



Functional Series [400](#)
Personnel

INTERIM UPDATE 07-01

SUBJECT: Responsibilities for USAID's Foreign Language Program

NEW MATERIAL: The purpose of USAID's Foreign Language Program is to strengthen the ability of USAID's Foreign Service (FS) Officers to implement programs as mandated by Congress.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 02/28/2007

POLICY

USAID/General Notice
M/HR
02/28/2007

Subject: Responsibilities for USAID's Foreign Language Program

The purpose of USAID's Foreign Language Program is to strengthen the ability of USAID's Foreign Service (FS) Officers to implement programs as mandated by Congress. The Program objectives are to ensure that: 1) overseas language-designated positions are staffed with employees who meet position language requirements, and 2) employees meet language requirements for tenure. FS employees must meet foreign language proficiency requirements for tenure and for Language-Designated Positions (LDPs) before departure for assignment to post.

The purpose of the language tenure requirement is to ensure that FSOs are capable of communicating in languages used in countries where USAID carries out its mission. To meet language tenure requirements, career candidates must have an FSI-tested proficiency of S-3/R-3 if the language is French, Spanish, or Portuguese. For tenuring in other languages on USAID's tenuring languages list, career candidates must have an FSI-tested proficiency of S-2/R 0-1.

Mission Directors or principal USAID officers must designate overseas FS positions for which language proficiency is essential for effective job performance. LDPs must not be designated above the S-3/R-3 or below the S-2/R-0 level. M/HR, in consultation with

the appropriate geographic Bureau, places language designations on new positions, as applicable.

Changes to LDPs: Modifications to established requirements must reflect significant changes in circumstances, duties and responsibilities. The mission recommends changes to existing LDPs by requesting the geographic bureau to submit to M/HR/POD and M/HR/EPM a SF-52-B, Request for Personnel Action and a Position Description that includes a statement justifying the changes. Language requirements must not be changed to avoid delays in recruitment, assignment, or language training.

M/HR/POD will assign FS career candidates to training in a USAID-useful language until the tenure requirement is achieved or the allotted training time is exhausted.

New Entry Professional (NEP) and International Development Intern (IDI) language training for tenure must not be postponed or curtailed. Training must be completed before departing for the initial assignment overseas.

Requests for curtailment or postponement of other (mid-level) FS career candidate's language training must be submitted by the Assistant Administrator (AA) of the geographic bureau of assignment to the Director of the Office of Human Resources for approval. Requests must include the following:

- Specific programmatic reasons for the curtailment or postponement;
- Proposal for an alternate, mission-funded plan for providing language training (this should include a detailed description of the post language plan that must be compelling);
- Mission Director's, AA's, or USAID/W Office Director's certification that if the necessary language proficiency is not reached at the end of the first tour of assignment, the employee will remain in USAID/W, following home leave, until the required proficiency is achieved; and
- A statement signed by the employee indicating agreement with the request, alternate training plan, and acknowledging possible consequences including separation from the Foreign Service for failure to meet language requirements to become tenured.

Regarding FS Career Employees and USAID/W reassignment and Home Leave: Employees transferring to LDPs from USAID/W, from home leave transfer, or from home leave return to post, without the required proficiency will be enrolled in language training before departure for post.

Regarding FS Career Employees and Direct or Mid-Tour Transfer: Employees reassigned to LDPs through a direct or mid-tour transfer without the required proficiency will be enrolled in language training at post if available. If the required proficiency is not

documented at post through an FSI-approved tester, the employee must be tested during USAID/W consultation and scheduled for training in connection with home leave.

Language Training Waivers - Mission Directors, Principal USAID Officers, or Assistant Administrators must provide detailed written justification to support a request for a waiver of language training for an LDP. M/HR reviews the Request for Waiver of Language Training and makes an action recommendation to the Director, M/HR. M/HR informs the post or the appropriate Bureau/Office of the waiver decision. Foreign language proficiency cannot be waived for purposes of tenure.

Point of Contact: Any questions concerning this Notice may be directed to James VanDenBos, M/HR/POD, (202) 712-0292.

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