSION RATES FOR CAT IV LANGUAGES (GIVEN IN HOURS AND WEEKS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FROM R/S</th>
<th>TO R/S</th>
<th>HOURS (PER STEP)</th>
<th>HOURS (CUMULATIVE)</th>
<th>20-HR WEEKS</th>
<th>25-HR WEEKS</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>0+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1+</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>1+</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX D: CONTINUED SERVICE AGREEMENT (CSA)

SAMPLE Continued Service Agreement

Employee’s Full Name: __________________________
Telephone No.: ________________________________
Operating Unit: ________________________________

Agreement to Continue in Service

This agreement is made pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 4108 and 5 CFR 410.309 and applies to all training that costs more than $1,000, non-Government training in excess of 80 hours and Government or non-Government training of a long-term nature in excess of 120 calendar days that is part of an established or requisite curriculum for which the Government approves payment of training costs prior to the commencement of such training. The period of obligation begins the first workday after the training ends. Nothing contained in this section shall be construed as limiting the authority of an agency to waive, in whole or in part, an obligation of an employee to pay expenses incurred by the Government in connection with the training.

a. I agree that upon completion of the training described in this request, I will serve in the Department of Commerce (Commerce) a minimum of three times the length of the training period (or time prescribed by the bureau); except that if I receive no salary for the time spent in training the period of obligated service will be either one month or a period equal to the amount of time spent in training, whichever is greater. The length of part-time training is the number of hours spent in class or with the instructor. The length of full-time training is eight hours for each day of training, up to a maximum of 40 hours a week.

b. If I voluntarily separate from Commerce and the Federal service before successfully completing the period of service agreed to in item (a) above, I agree to reimburse Commerce for the tuition and related fees (including books, materials, and equipment), travel, and other special expenses (excluding salary) paid in connection with my training. However, the amount of the reimbursement will be reduced on a pro rata basis for the percentage of completion of the obligated service. (For example, if the cost of training is $900 and I complete two-thirds of the obligated service, I will reimburse Commerce $300 instead of the original $900.)

c. If I voluntarily separate from Commerce to enter the service of another Federal agency or other organization in any branch of the Government before completing the period of service agreed to in item (a) above, I will give my servicing human resource manager 10 days advance written notice during which time, in accordance with Federal regulations, a determination concerning reimbursement or transfer of the remaining service obligation to the gaining agency will be made.
d. If I am separated involuntarily for reasons beyond my control and not because of misconduct or personal delinquency during the training or the post-training obligated service period, I understand that this agreement will be cancelled and the right of Commerce to recover will be waived.

e. I understand that any amounts which may be due the employing agency as a result of any failure on my part to meet the terms of this agreement may be withheld from any monies owed me by the Government, or may be recovered by such other methods as are approved by law.

f. I acknowledge that this agreement does not in any way commit or require the government to continue my employment.

g. Training period requiring obligated service:

Program Title: ____________________________
From (YYMMDD) / To (YYMMDD): ____________________________
Number of Duty Hours: ____________________________

h. Period of obligated service:

From (YYMMDD) / To (YYMMDD) ____________________________

i. I am not receiving any contributions, awards, or payments in connection with this training, from any other government agency or non-government organization and shall not accept such without first obtaining approval from the authorizing training official. I agree that should I fail to complete the requested training successfully due to circumstances within my control, I will reimburse the agency for all training costs (excluding salary) associated with my attendance.

j. By signing this Agreement, I acknowledge and understand my obligation to Commerce as described above.

__________________________________________  ____________________________
Employee signature  Date signed
APPENDIX E: 2007 AMENDMENTS TO THE LANGUAGE INCENTIVE PROGRAM POLICY, WHICH ORIGINATES IN FSPMM SUBCHAPTER 800-1

NOTE: At the request of the of the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) the 2007 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service and AFSA, together with Foreign Service Personnel Manual, Subchapter 800-1, regarding incentive pay, are provided as published in 2011. A 2012 policy change made proficiency test scores certified by both Diplomatic Language Services (DLS) and FSI acceptable for all purposes, including incentive pay. As of 2017, only those officers training at FSI will be authorized to final proficiency test at FSI (due to scheduling and cost constraints) and those FSI certified proficiency scores will be eligible to qualify for all purposes, including incentive pay. Portions of the following Subchapter 800-1 are also repeated above on page 7.

FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL MANUAL SUBCHAPTER 800-1 {Amended as outlined the Note above}

Language Incentive Program

Section 1. Purpose This establishes Department policy regarding incentive payments for proficiency in foreign languages.

Section 2. Legislative Authority The legislative authority for language incentive payments is Section 704 (b) (3) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 3901 et. seq.).

Section 3. Coverage This applies to all Foreign Service employees of the Department except foreign national employees, family members of government employees employed under Section 311 of the Act, and Americans residing abroad who are hired for service at a post (Local Resident Hires).

Section 4. Policy (Section Amended: See above explanation regarding MOU)

01. Test Score Validity Language proficiency tests administered by the Foreign Service Institute or Diplomatic Language Service, LLC are the only proficiency tests acceptable for language incentive payments. To qualify for payment, the certified test score must have been achieved within one year prior to arrival at the incentive language post, or during the assignment. A test rating of S-5, R-5 is valid indefinitely.

02. Program Goal The language incentive program is intended to encourage, through monetary payments that are a percentage of base salary, the acquisition and maintenance of proficiency in foreign languages that are characterized by their difficulty to learn and by the need to develop a cadre of skilled users of the language in the Department.

03. Designation of Incentive Languages Languages for which incentive payments are authorized are designated in this policy, considering the recommendations of the Director General of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service. Proposed changes to the list of incentive languages may be recommended to the Director for Human Resources Management at any time.

04. Eligibility Criteria Employees with a tested proficiency of S-2/R-2 or better in an incentive language are eligible for an incentive language payment when the following criteria are met:

a. The recipient is a member of the Foreign Service as defined in sections 103(1) through (5) of the Act; and,

b. The recipient is serving at a post where the primary language is one designated in this policy.
Test Score Validity. Language proficiency tests administered by the Foreign Service Institute are the only ones acceptable for language incentive payments. To qualify for payment, the FSI certified test score must have been achieved within one year prior to arrival at the incentive language post, or during the assignment. A test rating of S-5/R-5 is valid indefinitely.

Payment Levels. The language incentive payment is a percentage of base salary. The differential paid is linked to the FSI certified language test rating as follows:

a. For a test rating of S-2/R-2, 5 percent of base salary;

b. For a test rating of S-3/R-3, 10 percent of base salary; and,

c. For a test rating of S-4/R-4 or better, 15 percent of base salary.

Periods During Which Payments are Effective. Language incentive payments are effective as follows:

a. For an eligible recipient, already at post on the effective date of this policy, payment will start at the beginning of the first pay period after the effective date.

b. For other eligible recipients, payments will be effective at the beginning of the first full pay period after the recipient's arrival at post.

c. When the qualifying language test rating is achieved after arrival at post, payment will be effective at the beginning of the first full pay period after the recipient passes the test at the required level.

d. When a language is added to the incentive language list, payment for eligible recipients will begin at the beginning of the first full pay period after the language is added to the list.

e. No incentive payments will be authorized until the Office of Foreign Service Personnel receives FSI certification of the employee's test score.

f. Language incentive payments end on the last day of the pay period during which the recipient departs the post.

Testing to Qualify for Language Incentive Payments. (Section Amended: See above MOU agreement)

a. Tests for language incentive payments may be administered only by FSI-certified testers. Note: As of 2017 policy rewrite, the above is no longer accurate; officers training at FSI are the only officers allowed to test at FSI.

b. Covered employees who require language testing to establish eligibility for an incentive payment must contact the Office of Foreign Service Personnel to be scheduled for testing. Retesting may not be requested for at least six months after a previous test.

c. FSI periodically sends certified testers to incentive language posts. The State Department will notify posts in advance of such visits. Covered employees who think they have the necessary proficiency level to qualify for an incentive payment should receive approval from the Office of Foreign Service Personnel, U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service, to arrange for testing through the post language officer. [Note: As of 2017 policy rewrite, this is no longer accurate; officers training at FSI may only also test at FSI]
**Section 5. Effect on Uniform Regulations** This policy supersedes the uniform regulations 3 FAM 873.4 a. through d. (salary increases for study and proficiency in incentive languages), and 3 FAM 873.5 a. through e. (incentive payments).

**Section 6. Savings Provisions** Employees who have received step increases under the provisions of 3 FAM 873.4 as of the effective date of this policy will continue to receive that compensation. Employees who are receiving incentive payments as of the effective date of this policy, but who would not qualify for payments under its provisions, will continue to receive.

**Section .07 Testing to Qualify for Language Incentive Payments**

Tests for language incentive payment must be administered by testers certified by the Foreign Service Institute or Diplomatic Language Service, LLC. However, the test must be administered by FSI if the Officer is enrolled in language training at FSI.