

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE USCG FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Note: This document is intended to clarify and expound upon aspects of ALCOAST 585/05 (Coast Guard Foreign Language Program).

Q. How long has the USCG Foreign Language Program been in existence?

A. The Coast Guard had no formal foreign language program until 2005. Coast Guard military members meeting the requirements (described below) will begin receiving FLPP on or after January 1, 2006. Some enlisted members have been paid SDAP based, at least partially, on foreign language requirements. A 1999 Coast Guard study, known as the Foreign Language Needs Assessment (FLNA), forms the basis of the USCG Foreign Language Program. The FLNA is posted on CG Central. (Learning>Foreign Language>Background and Policy Information)

Q. What foreign languages are currently needed to support CG operational missions?

A. Spanish, Haitian-Creole, Russian, Vietnamese, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese and Korean. Eighty percent of the need is for the Spanish language.

Q. Who is eligible for FLPP?

A. Starting January 1, 2006, CG military members (active & reserve¹ components; officer & enlisted) who meet the criteria outlined in ALCOAST 585/05 (see CGCentral, Learning>Foreign Language Program>Background and Policy) will be paid \$100/mo as

¹ In the case of the Reserve component, the pay is called a "Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus" unless the member is on active duty, e.g. Active Duty Training, and the command authorizes FLPP on the orders. See 37 U.S.C. §316.

“Interpreters”, \$150/mo as “Linguists”, and \$50/mo as “Command Designated Interim Interpreters”.

Q. ALCOAST 585/05, in paragraph 7, says that Interpreter and Linguist FLPP will be available beginning in January 2006. Is there specific date in January when FLPP will begin?

A. Yes, FLPP will be available starting January 1, 2006.

Q. How about those CG military members who have been performing interpreter functions thus far without FLPP? Can they get retroactive FLPP?

A. No, there is no provision to pay CG members who have served as interpreters for the CG in the past and have not received FLPP for those services.

Q. What are the criteria for getting FLPP at the Linguist rate of \$150/mo?

A. Linguists are associated with specific billets, such as certain intelligence, International Training Detachment or defense attaché billets. Look for a forthcoming ALCOAST devoted to Linguists which will list designated Linguist billets. Linguists must achieve a score of at least 2+/2+ on the DLPT.

Q. What are the criteria for getting FLPP at the Interpreter rate of \$100/mo?

A. To qualify as an Interpreter, a member must first achieve a score of at least 2/2 on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT). The member must also be at a unit with interpreter allocations and be designated by his/her command to occupy one of the allocations.

Q. Will all units get Interpreters?

A. No. ALCOAST 585/05 specifies the units that get Interpreters and the number of allocations for each of those units.

Q. Is it possible to add or change an Interpreter allocation to a unit?

A. Follow the directions in paragraph 5 of ALCOAST 585/05 regarding requesting a modification to the Interpreter allocation. Not all requests for additional interpreters will be granted, given the limited amount of FLPP funds. Each request will be carefully considered.

Q. What are the criteria for getting FLPP at the Command Designated Interim Interpreter rate of \$50/mo?

A. A command may designate a Command Designated Interim Interpreter (CDII) if the command cannot fill its unit allocation with qualified Interpreters. Normally, the member designated as CDII will have already successfully interpreted for the command. The CDII gets FLPP at the CDII rate until s/he or another member of the unit achieves a 2/2 score on the DLPT. At that point, the member with the 2/2 score will receive FLPP at the Interpreter level. CDII designations expire after 6 months but can be renewed by the command.

Q. I'm currently receiving SDAP. Am I also eligible for FLPP?

A. Not until FY07. Don't let that stop you from taking the DLPT if you have a foreign language skill and are either using it or expect to use it in calendar year 2006. We are in the process of transitioning from using SDAP related to foreign language requirements, and transitioning to using FLPP, to recognize foreign language skills. Eligibility for continued SDAP will be evaluated during the FY07 SDAP board, which will be held in late spring/early summer 2006. New SDAP rates will become effective on 1 October 2006. SDAP related to foreign language skills will stop in FY07.

Q. What sort of examination is the DLPT?

A. The current version of the exam, known as the DLPT-IV, is a paper and pencil, multiple-choice exam. It is a two-part exam, Listening and Reading, and takes two hours per part. The DLPT-IV, like its predecessors, was developed by the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center and has been in use for many years. The DLPT-IV is gradually being replaced by an electronic version, known as the DLPT-V. Once the DLPT-V version of a

particular language rolls out, the DLPT-IV version of that language will be obsolete and no longer valid for use. See CGCentral for more information on both DLPT-IV and DLPT-V exams.

Q. Are the use of headphones required to take the DLPT?

A. Not for the DLPT-IV, the paper and pencil version of the exam. Headphones are required for the electronic DLPT- V, the Spanish version of which will be available by the 4th quarter of 2006.

Q. How do I sign up to take the DLPT?

A. Three groups may present for the DLPT exam at a CG DLPT authorized test site:

- 1) military members who have been selected by their commands to potentially serve as Interpreters at their unit;
- 2) certain intelligence, International Training Detachment and defense attaché members; and
- 3) other CG members who:
 - have skills in one of the 7 CG authorized languages and will be tour complete in 2006
 - are seeking for their next tour, either a billet at a unit that is allocated Interpreters, or a Linguist billet (e.g. defense attaché, International Training Detachment or certain intelligence billets) as evidenced by a completed e-resumé specifying these units or billets

For all 3 groups, the command sends a letter with the names of the test candidates to the nearest CG DLPT authorized test site. A list of the CG DLPT authorized test sites is posted on CG Central at Learning>Foreign Language Program>DLPT-IV.

Q. ALCOAST 585/05 mentions a forthcoming ALCOAST specifically regarding Linguists. In the meantime, should CG members in Linguist billets, that is, billets requiring foreign language proficiency (such as defense attaché, International Training Division and certain intelligence billets) take the DLPT?

A. Yes, Linguists and prospective Linguists who have not taken the DLPT in the last year should take the DLPT.

Q. Can CG civilian employees take the DLPT at CG authorized DLPT test sites?

A. For the time being, only those civilian employees whose job in the CG requires foreign language skills, or who are applying for a CG job requiring foreign language skills may take the exam. DLPT candidates must be able to produce their position description or job announcement to the test site Educational Services Officer (ESO).

Q. How do I prepare for the DLPT?

A. You can prepare for the DLPT in a general fashion by: 1) reading newspapers, magazines, etc., or viewing foreign films in the target language; and 2) taking some language enhancement training. For language training resources, check CGCentral periodically.

Q. Can I retake the exam if, for example, I don't score high enough?

A. Yes, but you must wait 6 months before retaking the exam.²

Q. For how long is my DLPT score valid?

A. One year from the date you took the exam.³

Q. Will my DLPT score, or Linguist, Interpreter or Command Designated Interim Interpreter status be entered into my Coast Guard Personnel Command (CGPC) Personnel Data Record (PDR)?

A. The ESO at the CG authorized DLPT test site where you took the exam will enter your score into Direct Access. Because Linguists are

² Per subsection 4-2(b) of Army Regulation (AR) 350-20 (Navy OPNAVINST 1550.7B, which is posted on CG Central) "Management of the Defense Foreign Language Program"; and Subsection 3-12(a) of AR 611-6, "Army Linguist Management."

³ Per subsection (c) of 37 U.S.C.A. § 316. For text, see footnote 5.

in language-coded billets, their experience will be reflected in the assignment history portion of Direct Access.

Q. Has there been any attempt to identify Coast Guard military member speakers of the seven languages the Coast Guard needs in operational missions?

A. There has been no formal attempt to identify foreign language speakers until now. Coast Guard members formerly had the option to voluntarily specify, in Direct Access, foreign language speaking, reading and writing ability.

Q. How many Coast Guard military members self-reported as having a moderate to high speaking, reading or writing ability in the seven languages?

A. The following chart contains figures from summer 2005:

Language	Spanish	Haitian-Creole	Russian	Vietnamese	Mandarin/Chinese	Japanese	Korean
Active Duty	2323	14	37	17	15	45	29
Reserve	643	6	12	10	5	11	10

Q. The military FLPP law, 37 U.S.C. §316 speaks of “certification”⁴ of foreign language proficiency. What does certification of foreign language proficiency consist of in the Coast Guard?

A. Certification, in the case of an Interpreter, means: 1) a score of 2/2 on the DLPT; and 2) designation by the command as an Interpreter. Certification in the case of a Linguist, means: 1) a score of 2+/2+ on the DLPT; and 2) the member is currently in a billet requiring foreign

⁴ (c) **Certification of proficiency.**--To be eligible to receive special pay or a bonus under this section, a member described in subsection (a) or (b) must be certified by the Secretary concerned as being proficient in the foreign language for which the special pay or bonus is offered. The certification of the member shall expire at the end of the one-year period beginning on the first day of the first month beginning on or after the certification date.

language proficiency. The forthcoming ALCOAST on Linguists will list the Linguist billets. Certification in the case of a Command Designated Interim Interpreter (CDII) means: the Command has selected the member to perform interpreter functions and that member will be paid at the CDII level until such time as the member obtains a 2/2 on the DLPT, at which time the member will be paid as an Interpreter. If the member does not achieve a 2/2 on the DLPT, s/he will be replaced by a member at the unit who does achieve a 2/2. If no qualifying replacement can be found at the unit, then the member will continue to perform interpreter functions and continue to be paid as a CDII for up to six months, unless redesignated as CDII by the command.

Q. What do the DOD services pay its members for foreign language proficiency?

A. Currently, each of the 4 DOD services pays differing amounts based on specific languages and proficiency levels.

Q. Who is the POC for the Foreign Language Program?

A. The Foreign Language Program Manager.

Foreign Language Program Manager
COMDT (CG-132-2)
Room 5110
2100 Second Street SW
Washington, DC 20593-0001

Phone: 202-267-6071