

2009-2010

U.S Department of State **Guide to the Foreign Service Officer Selection Process**



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U.S. Department of State

Guide to the
Foreign Service Officer
Selection Process

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Privacy Act Statement

Authority: Section 301 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended, 22 U.S.C. s3941.

Purpose: Information is being collected on this form to determine your eligibility to take the Foreign Service Officer Test, to register you for the Foreign Service Officer Test, to assess your qualifications for selection as a Foreign Service Officer, and to ensure the integrity of the examination process.

Routine Uses: The information on this form may be used to prepare statistical reports and analyses at the Department of State. Such reports and analyses are prepared in such a way that data is not identifiable with an individual, and may be shared outside the Department of State. This information may also be made available to other federal agencies for authorized law enforcement or administrative purposes or in response to a request for information about hiring or retention of an employee, or to Members of Congress in response to an inquiry on behalf of the applicant.

Your Social Security number is used as your applicant identification number. Executive Order 9397 authorizes solicitation of your Social Security number for use as an identifier in personnel records management, thus ensuring proper identification of candidates throughout the selection and employment process. Furnishing your Social Security number, as well as other information requested on the form, is voluntary, but failure to do so may prevent timely processing of your application or may prevent us from registering you for the Foreign Service Officer Test.

Paperwork Reduction Act

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average forty minutes per response, including time required for searching existing data sources, gathering the necessary documentation, providing the information and/or documents required, and reviewing the final collection. You do not have to supply this information unless this collection displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. If you have comments on the accuracy of this burden estimate and/or recommendations for reducing it, please send them to: U.S. Department of State, A/ISS/DIR, 1800 G St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20520.

Disclaimer

While attempts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this publication, should any discrepancies occur between the information here and the information on careers.state.gov, please assume that the website has the most accurate, most up-to-date information. The website was updated in August 2009.

Registering for the Test

All registrations for the Foreign Service Officer Test must be completed online. The registration package consists of an application form that gathers factual information about your academic background, work history, and other relevant data. The link to online registration is available at careers.state.gov. The registration process begins the process for entry-level Foreign Service Officer positions in the U.S. Department of State.

For each Foreign Service Officer Test window, registration package must be submitted at least 48 hours prior to the opening of the window.

Test windows will occur in and October, 2009, and three times in 2010.

For exact dates of each test window, visit our website: careers.state.gov

To obtain additional copies of the 2009 Guide to the Foreign Service Officer Selection Process, write to:

Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT)
U.S. Department of State
Examination Division
2401 E Street, NW, 5th Floor
Washington, DC 20522-0151

The most up-to-date version of the guide may also be downloaded at our website, careers.state.gov. As all registrations for the test must now be completed online, there is no longer a printed version of the application.

Important Information:

- (1) Registration for the Foreign Service Officer Test will be open on a continuous basis.**
- (2) The Foreign Service Officer Test will be offered in three eight-day test windows in 2009 and in 2010.**

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The Department of State is committed to equal opportunity and fair and equitable treatment for all without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disabling condition, sexual orientation, political affiliation, marital status, or prior statutory, constitutionally protected activity. The Department provides reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities. Applicants requiring a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application or hiring process should so advise the Department. All decisions for granting reasonable accommodation are made on a case-by-case basis.

Foreign Service Officer Selection Process

**Testing Window Dates:
February, June and October, 2009
and three times in 2010**

Registration Timelines:

- **Register on-line any time.**
- **See careers.state.gov for deadlines to register and to schedule a seat for specific test windows. Note that deadlines are slightly earlier for international than for domestic test sites.**
- **Test center seats are available on a first-come, first-served basis by career track and date of registration; seats may be limited.**

Eligibility Requirements to Take the Test:

- Applicants must be citizens of the United States.
- Applicants must be at least 20 years old on the day they submit their registration package. They must be at least 21 years of age to be appointed as a Foreign Service Officer. Applicants must be no older than 59 on the date they submit their registration package. Appointment as a Foreign Service Officer must occur before an applicant reaches the age of 60.
- Applicants must be available for worldwide assignment.
- No applicant will be considered who has previously been separated from the Foreign Service under sections §607, §608, §610 or §611 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended, or who resigned or retired in lieu of separation under these provisions. In addition, no applicant will be considered who has previously been separated for failure to receive a career appointment under section §306 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended, or who resigned or retired in lieu thereof.
- *No specific educational level or proficiency in a foreign language is required for applicants.*

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IMPORTANT REGISTRATION INFORMATION

The Foreign Service Officer Selection Process in 2009 and 2010

The computer-based Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) will be offered in June and October, 2009 and three times in 2010. Each test window is about eight days in length, with multiple testing times within it. The test takes about three hours. There is no limit on the number of times an applicant may take the FSOT, but the test can be taken only once in an 11-month period. The FSOT is only given on the computer. There is no longer a paper version.

Registration

Applicants register on-line by completing an application form at careers.state.gov. Registrants must submit their applications before they can reserve a test date at a test center. Test seats may be limited during each test window and invitations to reserve seats are offered on a first-come, first-served basis within each career track according to when applications are received. Registrants must have e-mail addresses to use throughout the selection process and must ensure their spam filters accept e-mails from ACT, the testing firm that prepares and administers the test for the Department of State. Those planning to request reasonable accommodation should register at least four weeks before the requested test date. Every effort will be made to approve and arrange the requested accommodation by the test date. Delays, however, do happen.

Applicants should print or make a copy of their applications before submitting them as they will not be able to access this information again during the selection process.

A registration remains active until an applicant takes the FSOT or up to a maximum of 12 months from the date of submission, whichever comes first. If an applicant does not schedule a test date and does not take the test, or is not selected to schedule a test date within that period, the applicant must wait 11 months from the date of the original registration submission and then submit a new registration.

E-mail Invitation to Schedule FSOT Appointment

Once seats are available for a test window, applicants are notified by e-mail with instructions for scheduling test seat appointments. Applicants have a one-week window to schedule the test date and time. Upon scheduling the FSOT, the applicant receives an e-mail confirmation of the appointment date and time. The applicant must print this e-mail notification and bring it to the test center on the scheduled test date.

Foreign Service Officer Test

Applicants must appear at their selected test centers to take the Foreign Service Officer Test and must bring a copy of their e-mail notifications confirming their test date, time and location and a **valid (not expired) U.S. Government-issued photo identification**, such as a driver's license, passport, or military ID. Test center supervisors are authorized to refuse admittance to applicants whose identities cannot be positively established. No other items are allowed in the test area. Applicants are assessed a fee of \$50.00 if they cannot attend and fail to cancel their seats at least 48 hours before the test date or for failure to appear for the test. Applicants are asked to provide credit card information when they register for the no-show fee collection. An

applicant cannot reserve a seat for a future test date until the no-show fee has been paid.

Super Critical Needs Language (SCNL) Testing

Candidates who indicate in their applications knowledge of Arabic (Modern Standard, Egyptian and Iraqi), Chinese (Mandarin), Dari, Farsi, Hindi, or Urdu at a limited working level or better will be invited to a telephone language test. Instructions on how to arrange the test are sent by e-mail approximately three weeks after the end of the FSOT testing period. For more information and a self-assessment tool, candidates can visit www.govtilr.org and click on “Speaking” under the skill level descriptions. Receiving SCNL bonus points on the hiring register means serving in a country where that language is spoken at least twice in a career: once during the first two tours and again after reaching the mid-levels of the Foreign Service.

Notification of Results

Once the FSOT has been scored, candidates are informed by e-mail to check whether they passed the FSOT and will continue on to the Qualifications Evaluation Panel (QEP) or whether their overall score on the FSOT was not high enough to allow their candidacies to continue.

Candidates use their personal login IDs and passwords chosen by them at registration to retrieve on-line the results of the selection process at all stages and are responsible for remembering this ID and password. Candidates receive an e-mail with directions for downloading the results letter. Candidates who change or expect to change their e-mail addresses should see page 25.

Personal Narratives

Those who continue to the QEP are asked to submit on-line responses to five personal narrative questions. Candidates must notify ACT of any change of e-mail addresses so they can receive the invitation to submit these responses in a timely manner. The firm deadline for completing the narratives is three weeks from the date of ACT’s e-mail. Candidates who may not be available to submit their narratives during this window should consider delaying their FSOT. A candidacy cannot go forward without these narratives and there is no grace period for late submissions. If the narratives are not received by the deadline, the candidacy is terminated and candidates have to wait approximately a year after the FSOT to retake it.

Qualifications Evaluation Panel (QEP)

FSOT results, the work and education portions of the application and the personal narratives are sent to a Qualifications Evaluation Panel for review. The panel evaluates those candidates’ files; only the most qualified are invited to the Oral Assessment.

Career Track

Registrants should fully educate themselves about the five Foreign Service career tracks: Consular, Economic, Management, Political and Public Diplomacy. Descriptions of the career tracks are contained in this guide and at our website, careers.state.gov. Applicants will be required to select their career track when registering for the exam. **Applicants will NOT have the opportunity to change career tracks after submitting their on-line registrations, so careful thought should be put into making this decision.**

Section I

The Foreign Service of the United States

A career in the Foreign Service can offer excitement, challenge and the satisfaction of serving your country. The Foreign Service is first and foremost a diverse corps of working professionals who are dedicated to representing America's interests and responding to the needs of American citizens in other countries.

If you are a U.S. citizen who cares about your country and its leadership in the international arena and who is talented enough and tough enough to get the job done, consider a career in the Foreign Service. The world has gone through many dramatic changes recently and the career diplomats of the Foreign Service have been in the forefront of those changes.

A Foreign Service career is more than just a job. It is a way to serve your country and reach your professional goals. While the Foreign Service requires uncommon commitment and sometimes involves hardships, it also offers unique rewards and opportunities.

Diplomacy is America's first line of defense. Sustained military strength and flexibility are necessary to assure national security, but the conduct of U.S. relations with the nations of the world through an effective international presence and discerning diplomatic leadership is what makes the United States a force for peace. The diplomatic investments we make now to prevent conflict, promote democracy, protect the environment, and increase trade decrease the possibility of much more costly conflicts later and help ensure the prosperity and well-being of the American people.

• Global Challenges of the New Diplomacy

The challenges to today's Foreign Service extend well beyond the confines of traditional diplomacy. There are many new issues of critical importance to our nation's foreign policy: strengthening democratization and human rights around the world, halting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, enhancing peacekeeping capabilities, dealing more effectively with global environmental problems, addressing global population, refugee and migration issues, fighting international crime and terrorism, dealing with ethnic and religious affairs and penetrating new markets for American business.

To deal effectively in the foreign affairs environment of the twenty-first century, the Foreign Service must develop new skills and greater knowledge in areas such as administration and management, economics, trade, science, technology and the environment.

To be truly representative of today's United States, the Foreign Service must consist of the best of America's people from all racial and ethnic origins, from diverse educational backgrounds, from varied economic and social backgrounds and from every state in the nation.

- **The Lifestyle**

A career in the Foreign Service offers the pride and satisfaction that come from representing the United States and protecting American interests abroad. It can also involve uncommon hardships. Many overseas posts are in small or remote countries where harsh climates, health hazards, and various discomforts exist and where American-style amenities and e-mail are unavailable. To succeed in the Foreign Service, one must be strongly motivated, enjoy challenges, and possess an ardent dedication to public service.

- **The Search**

The search for extraordinary women and men to serve as Foreign Service Officers is intense and the qualifying process is rigorous, demanding and highly competitive.

- **The First Step**

Those interested in taking the Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) must complete an on-line application form. The registration package can be accessed and completed on our website, careers.state.gov. Applicants are informed by e-mail when they may schedule a seat for the FSOT, approximately 5 weeks before the next test window. The FSOT is offered three times per year during eight-day windows at numerous locations in the United States and abroad. Seats during each test window are limited, with seat allocation determined on a first-come, first-served basis within each career track according to when the registration package was submitted.

- **Employment Time Frame**

Application to become a Foreign Service Officer begins with registration. After the Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT), the process can be as short as six months or as long as two years, but will typically fall between those extremes. Applicants who pass the FSOT and who are successful during the Qualifications Evaluation Panel (QEP) review must then successfully complete an all-day oral assessment process, undergo a background investigation, receive a medical clearance for service worldwide and pass the final suitability review, all described in this guide. The Foreign Service Officer Selection Process is a multi-phase process and one that requires a unique commitment from the candidate.

Activity	For 2009-2010 test dates
On-line registrations accepted at ACT.	Continuous registration.
Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) seat scheduling.	FSOT seat appointments will be offered approximately 4-5 weeks before the test period begins, on a first-come, first-served basis according to career track and the date the registration was submitted.
FSOT administered.	Eight-day windows 3 times per year; check careers.state.gov for test schedule.
FSOT results letters ready for downloading.	Approximately 3 weeks after the FSOT administration.
Super Critical Needs Languages Testing	Invitations issued about 3 weeks after FSOT administration.
Completion of personal narratives.	Due within 3 weeks of FSOT results notice.
QEP results letters ready and oral assessment schedule website opens.	Approximately 14-18 weeks after FSOT.
Oral assessments begin.	Approximately 21-25 weeks after FSOT.

• What Does a Foreign Service Officer Do?

Foreign Service Officers, or diplomats, are the front-line professionals representing the Department of State at all U.S. embassies, consulates and other diplomatic missions. They can be sent anywhere in the world, at any time, to serve the diplomatic needs of the United States. With representation in over 160 countries, the Department of State offers Foreign Service Officers unparalleled opportunities to serve their country.

The Department of State faces a growing and complex web of international challenges. Among the transnational issues that are priorities are counterterrorism, anti-narcotics efforts, trade, technology, and science, including the global fight against diseases such as AIDS and efforts to save the environment. The Department therefore seeks not only candidates interested in political science and international relations, but also candidates with training and experience in economic policy issues, media relations, administration and management of programs, budgets, and human resources.

The Department of State requires that applicants select a functional area of specialization, or “career track,” when registering to take the Foreign Service Officer Test. The five Foreign Service career tracks are: Consular, Economic, Management, Political and Public Diplomacy. The choice of a career track is the first important decision potential Foreign Service Officers must make. Prospective candidates are urged to read carefully the following descriptions of the five career tracks, as well as the comprehensive supplemental information available at careers.state.gov. Once registrants have selected a career track during the registration process, they will not be able to change it.

CAREER TRACK CHOICES

- **Consular**

You are escorting an American woman who has come to retrieve her two children, abducted by their father from the United States. She has received permission from the local court to take the children home, but you are concerned she may encounter problems. Sure enough, she and the children are stopped by passport officers who place her under arrest for kidnapping. Through the police you discover that the father has obtained a stop order from a local prosecutor and you quickly call your contacts in the Ministry of Justice to intercede for the American mother. Awaiting a reply at the airport police station, you see the father arrive to receive the children. You ask the police to intervene but they refuse. The Ministry of Justice finally responds, ordering the mother's release and giving her temporary custody of the children. She and the children leave without further incident and the matter is later resolved through the courts.

You will face many situations in your career as a consular officer requiring quick thinking under stress. You develop and use a wide range of skills, from managing resources and conducting public outreach to assisting Americans in distress. You are also the front line of defense in protecting U.S. borders from foreigners who seek to break U.S. laws.

As an entry-level officer, you will probably supervise several locally-hired employees as you manage the crucial work of adjudicating visas to determine who may enter the United States. You will assist American citizens in living or visiting overseas who find themselves in emergency situations involving arrests, hospitalization and major accidents, or who have routine U.S. government matters to complete, such as reports of birth, passport issuances and notarial services. You will respond to inquiries from a range of sources including attorneys, congressional offices, business contacts and host government officials. You will also work to combat consular fraud. Your diplomatic skills will be finely honed as you will be the first and, in many cases, the only contact many people have with the U.S. embassy or consulate.

As a mid-level officer, you will manage a small consular section or part of a large one, such as the American Citizen Services (ACS), anti-fraud, or visa unit. You will probably supervise American entry-level officers and Foreign Service National employees (FSNs). You will have the opportunity to make complex decisions regarding visas and services for American citizens and show your resourcefulness in resolving challenging management issues involving workflow and human resources. You will also provide guidance to entry-level officers in all areas of consular operations. If you work in the Consular Affairs Bureau in Washington, you will support consular officers in the field on visa, ACS, fraud and management issues.

As a senior officer, you may manage a large consular section, supervise a number of American officers and local staff members and be part of the embassy's senior management. You might also be an office director or part of the senior staff within the Consular Affairs Bureau in Washington, which advises on all consular matters. In addition, you will engage in a variety of public outreach functions, such as speaking to the press or to American organizations. As with senior officers in other career tracks, you may be a Deputy Chief of Mission or Ambassador, or a Principal Officer at a large U.S. consulate.

- **Economic**

You are helping to negotiate a new “Open Skies” civil aviation treaty with a major European country that is a popular tourist destination for thousands of Americans. Your efforts will bring potentially millions of dollars of new business to U.S. airlines every week, lower prices for passengers and result in more flights from which to choose. Even better, you soon see the results of your efforts as the U.S. airlines launch advertising campaigns for the upcoming tourist season.

As an economic officer, you use economic analysis skills to develop expert knowledge of the economic foreign policy issues facing the U.S. and to advance U.S. economic and commercial interests. You build wide contact networks in host countries to gain information on local developments and report and provide advice on these matters to Washington policy makers. You also advocate for U.S. interests both in bilateral and multilateral fora. American companies having interests in the host country may look to you for accurate information and help. You seek a level playing field for these companies, arguing against unfair barriers to trade. You also identify opportunities for U.S. exports and provide this information to the U.S. Department of Commerce and others. In Washington, you work with other agencies and organizations in and outside of government, such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the IMF and the World Bank. You may also work on related issues, such as the environment.

As an entry-level officer, you will work in a section under the direction of a more experienced officer. You will develop a network of contacts in the host government and local business community so as to keep informed on local developments. You will prepare economic analyses and may recommend strategies for implementation of U.S. policies. At a small post, you may supervise one or two locally-hired employees who work on trade issues and manage a small commercial library.

As a mid-level officer, you may be chief of a small economic affairs section, supervising a small local staff and one or two entry-level officers. You may brief the Ambassador and visiting dignitaries and business people on local conditions and issues that affect U.S. policy and support the visits of U.S. officials on these matters. You will report or supervise reporting to Washington. As instructed, you will seek to persuade the host government to support U.S. policies on a range of economic and commercial issues.

As a senior officer, you may have major responsibility for developing and implementing U.S. policy on bilateral and multilateral economic and trade issues, including debt relief, free trade, international finance and development assistance. From a Washington assignment, you will likely travel as the USG negotiator of bilateral or multilateral aviation, environment, or investment treaties. You will have opportunities to be an office director, supervising a large number of officers. At our embassies, you may serve as Ambassador or Deputy Chief of Mission, or manage a large economic section, advising the Ambassador on the full range of economic issues. You will make numerous demarches to the host government and meet with host government officials at the Ministries of Finance, Trade, Economy, Communications, Transportation, Environment, Labor, as well as the Central Bank, Civil Aviation Authority, or Chambers of Commerce.

- **Management**

You are negotiating with a landlord the lease of a multi-million dollar embassy annex when you receive a call from your assistant. The Ambassador has asked you to participate in a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss street closures and building permits. You are then to lead a meeting of local staff to discuss changes to their health and retirement benefits, followed by a budget briefing for another agency and an evening event at the local international school.

As a management officer, you need the same skills as good managers in multinational corporations, but you employ those skills in different settings, often difficult and always challenging. You and your team are responsible for developing, maintaining and improving a full range of management services to support our nation's goals in your country of assignment. You and your team pursue the interests of the embassy in negotiating with local and American businesses to procure equipment, supplies and services; recruiting and hiring local staff; coordinating information technology systems; and managing budgets to ensure funding is available for embassy priorities. Your work affects not just the State Department but all U.S. Government agencies operating at our diplomatic and consular posts abroad.

As an entry-level officer, you spend more time out of the office than in it. "Management by walking around" is a key part of your success and there are often opportunities for innovative approaches and teambuilding. You may run a unit within the management section of a large embassy, or you may be the sole management officer at a small post. You learn the inner workings of the embassy. Your customers, from the Ambassador to every local and American staff member (and their families), know you as a planner and problem-solver. Working closely with your staff, you have broad contacts with host-country officials and local business people. You hone your foreign language capabilities, test your negotiating skills and learn what works in the host country's culture and what doesn't. You adapt to local levels of infrastructure support to make the embassy's work possible. You supervise more employees than your peers and have decision-making authority and autonomy to resolve problems.

As a mid-level officer, you will run a management section for a medium-sized embassy or consulate, or perhaps supervise a human resources or other major unit at a large embassy, supporting up to 1,000 employees. You may develop and manage multi-million dollar budgets, lease and maintain over 200 government-owned and short-term leased residences and office buildings, and provide the logistical platform to support dozens of high level visits. As head of a management section, you negotiate with host government authorities over diplomatic privileges and immunities, applications of tax reciprocity laws, and spousal employment. Your ability to lead and inspire teams and employ best practices has a direct impact on the success of the mission.

As with other senior officers, you may be a Deputy Chief of Mission, an Ambassador, or a Principal Officer at a large consulate, or you may be a management counselor at one of our largest posts. In a Washington assignment, you may be an office director, Executive Director, or Deputy Assistant Secretary, directing resources to support the work of posts throughout a region, managing the Department's global logistics or building programs, or coordinating recruitment, training, or assignments of Foreign Service personnel.

- **Political**

It is late on election night, but as the embassy's sole political officer you are in close touch with your media and host-country contacts, waiting for the final results for an urgent report to Washington. You have on hand biographies of host-country key figures who could be elected to the new government. For weeks you have analyzed their positions on issues vital to the United States and consulted your contacts about the implications of the possible outcomes. In short, you know what you will write; you just need to know who won. Impatient, you consider phoning a good contact who is on the local election committee. You would like his inside view, but do not want anyone to think that you were involved in any way in the polling. Just then, the results are announced and you quickly draft your report for the Ambassador's approval.

As a political officer, you often work behind the scenes to analyze and report on local issues and events. You have excellent oral and written communication skills to convey clearly, concisely and persuasively often complex messages. In-depth knowledge of local culture and history helps you understand events and tailor the U.S. message effectively. You draw on that knowledge to advise U.S. policy makers of local views and their implications. You use foreign language and interpersonal skills to develop contacts and promote U.S. positions.

At the entry level, you will likely have your own portfolio, probably focusing on one segment of society, such as the major groups in religion, labor or academia. You will make contacts with leaders of this segment and with officials at the appropriate level in the major political parties, the Foreign Ministry and other ministries. You may supervise a locally-hired political specialist who has developed contacts in important segments of society and who advises you on local political and social developments. You will follow local newspapers and publications and accompany more senior officers on calls, taking notes and writing reports on the meetings.

As a mid-level officer, you will serve as political section head at a small-to-medium-sized post where you will advise the Ambassador, maintain contacts with political, labor, military and other figures at various levels of government and society. You will supervise entry-level officers and locally-hired political specialists. You will monitor, analyze and report on key issues; present demarches to the host government; explain to other diplomats U.S. positions on various issues; and gather information. When Washington officials visit, you will arrange schedules that meet policy objectives and accompany them to take notes. You may serve at the U.S. mission to an international organization where you will represent U.S. interests, coordinate responses to particular issues and interface with the organization's staff. You will gather information and papers for Washington delegations to high-level or technical meetings.

As a senior officer, you may serve as Ambassador or Deputy Chief of Mission, or manage a large political section, supervising a number of officers and advising the Ambassador. You often present demarches to the host government. You will meet regularly with political and social leaders and perhaps give speeches explaining the U.S. position on a variety of issues. If assigned to Washington, you will likely direct the work of an office or be an advisor to a senior Department official. You may head delegations to meetings abroad, both bilateral and multilateral. You will be responsible for drafting policy documents, and statements used by senior Department officials and U.S. embassies abroad.

- **Public Diplomacy**

The front pages of the local morning newspapers prominently accuse the U.S. government of “environmental terrorism,” claiming U.S. involvement in a toxic waste dump north of the capital. You alert the Ambassador to the story and then, with the help of your locally-hired assistant, weigh its implications. You consult on the facts with the embassy’s economic officer and learn that an American company did play a role in the matter, but the Federal government did not. By mid-morning, you have edited the economic counselor’s draft press statement to ensure the facts and responsibility are clear. By noon, you have faxed it to local media and granted three radio interviews in the local language. Although some damage has been done to the U.S. image, you and your team have corrected misperceptions of American responsibility.

The work of a public diplomacy officer is varied and demanding. It involves a high degree of outside contact work, dealing with the independent media, ministries of information, universities, cultural and arts institutions, libraries, think tanks and non-governmental organizations. You are the “face” of the U.S. embassy, maintaining contacts with key people who influence public opinion. You and your embassy colleagues identify key people and institutions where a special effort is vital to achieve mutual understanding. You depict U.S. views and policies accurately and serve as the antenna for local editorial and public opinion, detecting shifts that can affect U.S. interests. You need excellent communication and language skills, a strong sense of cultural and other nuances that affect how the U.S. message is received and the management skills for handling cultural education exchanges and other programs.

As an entry-level officer, you will be assigned as assistant cultural or information officer. You may coordinate exchange programs that send selected individuals to the United States on three-week fact-finding tours, oversee the website and use of other new technologies, or serve on a local Fulbright selection board and monitor the travel and professional programs of grantees, both in your host country and in the United States. As an information officer, you would be a contact for local reporters, editors and broadcasters, who seek up-to-date and accurate facts on U.S. policy or assistance with the methodology of fair reporting. Through your work in bolstering the media sector, you promote the U.S. core values of free speech and transparency.

As a mid-level officer, you may manage the staff of a cultural or information section of a medium-sized or large U.S. embassy, overseeing the budget, programming exchange opportunities and organizing focused programs and discussion groups with local colleagues on topics of mutual interest. You may also be responsible for an information resource center or language institute. A mid-level officer often sits on Fulbright boards or chairs a Fulbright commission. On the information side, you would handle inquiries from local and international media. At a small post, you may be doing all of the above.

As a senior officer, you may manage regional or global exchange programs from Washington, or represent an embassy overseas as its spokesperson and manager of culture and media programs. You may be responsible for significant budget and staff resources and for country-wide programs. You may serve as Ambassador, Deputy Chief of Mission, or as a senior country public affairs officer, whose job is to advise the Ambassador and other colleagues about the country’s media, cultural and educational climate.

PREREQUISITES FOR PERFORMING WELL IN ANY CAREER TRACK

A job analysis of the Foreign Service Officer position identified certain knowledge, skills and abilities that prospective Foreign Service Officers should possess prior to entry into the Foreign Service.

Knowledge of the following areas was identified as essential for success across all five career tracks (Consular, Economic, Management, Political and Public Diplomacy): proper English usage; U.S. society, culture, economy, history, government, political systems and the Constitution; world history and geography; and world political and social issues. In addition, all Foreign Service Officers should have a general understanding of basic mathematics and statistics, computer usage, principles of management, interpersonal communication and basic economic principles.

The 1997 job analysis also indicated that greater or more in-depth knowledge is needed in some areas, depending on the career track. In-depth knowledge may be required in the following areas: U.S. and international political and economic principles, issues and history; U.S. government and non-governmental agencies and organizations and their interactions with the Department of State; U.S. diplomacy, democratic philosophy and educational practices; U.S. policy issues and public and foreign policy formulation; legislation and laws related to Foreign Service issues; international economics, finance and commerce; administrative methods and procedures; interpersonal communication and behavior; and information and media resources.

The 2006-2007 update of the 1997 job analysis reaffirms that the following skills and abilities are important in the work of a Foreign Service Officer across all career tracks: strong interpersonal and communication skills; adaptability and stress tolerance; good problem-solving and decision-making skills; integrity and dependability; ability to plan and set priorities; and initiative and leadership.

See pages 38 and 39 for more information on these prerequisites.

Section II

The Foreign Service Selection Process

- **Qualifying for Appointment to the Foreign Service Officer Program**

While not a prerequisite, most successful FSO candidates have at least a bachelor's degree. In recent years, many candidates have also had advanced degrees in international relations, economics, business administration, law, journalism, or other areas. Many also had work experience in various fields before their appointment and have worked, attended school, or traveled overseas. Please see page 1 of this guide for a list of eligibility requirements.

- **A Five-Stage Selection Process**

Entry into the Foreign Service involves extensive screening through a five-stage selection process that includes: 1) the registration (application form); 2) the Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT); 3) the personal narratives; 4) the Qualifications Evaluation Panel (QEP); and 5) the Oral Assessment (FSOA).

1. Registration

To register for the FSOT, applicants first complete an on-line application form that asks them to provide basic factual information about their educations and work histories. The complete application form must be submitted before the registrant is invited to select a test seat appointment at a test center. The registration package takes approximately forty minutes to complete.

2. FSOT

The FSOT is administered at hundreds of commercial test centers throughout the United States and at locations abroad. The test lasts approximately three hours and draws upon a candidate's writing skills, general background, experience and education, and measures knowledge of English expression and other subjects basic to the functions of Foreign Service Officers. The test includes three multiple-choice sections—general job knowledge, English expression and a biographic information section that measures skills and abilities such as integrity, problem-solving and cultural sensitivity—and at least one 30-minute written essay. Seats for each FSOT administration are limited and invitations to schedule a seat appointment at a test center are sent by e-mail approximately five-to-six weeks before the test period on a first-come, first-served basis by career track according to when registrants submit their complete registration package.

The Test Day: Registrants must report to their assigned test center no later than the time shown in their confirmation notification e-mail. Late arrivals cannot be accommodated. **Registrants will be assessed a no-show fee of \$50.00 for failure to cancel the seat at least 48 hours before the test date or for failure to appear for the test.** A registrant cannot reserve a seat for a future test date until the no-show fee has been paid.

Examination Content: The FSO Test consists of the following components:

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- * Job Knowledge Test: The job-related knowledge test measures the candidate's depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding of a range of subjects identified in the 1997 job analysis as important for performing the tasks required of Foreign Service Officers. Topics covered appear later in this guide.
 - * English Expression and Usage Test: This test measures knowledge of correct grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation and organization required for written reports and for editing the written work of others. The test includes questions in each of these areas. Sample questions appear later in this guide.
 - * Biographic Information: The biographic information section provides an assessment of candidates' prior work, education and job-relevant life experiences, highlighting attributes such as the way they resolve conflicts, interact with others, adapt to other cultures and set priorities. The questionnaire does not penalize candidates who have not gone to college, who have no previous work experience, or who have varied patterns of education and experience. Rather, it credits candidates for what they have achieved relative to the opportunities they have had.
 - * Essay: Candidates draft one or two essays on a computer on assigned topics. The essays are evaluated on the quality of writing, including development of ideas, structure, clear language and the standard use of conventions—not on opinions expressed.

See Section IV of this guide for sample questions.

Performance on the FSOT is based on scored items only. In each section of the test, there are a small number of unscored items that are included for research purposes. Since these items are indistinguishable from those that are scored, it is important that examinees answer all the items in each section of the test to the best of their ability.

A minimum score for the multiple choice sections of the FSOT is established for eligibility for essays to be scored. Candidates who obtain this minimum score on the multiple choice sections of the FSOT have their essays graded. Candidates who have achieved the minimum score on both the multiple choice and essay tests receive instructions for completing personal narratives, which must be submitted prior to the deadline in order to advance to the QEP stage of the selection process. Those candidates whose scores do not reach the minimum are notified by e-mail that their candidacies end at this stage.

Candidates who have indicated at least a limited working knowledge of one of six super critical needs languages (SCNL) are invited to schedule a telephone test in that language with the Department of State's Language Testing Unit. Please see page 4 for more information. Candidates who pass the FSOA may test in critical needs languages (CNL) and other languages to boost their scores on the hiring register. Note that boosting a score with an SCNL or CNL language bonus obligates those who are hired to serve in a country where that language is spoken at least twice in a career. Candidates must confirm by e-mail when they are put on the register that they understand this obligation. There is more information on this obligation and

bonus points at careers.state.gov.

3. Personal Narratives

Candidates whose FSOT scores reach or exceed the minimum passing score then have three weeks to write personal narratives consisting of five short essays about the skills, knowledge and abilities they would bring to the Foreign Service. The questions seek a great deal of information in a limited space (200 words per question). Applicants should highlight their most salient qualifications. For example, recent graduates with little work experience would likely focus on academic and volunteer experience; candidates who have been in the work force for a number of years would likely focus on jobs and associated responsibilities. Candidates should think broadly about their personal, educational and professional experience, including paid and volunteer work experience, educational achievements, training, awards, hobbies, sports and travel. Candidates are also asked to provide references who can verify the information provided. All information is subject to verification and factual misrepresentation may be grounds for terminating a candidacy.

4. Qualifications Evaluation Panel (QEP)

The QEP reviews the work and education portions of the application form, the personal narratives and the FSOT/essay results to select those candidates qualified to be invited to the Oral Assessment. All applicants who reach this stage receive an electronic letter from ACT once the QEP review is complete, inviting them to the Oral Assessment or ending their candidacies.

5. Foreign Service Oral Assessment (FSOA)

The invitation to the full-day oral assessment process is in part based on anticipated hiring needs and budget. Assessments are conducted in Washington, D.C. and in a limited number of other major cities in the United States. Travel to the oral assessment site is at the candidate's expense. All candidates should pay careful attention to the instructions in the results letter concerning completing an SF-86 (also referred to as e-QIP) to apply for a security clearance.

The assessment center exercises are based on the 13 dimensions identified as essential to Foreign Service jobs. See page 39 for the definitions of the dimensions. The oral assessment tests the abilities and personal characteristics considered necessary to perform that work. Candidates are advised at the end of the assessment day if they are eligible to continue their candidacy. For more information and a sample of the oral assessment, go to careers.state.gov.

• Request for Re-Scoring Test Record

The Department of State and ACT, Inc. maintain a variety of quality control procedures to ensure the accuracy of scores and score reporting. However, candidates who think a scoring error has occurred may submit a written request for re-scoring. The test record for all three multiple-choice sections will be re-scored by hand for a fee of \$30. The fee to re-evaluate the written essay is also \$30. Copies of the written essay or multiple choice answer sheets will not be released or provided to examinees.

The results of re-scoring is reported to the candidate in writing two to three weeks after the

request is received. Requests for re-scoring must be received by ACT not more than five months after the test date. Candidates wishing to be re-scored should include in their letters their full names, dates of birth, mailing addresses and test dates and locations and advise which section of the test is to be re-scored. Candidates should also enclose a check or money order payable to ACT, Inc. for the appropriate amount and mail everything to: ACT, Inc., Foreign Service Officer Test (82), P.O. Box 4070, Iowa City, IA 52243-4070.

- **Study Guide**

A study guide is available to help candidates prepare for the Foreign Service Officer Test and Oral Assessment. The study guide contains sample topics for the written essay and sample versions of the English expression and job knowledge segments of the written exam. Explanations of the answers for the two segments are provided as well. There are also examples of the biographic information questionnaire. The study guide may be ordered in hardcopy or downloaded through the State Department's website: careers.state.gov. There is also an order form at the back of this guide.

TESTING OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) is prepared and administered by ACT for the U.S. Department of State. In accordance with Federal law, the Department of State will provide reasonable accommodation to enable qualified applicants with disabilities to take the FSOT. Accommodation may include such actions as provision by ACT of a reader or a person to record answers, a separate testing room, extra testing time, a Braille or cassette version of the test, and/or large-print versions of the exam.

All registrants, including those requesting accommodations, must register on-line.

Requests for accommodations and **complete**, current (within the last five years) supporting documentation must be received at least four weeks prior to the requested test date, along with a copy of the on-line confirmation received after submission of an on-line application.

Registrants should send requests for accommodations and complete supporting documentation to: ACT, Inc., Foreign Service Officer Test (82), P.O. Box 4070, Iowa City, IA 52243-4070.

Requests that are incomplete or are not supported by appropriate documentation by the registration deadline may not be approved. Candidates who need accommodations are requested to register as early as possible in order for ACT to have sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.

Those granted accommodation receive a letter from ACT confirming the accommodation to be provided. If the request is incomplete or the documentation does not support the accommodation request, ACT notifies the registrant in writing. The registrant may then provide complete or updated documents prior to the deadline. Every effort will be made to provide accommodation at the registrant's chosen test center and on the chosen date. In order to meet certain requests, there may be a delay, but it should not be greater than one test cycle. Moreover, some test centers may be unable to provide certain types of accommodation.

Application Requirements for Any Type of Disability

1. Completed registration. All registrants, including those requesting accommodations, must register on-line.
2. A written request for accommodation, including:
 - (a) a detailed description of the disability; and
 - (b) a detailed description of the accommodation necessary for the registrant to take the written examination. If additional testing time is necessary, the registrant's request must include the precise amount of time needed; for example, time and a half, or regular test time but longer breaks between sections.
3. A letter, prepared within the last five years and on office letterhead, from the registrant's physician or other specialist licensed or certified to diagnose and treat the disability. The physician's or specialist's letter must include:
 - (a) current professional diagnosis of the registrant's disability;
 - (b) the specific accommodation required as a result of the disability;
 - (c) an explanation of the need for the accommodation and how the functional limits of the disability relate to test-taking activity; and
 - (d) the treatment provided and the last date of treatment.
4. A statement from the specialist or doctor describing past testing accommodation, if any.

If the accommodation required includes additional testing time, the registrant's physician or specialist must include the precise amount of time needed **as well as the diagnostic basis for the additional time**. If the accommodation required is due to a diagnosis of a **cognitive (learning) disability**, the physician or specialist must include additional documentation.

Additional Documentation Requirements for Diagnosis of Cognitive (Learning) Disability

If a registrant requires testing accommodation due to a cognitive disability, the registrant's physician or specialist must provide the following documentation **in addition to that described above**. All tests used by the physician or specialist to support a diagnosis of cognitive disability must be reliable, valid, standardized and age appropriate. All standard scores and percentiles (including those of sub-tests) must be included in the documentation.

1. A report that includes a description of the **presenting problem(s)** and its (their) **developmental history**, along with a **specific diagnosis** and evidence that alternative explanations were ruled out.
2. A neuropsychological or psychoeducational evaluation that includes the results of an **aptitude assessment** using a complete and comprehensive battery. (The preferred instrument is the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III. Another acceptable instrument is the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability.)
3. The results of a complete **achievement battery**, including a report of current levels of academic functioning in relevant areas such as reading (decoding and comprehension) and written language (e.g., the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Tests of Achievement; the Nelson-Denny Reading Skills Test; or the Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults).

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4. The results of an assessment of **information processing** (e.g., short- and long-term memory, sequential memory, processing speed, executive functioning) using appropriate instruments (e.g., the Wechsler Memory Scale or relevant sub-tests from the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability).
 5. The results of other appropriate assessment measures to support a differential diagnosis or to disentangle the cognitive disability from co-existing neurological and/or personality disorders.
 6. **If the diagnosed cognitive disability is attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**, the physician or specialist should provide relevant batteries as described above to determine patterns that support attention problems.

The physician or specialist also must provide:

- a measure of reading speed;
- a review of DSM-IV diagnostic criteria for ADHD;
- a description of which impairment-causing symptoms were present in childhood;
- A description of which current symptoms have been present for at least the past six months and how the symptoms relate to the test-taking activity.

THE PATH TO APPOINTMENT

Candidates who are successful in the oral assessments have several additional selection steps before they can be offered appointments as Foreign Service Officer career candidates, pending tenure. Each candidate must receive medical and security clearances and pass a final suitability review.

• **Worldwide Availability**

Worldwide availability is an essential qualification for appointment to the Foreign Service. Regardless of who administers the medical exam, the Department's Office of Medical Services determines whether a candidate is available for assignment to Department of State posts worldwide. Certain medical conditions that require monitoring or follow-up care, or are prone to exacerbation in certain overseas environments, may result in a finding of non-worldwide availability and thus disqualify a candidate from eligibility. In cases where medical problems lead to a denial of medical clearance, the candidate may request a waiver of the worldwide availability requirement by the Employment Review Committee. The committee operates on a case-by-case basis and only grants waivers if it is clearly in the best interests of the Foreign Service.

• **Medical Clearance**

Those entering the Foreign Service must be able to serve at any overseas post. Many facilities are remote, unhealthy, or have limited medical support. Therefore, each candidate must meet medical fitness standards which are, of necessity, often more rigorous than those of other professions. Prior to being appointed to the Foreign Service, candidates must have a thorough

medical examination and receive an unlimited medical clearance for assignment worldwide. Candidates who pass the oral assessment are provided with instructions for the examining physician(s) that outline the precise requirements and a voucher that authorizes the Department of State to pay for the exam. Candidates living within a fifty-mile radius of Washington, D.C. must have the medical exams performed by the Office of Medical Services. Children under the age of 6 must be examined by their own family physicians. While candidates must be medically cleared for full overseas duty, the Department of State no longer considers the medical condition of family members for pre-employment purposes. However, the Department still requires medical clearances for family members before they can travel overseas to accompany an employee on assignment at U.S. Government expense. Family members who, for medical reasons, cannot accompany an employee on an overseas assignment may be eligible to receive a separate maintenance allowance.

- **Background Investigation**

A comprehensive security background investigation, conducted by the U.S. Department of State in cooperation with other federal, state and local agencies, provides information necessary to determine a candidate's suitability for appointment to the Foreign Service and for a top secret security clearance. The process considers such factors as: failure to repay a U.S. Government-guaranteed loan or meet tax obligations, or failure to register for the Selective Service; past problems with credit or bankruptcy; unsatisfactory employment records; a criminal record or other violations of the law; drug or alcohol abuse; and less than honorable discharge from the armed forces. Extensive travel, education, residence and/or employment overseas may extend the time it takes to obtain a clearance. Candidates who cannot be granted security clearances are ineligible for appointment. Candidates who hold an active top secret security clearance from another U.S. federal agency and whose last background investigation is no more than seven years old can usually have their security clearances transferred. However, for purposes of determining candidates' suitability (see section below), candidates whose background investigation is more than two years old still need to update documentation.

- **Final Review Panel (FRP)**

When the security clearance process is completed, the Board of Examiners convenes a Final Review Panel. The panel assesses all of the information related to the applicant to determine suitability for appointment to the Foreign Service. All Foreign Service applicants must receive valid medical, security and suitability clearances as a final condition of employment.

- **Candidates with Disabilities**

The Department of State provides reasonable accommodation to Foreign Service candidates with disabilities throughout the pre-employment process. Please see pages 17-18 of this registration guide for detailed information on registration procedures. For qualified candidates who will require accommodation upon appointment, the Office of Employee Relations is responsible for determining whether reasonable accommodation can be

provided. To be considered qualified, a candidate must meet all requirements for appointment to the Foreign Service. This includes an unlimited medical clearance from the Office of Medical Services or a waiver of the worldwide availability requirement from the Employment Review Committee.

- **Career Track Hiring Registers**

Candidates who pass the oral assessment and who have successfully passed the security background investigation, the medical clearance and the final suitability review process are placed on rank-ordered career track hiring registers (based on the career tracks chosen by the candidates). Appointments to entry-level positions are made from the five registers. If a candidate declines two job offers, he/she is removed from the register. Candidates with veteran points and/or a demonstrated speaking proficiency in a foreign language can earn bonus points and improve their rank-order positions on the hiring lists. Information about these bonuses is provided upon successful completion of the oral assessment.

- **Yearly Hires**

The number of candidates hired each year varies with the needs and budget of the Foreign Service and does not always equal the number of candidates on the registers. Every attempt is made to give new employees ample time to make personal arrangements to come on board.

- **Entry-Level Salary Range**

Since the Foreign Service is a career service, appointments are made at one of three entry levels based on the candidate's education, professional experience and, if applicable, current Federal base salary. Fluency in certain foreign languages may qualify candidates for language incentive pay while serving at posts where these languages are used. Information on the current entry-level FSO salary ranges is available at our website, careers.state.gov.

- **Training**

On entering the Foreign Service, all new officers receive several weeks of basic orientation at the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center in Arlington, Virginia. An officer can expect up to seven months of subsequent training prior to the first overseas assignment, much of it involving foreign language instruction, as needed. New officers whose first overseas assignment is to a country where they already have professional competence in the local language may have a significantly shorter training period.

- **Tenuring and Commissioning**

FSOs are reviewed for tenure and commissioning over a five-year period and are first reviewed after three years of service. Most career candidates can expect to be commissioned as FSOs before the end of their time-limited appointment, following approval by the Foreign Service Commissioning and Tenure Board.

Section III

Registering for the Foreign Service Officer Test

Please make sure you meet all the eligibility requirements on page 1 of this selection process guide before you register to take the Foreign Service Officer Test. No exceptions can be made to the eligibility requirements for Foreign Service Officer candidates. Those interested in taking the test must register in advance. Because of the personal information collected in the registration process, registrants must complete their own on-line application forms. Please carefully read this guide before completing your on-line registration.

To take the Foreign Service Officer Test, each registrant, including those requesting accommodations, must register in advance by submitting a complete application form. You can access the link to the registration package at careers.state.gov. Those applying for testing accommodation will also need to mail supporting documentation to ACT four weeks before the requested test date.

If you are having difficulty registering for the test, please contact ACT. Those calling from the United States may call ACT at (800) 205-6358; the number for those calling from overseas is (319) 341-2500. ACT is available to receive and answer calls on weekdays (excluding holidays) between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Central Time. You may also contact ACT by e-mail at fsot@act.org, or through their fax number, (319) 337-1122. Please be prepared to give ACT all necessary registration information.

When scheduling windows are open, registered candidates receive e-mails authorizing them to schedule test seats, contingent on seat availability, for the next available test window. Seating is limited; candidates are invited to schedule test appointments on a first-come, first-served basis within a one-week scheduling window, according to their career tracks and the date their completed registration package was submitted. Those candidates not invited to the next test window or not able to test during the that window are invited to later test windows in the order their completed registration packages were received.

Registered candidates should be careful to ensure that e-mail messages from ACT reach their in-boxes and are not sent to the trash bin by spam filters. Candidates who have not received messages from ACT within the time frames indicated on page 7 may also contact ACT.

If an applicant schedules a seat appointment and later decides she or he is unable to test on that day, s/he must notify ACT. The applicant can try to reschedule for a different test day (within the available appointments) or cancel the test appointment. Cancellation must occur at least 48 hours prior to the date of the scheduled appointment. If an applicant fails to appear for the test appointment or to cancel the test appointment at least 48 hours before the test date, the applicant will be required to pay a \$50.00 no-show fee.

- **Use of Data Collected in the Registration Application Form and Personal Narrative**

Responses to items in the application form related to your education and work experience and all responses to the personal narrative are used by the Qualifications Evaluation Panel to determine your qualifications and experience relative to selection as a Foreign Service Officer. Moreover, the information requested on the application form is used for printing admission tickets and attendance rosters, improving future tests and conducting research based on the results of the test. Your cooperation in providing responses to all items is greatly appreciated.

The collection of information concerning disabilities is authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 92-112). The information you furnish is used for the purpose of producing statistical reports to show agency progress in the hiring, placement and advancement of individuals with disabilities and to locate individuals for voluntary participation in surveys. The reports are used to inform agency management, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Congress and the public of the status of programs for employment of individuals with disabilities. All such reports are in the form of aggregate totals and do not identify you as an individual in any way. While self-identification is voluntary, your cooperation in providing accurate information is critical.

Information on the race, national origin and sex of the applicants is collected in accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended and Federal Sector Equal Employment Opportunity Regulations (29 C.F.R. 1614.601). It is disclosed only in the form of gross statistics in reports, studies or other analyses to help ensure that agency personnel practices meet the requirements of Federal law.

• **Test Center Admission and Regulations**

- ◆ You must register on-line, even if you are requesting a testing accommodation.
- ◆ Bring your scheduling confirmation e-mail (notification e-mail confirming your test location, test date and time) with you to your test center.
- ◆ You must bring a valid (not expired) U.S. Government issued state or federal photo ID such as a government-issued ID, driver's license, passport, or Military ID. Test center supervisors are authorized to refuse admittance to applicants whose identities cannot be positively established.
- ◆ Your appointment is not transferable to another person.
- ◆ A test center administrator will continuously monitor your test session. You must consent to video and audio taping of your test session and to the examination of the video and/or audio tape of your test session in the event that any questions should arise concerning possible violations of the procedures.
- ◆ You must follow the instructions of the test administrator, represent yourself honestly and conduct yourself quietly to avoid interfering with the performance of other test takers.
- ◆ You must not bring into the testing room any unauthorized items such as food, drinks, purses, briefcases, backpacks, cell phones, pagers, notes, note pads, photographic equipment, or any electronic devices other than those provided by or expressly approved by the test center staff.
- ◆ You must return all materials, including scratch paper, provided to you by the test center staff when you have completed your test and before you leave the test center.

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- ◆ You must neither give nor receive any form of unauthorized assistance during the test or any breaks.
 - ◆ If you have any questions or concerns about the test or environment, you must quietly leave the testing room to notify the test center staff. You must report all problems to test center staff.
 - ◆ You must not remove any written, printed, or recorded materials of your test from the test center. The test questions remain the property of the Department of State and you agree to maintain the confidentiality of the questions and answers.
 - ◆ You must sign in and out every time you enter or leave the testing room. You should use the restroom or otherwise address personal needs prior to beginning your test. During testing, the timer remains running during any unscheduled breaks. You must remain in the test center and may leave only to use those restroom facilities that are closest to the test room. You must not leave the building. You cannot access a phone or your personal belongings, except in the case of an emergency. Under such circumstances, you must notify the test center staff before accessing a phone or your personal belongings. The test center staff must monitor you.
 - ◆ You will be provided earplugs upon request. You may not use your own.
 - ◆ Test center staff must be allowed 30 minutes to resolve any technical problems that may arise (including power failure). You have the option of continuing the test or requesting a rescheduling of the test for technical or other problems outside of your control taking more than 30 minutes to resolve.
 - ◆ You are required to sign a form agreeing to abide by the above information and regulations of the test center.
 - ◆ Your failure to comply with any of the regulations listed above may affect the outcome of your test and further may have additional consequences as determined by the Department of State.
 - ◆ Your Foreign Service Officer Test is given only on the day and time scheduled. Makeup tests cannot be authorized for any reason.
 - ◆ You should report to the test center at the time shown on your scheduling e-mail. If you report to the center later than the time stated on your scheduling e-mail, you will not be admitted.
 - ◆ You are not permitted to continue any part of the test beyond the established time limit.
 - ◆ Scoring is based on the number of questions you answer correctly. There is no penalty for guessing.

Your scheduled appointment is not transferable to another person. You will be assessed a fee of \$50.00 for failure to cancel the seat at least 48 hours before the FSOT test date or for failure to appear for the test. You cannot reserve a seat for another test date until any outstanding no-show fee has been paid.

If you lose your e-mail confirmation notification and do not know when you have scheduled your test appointment, you may notify the ACT Call Center at 1-800-205-6366.

- **EEO Contact**

Candidates who believe that they have been discriminated against during the pre-employment

process must contact the Department of State's Office of Civil Rights, at (202) 647-9294, within 45 days of the alleged discriminatory act.

- **Reporting Results**

Results letters will be available approximately three weeks after the date you take the Foreign Service Officer Test. You are sent an e-mail providing directions for downloading your results letter. The results letter specifies whether you are invited to the QEP phase of the Foreign Service Officer selection process. If yes, then the letter also provides instructions on writing and submitting the five personal narratives. Pay careful attention to the three-week deadline for submitting the personal narratives. It is vital that you notify ACT of any change in your email address, so you can receive the invitation to complete the personal narrative responses as soon as it is sent.

The personal login ID and password that you used to register is required to retrieve your results letter on-line. **You can only retrieve your letter on-line. Your letter will NOT be mailed to you.**

The results of the QEP are provided in a second results letter. **The letters for those invited to the oral assessment will include information for scheduling the date and location of the oral assessment and instructions for the forms (SF-86 and related forms) needed for the security clearance process (e-QIP).**

The QEP results are provided on a pass/fail basis. The pass/fail determination is based on the level of test performance needed to ensure acceptable proficiency on the job. The number of candidates invited to the oral assessment may be based in part on hiring needs.

FSOT and QEP results will not be reported on the telephone for any reason.

If you expect your name or address to change prior to the exam results notification date, you can make the necessary changes on your answer document and give it to the supervisor at the test center. You may also contact ACT, Inc., Foreign Service Officer Test (82), P.O. Box 4070, Iowa City, IA 52243-4070 or fax the changes to ACT at (319) 337-1122, including your full name and date of birth.

All inquiries concerning exam results should be sent in writing to: ACT, Inc., Foreign Service Officer Test (82), P.O. Box 4070, Iowa City, IA 52243-4070. You may also call (319) 341-2500, or toll free, (800) 205-6358 between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Central Time, or e-mail ACT at fsot@ACT.org. Any other inquiries about the examination should be addressed to the Staff Director, Board of Examiners, U.S. Department of State, 2401 E Street, NW, 5th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20522.

Section IV

Sample Foreign Service Officer Test Questions

1. Job Knowledge Test

To familiarize you with representative types of questions that appear in this part of the Foreign Service Written Examination, the following sample questions are provided. They are intended as examples of the subject matter covered by this test, not the degree of difficulty. An answer key can be found at the end of the Sample Tests.

DIRECTIONS: Each question or incomplete statement below is followed by four suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case. (N.B. In the actual on-line FSOT, once you complete and exit a test section, you may not return to that section.)

Knowledge Area: United States Government (general understanding of the composition and functioning of the Federal government, the Constitution and its history, the structure of Congress and its role in foreign affairs, as well as the United States political system and its role in governmental structure, formulation of government policies, and foreign affairs)

1. A political device of drawing irregular district lines in order to favor one political power over another is called:
 - A. gerrymandering.
 - B. filibustering.
 - C. federalizing.
 - D. rezoning.
2. Congress can override a Presidential veto of a congressional bill by:
 - A. not signing the bill.
 - B. passing the bill again by a two-thirds majority in both houses.
 - C. filibustering.
 - D. voting to place the bill in the congressional record.
3. Which of the following amendments to the Constitution affect the political process by declaring that the Federal government should not interfere with the press?
 - A. First
 - B. Fifth
 - C. Seventh
 - D. None – no amendment refers to the press

Knowledge Area: United States Society and Culture (general understanding of major events, institutions, and movements in national history, including political and economic history, as well as national customs and culture, social issues and trends, and the influence of U.S. society on foreign policy and foreign affairs)

4. The primary medium for the diffusion of American popular culture throughout the world following World War I was:
 - A. motion pictures.
 - B. newspapers.
 - C. radio.
 - D. books.
5. The architect Maya Lin is known for designing the:
 - A. Paris Las Vegas Hotel, Las Vegas.
 - B. Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, DC.
 - C. Sears Tower, Chicago.
 - D. Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

Knowledge Area: World History and Geography (general understanding of significant world historical events, issues, and developments, including their impact on U.S. foreign policy, as well as knowledge of world geography and its relationship to U.S. foreign policy)

6. The most economical route for an oil pipeline from Turkmenistan to world export markets would cross:
 - A. Iran.
 - B. Afghanistan.
 - C. Uzbekistan.
 - D. Pakistan.

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7. The purpose of the South African policy of apartheid was best described as the:
- A. segregation of blacks from English-speaking whites.
 - B. control of immigration from neighboring countries.
 - C. protection of the economic, political, and social status of Afrikaners.
 - D. promotion of equal opportunity for various racial groups.

Knowledge Area: Economics (general understanding of basic economic principles, as well as a general understanding of economic issues and the economic system of the United States)

8. The Council of Economic Advisers advises which of the following on monetary and fiscal policy?
- A. The Federal Reserve Bank
 - B. The Joint Economic Committee of Congress
 - C. The President of the United States
 - D. The Senate Budget Committee
9. All of the following are examples of United States products that would typically fail to be produced to optimal output without government intervention EXCEPT:
- A. national defense products.
 - B. light provided by lighthouses.
 - C. new automobiles.
 - D. new highways.

Knowledge Area: Mathematics and Statistics (basic mathematical and statistical procedures and calculations)

10. After a 3 percent raise and a \$3,000 bonus, a worker's salary increased to \$50,000. What was the worker's salary before the raise and bonus?
- A. \$48,544
 - B. \$47,000
 - C. \$46,910
 - D. \$45,631
11. The test scores for seven students are 90, 90, 70, 40, 80, 90 and 100. What is the median score for this group?
- A. 70
 - B. 80
 - C. 85
 - D. 90

Knowledge Area: Management (general understanding of basic management and supervisory techniques and methods. Includes knowledge of human psychology, leadership, motivational strategies and equal employment practices)

12. The primary guideline for effective delegation of tasks to subordinates is to:
- A. delegate to subordinates only when necessary.
 - B. delegate both pleasant and unpleasant tasks to subordinates.
 - C. provide subordinates information on a "need-to-know" basis.
 - D. provide assistance to subordinates whenever it is requested.
13. A work group that has high performance norms and low cohesiveness will most likely have which of the following levels of performance?
- A. Very high
 - B. High
 - C. Moderate
 - D. Low

Knowledge Area: Communication (general understanding of principles of effective communication and public speaking techniques, as well as general knowledge of the common sources of information, public media and media relations)

14. Posing rhetorical questions, telling a story, and providing a quotation are all techniques that help a public speaker to:
- A. arouse audience curiosity.
 - B. avoid audience questions.
 - C. increase audience anxiety.
 - D. avoid visual aids.
15. Unless told otherwise, a professional journalist will most likely consider anything said by a source to be:
- A. off the record.
 - B. on the record.
 - C. on background.
 - D. not attributable.

Knowledge Area: Computers (general understanding of basic computer operations such as word processing, databases, spreadsheets, and preparing and using e-mail)

16. It is common practice of e-mail users to have some specific text automatically appear at the end of their sent messages. This text is called their:
- A. attachment.
 - B. subject.
 - C. signature.
 - D. protocol.

Knowledge Area: U.S. and International Political and Economic Principles, Issues and History

17. The National Labor Relations Act established:
- A. a “cooling off” period before workers in a critical industry could strike.
 - B. the right of federal workers in non-defense agencies to organize and strike.
 - C. the government’s right to prohibit strikes by industrial workers during wartime.
 - D. collective bargaining and the right to organize as national policy.

Knowledge Area: Legislation and Laws Related to Foreign Service Issues

18. The Freedom of Information Act, enacted by the Congress in 1966, was expanded in 1996 to encompass:
- A. audiotaped transcripts.
 - B. Supreme Court deliberations.
 - C. electronic records.
 - D. Presidential campaign contributions.

Knowledge Area: Administrative Methods and Procedures

19. In federal government budgeting, “mandatory” spending differs from “discretionary” spending in which way?
- A. Legislative committees may not cut mandatory spending levels.
 - B. Mandatory spending is not subject to the annual appropriations process.
 - C. Discretionary spending increases in one budget category must be offset by reductions elsewhere
 - D. Bills to re-categorize mandatory funding as discretionary must originate in the House.

Knowledge Area: Information and Media Resources

20. Which of the following Web-based international news sources is published by the Council on Foreign Relations?
- A. <http://www.pressdigest.org>
 - B. <http://www.foreignaffairs.org>
 - C. <http://www.associateprogram.com>
 - D. <http://www.info-strategy.com>

2. English Expression Test

DIRECTIONS: In the passages that follow, certain words and phrases are underlined and numbered. In the right-hand column, you will find alternatives for each underlined part. You are to choose the one that best expresses the idea, makes the statement appropriate for standard written English, or is worded most consistently with the style and tone of the passage as a whole. If you think the original version is best, choose option A., which is the same as the original version.

You may also find questions about a section of the passage, or about the passage as a whole. These questions do not refer to an underlined portion of the passage, but rather are identified by a number or numbers.

For each question, choose the alternative you consider best and circle the letter of that choice. Read each passage through once before you begin to answer the questions that accompany it. You cannot determine most answers without reading several sentences beyond the question. Be sure that you have read far enough ahead each time you choose an alternative.

¹The poaching of elephants, which goes on in the African nation of Chad, is a serious problem.

The national parks director advised the U.S. embassy on January 11 that poaching has been on the increase since the prohibition on ²three African states on hunting and the ivory trade were revised. Statistics

³maintained by the Parks Department show that during the January 1997 to June 1998 period, a total of 41 elephants were killed in Zakouma National Park, where there is, at last count, a seasonal population of 2,000 elephants. Statistics for the ⁴most recent six-month period are still being compiled by the Parks

1. A. The poaching of elephants, which goes on in the African nation of Chad, is
B. The poaching in the African nation of Chad of elephants is
C. The poaching of elephants in the African nation of Chad is
D. In the African nation of Chad the poaching of elephants are
2. A. three African states on hunting and the ivory trade were revised.
B. hunting and the ivory trade in three African states were revised.
C. three African states on hunting and the ivory trade was revised.
D. hunting and the ivory trade in three African states was revised.
3. A. maintained by the Parks Department
B. maintained, by the Parks Department,
C. by the Parks Department
D. the Parks Department maintains,
4. A. most recent six-month period are still
B. just passed six-month period are still in the process of
C. six-month period that just passed is still in the process of
D. most recent six-month period is still

⁵Department, however the department director, he was unequivocal about there being an overall worsening of the situation. He maintained that approximately five elephants per month ⁶is being killed, but that these

figures ⁷take into account incidents within Zakouma Park only, where the Parks Department maintain, some capacity to monitor the situation. Elephant populations also exist outside the park, and during the rainy season, even the Zakouma population is forced into

a dry-season dispersal area to the west and north ⁸that appears to be lots larger than the park itself. Poaching does occur in these ⁹zones, but it is more difficult to monitor than in the park.

¹⁰Since two game wardens were shot, and killed by poachers in Zakouma Park in December 1997,

the government of Chad has temporarily increased ¹¹it's military presence in the zone, which, according to the park director, has had a somewhat dissuasive effect this past month.

5. A. Department, however the department director, he was unequivocal about there
B. Department, however, the department director was unequivocal for their
C. Department. However, the department director was unequivocal about their
D. Department. However, the department director was unequivocal about there
6. A. is being killed, but that
B. is being killed, but that,
C. are being killed, but that
D. are being killed, but that,
7. A. take into account incidents within Zakouma Park only, where the Parks Department maintain, some
B. take into account incidents within Zakouma Park only, where the Parks Department maintains some
C. take into account incidents, within Zakouma Park only, where the Parks Department maintains some sort of
D. accounts for incidents within Zakouma Park only, wherein the Parks Department maintains some
8. Assuming that all of the following are accurate, which one provides information about the dispersal area while maintaining the tone of the passage?
A. that appears to be lots larger than the park itself.
B. about the same shape as the park but four times the size.
C. with lots of room for other elephants and different kinds of animals.
D. that is about four times the size of the park itself.
9. A. zones, but it is more difficult to monitor than
B. zones. But it is more difficult to monitor then
C. zones; but it is most difficult to monitor then
D. zones: but it is more difficult to monitor than
10. A. two game wardens were shot, and killed by poachers
B. the fatal shooting and killing of two game wardens by poachers
C. poachers used guns to kill two game wardens
D. poachers shot and killed two game wardens
11. A. it's military presence
B. its military presence
C. its militarys' presence
D. it's military, present

The U.S. embassy anticipates holding a training exercise for park rangers in March or April of this year and ¹²will soon be transferring two vehicles to the park. The embassy has also sought funding from the Department of Interior's African Elephant Conservation Fund in an effort to ¹³help to conserve Chad's elephant population. ¹⁴In addition, the embassy is discussing with the U.S. Forest and Wildlife Service the possibility ¹⁵that an official would be in Chad for a specific purpose. ¹⁶

12. A. will soon be transferring
B. would soon be transferring
C. soon would have transferred
D. soon transferred
13. A. help to conserve
B. conserve
C. conserve and maintain
D. ensure the conservation and safety of
14. A. In addition,
B. At this place in time,
C. When all is said and done,
D. As you will come to know,
15. Given that all of the following choices are true, which one would provide the clearest and most relevant information to the paragraph?
- A. that an official would be in Chad for a specific purpose.
B. that someone would be sent to Chad with the purpose being to assess the particulars of the situation.
C. of its sending an official to Chad to assess the situation.
D. of an official visit to Chad, sent by them for the sole purpose of the assessment.
16. Which of the following sentences best summarizes the last paragraph?
- A. The U.S. embassy in Chad has an excess number of vehicles.
B. The U.S. has an interest in the fate of Chad's elephant population.
C. The U.S. Department of Interior has expanded its sphere into international arenas.
D. Chad has an insurmountable elephant problem.

Questions 17-25: In the following sentences, certain words and phrases are underlined and numbered. Each sentence is followed by alternatives for each underlined part. Choose the alternative that best expresses the idea in standard written English. If you think the original version is best, choose option **A.**, which is the same as the original version.

The Office of Ecology and Terrestrial Conservation leads the formulation of policies to address international threats to biodiversity, ¹⁷notably land degradation, invasive species, and illegal trade.

17. **A.** notably
B. notable
C. more notably
D. more notable

There is a controversy over a series of apparent incursions across a border line ¹⁸drawn in 1923.

18. **A.** drawn
B. which is drawn
C. where it was drawn
D. drawing

Last Sunday's parliamentary election ¹⁹delivery of a stinging setback to the governing Liberal Party.

19. **A.** delivery of a
B. was delivered by a
C. delivered a
D. deliverance of that

A large segment of Lapatria's officer corps ²⁰have been receiving U.S. training.

20. **A.** have been receiving
B. have received
C. are receiving
D. has received

The ambassador and ²¹myself were in attendance at the ceremony.

21. **A.** myself were in attendance at
B. I attended
C. me were in attendance at
D. myself attended

If we ²²had had the map, we might ²³of went farther inland.

22. **A.** had had
B. have had
C. had
D. have
23. **A.** of went
B. have went
C. of gone
D. have gone

Sustainable development involves enriching our people without impoverishing our planet and is a compelling moral and humanitarian issue. But sustainable development is also a security imperative. [24]

24. Which of the following sentences, inserted here, would best explain how sustainable development relates to security?

- A.** When we talk of sustainable development, we are talking about the means to unlock human potential through economic development based on sound economic policy.
B. Achieving sustainable management of natural resources worldwide requires the cooperation and commitment of all countries.
C. The best social development is based on investments in health and education and responsible stewardship of the environment.
D. Environmental degradation coupled with poverty and despair causes social instability that can spread from individual countries to entire regions.

The Inter-American Convention Against Corruption covers corrupt practices on both the national and international ²⁵level, furthermore, it commits nations to bringing domestic law into compliance with the convention.

25. **A.** level,
B. level
C. level;
D. level—

3. Biographic Information Questionnaire

DIRECTIONS: This questionnaire asks you to describe your educational background, your work, and other experiences in specific areas that are related to successful job performance.

Read each item carefully. You are to choose *one* answer to each question. Do not spend too much time on any one item. On some questions you are asked to explain or give more information. For these questions, select a response A-E and then give your examples on the lines provided. While there are no correct or incorrect answers, **your responses are subject to verification.**

1. How effective would supervisors, teachers, or colleagues say you are at handling multiple projects simultaneously?

- A. Much more effective than most people
- B. Somewhat more effective than most people
- C. About as effective as most people
- D. Somewhat less effective than most people
- E. Much less effective than most people

- C. 3-4
- D. 5-6
- E. 7 or more

If you answered B, C, D, or E, list the position(s). List no more than four.

2. When taking tests in school, how much did feelings of anxiety prevent you from performing your best?

- A. Very much
- B. Much
- C. Some
- D. A little
- E. Very little

5. During the last year, how often have you volunteered to complete a task you knew would be tedious?

- A. Quite a few times
- B. Several times
- C. A couple of times
- D. Once
- E. Never

If you answered A, B, C, or D, list any such tasks and briefly describe them. List no more than four.

3. In the past three months, how often have you read about cultures different from your own (e.g., ethnographies, *National Geographic*)?

- A. Very often
- B. Often
- C. Sometimes
- D. Seldom
- E. Never

If you answered A, B, C, or D, list the cultures and the materials read. List no more than four.

6. To what extent have you made it a practice to express a personal interest in the individuals with whom you work?

- A. To a very great extent
- B. To a great extent
- C. To a moderate extent
- D. To a limited extent
- E. To a very limited extent

4. During the last five years, how many times have you been nominated for a leadership position?

- A. 0
- B. 1-2

7. How likely have you been to keep up with the latest developments in technology?

- A. Very likely
- B. Likely
- C. Neutral—neither likely nor unlikely
- D. Unlikely
- E. Very unlikely

If you answered A or B, list the technologies. List no more than four.

8. During the last year, how many presentations have you made to groups of 10 or more people?

- A. 0
- B. 1
- C. 2
- D. 3
- E. 4 or more

If you answered B, C, D, or E, list the topics of the presentations or describe the nature of the groups. List no more than four.

9. How often have you been asked to summarize complex written material?

- A. Very often
- B. Often
- C. Sometimes
- D. Seldom
- E. Never

If you answered A or B, list examples of the written material. List no more than four.

10. When in a group, how often have you made a suggestion that defused a potential conflict?

- A. Very often
- B. Often
- C. Sometimes
- D. Seldom
- E. Never

SAMPLE TEST ANSWER KEY*				
Job Knowledge Test		English Expression Test		
1. A	11. D	1. C	11. B	21. B
2. B	12. B	2. D	12. A	22. A
3. A	13. C	3. A	13. B	23. D
4. A	14. A	4. A	14. A	24. D
5. B	15. B	5. D	15. C	25. C
6. A	16. C	6. C	16. B	
7. C	17. D	7. B	17. A	
8. C	18. C	8. D	18. A	
9. C	19. B	9. A	19. C	

*Due to the nature of the questions in the Biographic Information Questionnaire, no answer key is provided.

4. Sample Written Essay Topics

You will have 30 minutes to write an essay on an assigned topic. If more than one essay is required, an additional 30 minutes will be granted per essay. Sample topics are provided below.

When composing your essay, you should present your point of view clearly and support it. Your writing will be evaluated on the quality of the writing, not the opinions expressed. A successful essay should have an obvious structure and clear thesis supported by relevant substantiating details. It should show your ability to analyze a topic in a way that is appropriate for the intended audience. The writing should be coherent; occasional lapses should not impede flow or readers' comprehension. Language should be concise with clear and appropriate word choice. The language should also be free of errors in grammar and syntax, with no more than minor errors in spelling and punctuation. There is no limit on length.

1. Although rates for violent crime have fallen in the last few years, as a society we must continue to be concerned about existing crime rates and how to prevent violent crimes from occurring. Some argue that the most effective means of preventing crime is to expand police forces, particularly in large urban areas, and put more police officers on the street. Others argue that more effective gun control laws are needed to reduce the number and kinds of guns available to criminals. Still others argue that imposing stiffer legal penalties and keeping criminals in jail longer are the best means of preventing violent crime. In your view, what is the most effective public policy for preventing violent crime? Carefully explain the rationale for your position.
2. In recent years, there have been a number of mergers between firms in entertainment, communications, publishing, banking, automobile manufacturing, and other industries. Some people think that mergers result in lower operating costs, greater efficiency, and increased productivity for businesses. Others think such mergers are beneficial because they result in enhanced services and lower costs for consumers. However, some argue that mergers are not beneficial for society because they often result in loss of jobs and may reduce people's access to goods and information. In your view, are mergers beneficial? Carefully explain the rationale for your position.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What can I do to prepare to take the Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) and Oral Assessment (FSOA)?**

Over time, a thorough daily reading of major news sources will help develop the kind of general knowledge in world and national affairs that is necessary to do well. An officially sanctioned study guide is also available and can be ordered or downloaded at careers.state.gov. Sample questions and the thirteen dimensions of Foreign Service work are also provided in this registration guide.

- **What should I study in college?**

No specific educational background is required to become a Foreign Service Officer. However, most successful officers have a broad knowledge of international and domestic affairs, U.S. and world history, government and foreign policy, and American culture. The best preparation is a good education, including courses in English, management, history, government, international relations, geography, literature, economics, business, public administration, U.S. politics, political science, language, social sciences and international trade.

- **What experience is desirable?**

The Foreign Service is looking to attract individuals with relevant experience. This could include work in teaching, law, public service administration, local and state government, and military service. However, successful candidates come from a variety of professional backgrounds.

- **Why can't I take the Foreign Service**

- **Officer Test if I'm past my 59th birthday?**

To join the Foreign Service you must have entered an Entry-Level Officer class (A-100) before your 60th birthday. The process between the FSOT and entering a class is a lengthy one: Candidates take the oral assessment approximately six months after the FSOT. After passing the oral assessment, the candidate's clearances can take considerable time, and then the cleared candidate has to wait until his or her name is reached on the Register for an invitation to enter an A-100 class. Although we try diligently to move the process as quickly as possible, it is unrealistic to allow less than eight months for successful completion of all these steps.

- **Can I be assigned to the country of my choice?**

All Foreign Service Officers must be worldwide available (i.e., willing to serve anywhere the State Department determines is necessary). Officers are transferred routinely according to the needs of the Service.

- **Is there a policy in regard to applicants who have dual citizenship?**

The Department of State has not implemented, and does not intend to implement, any "blanket rule" regarding dual citizenship. In making security clearance determinations, Diplomatic Security (DS) will continue to evaluate dual citizenship issues on a case-by-case basis. Potential candidates will be questioned about dual citizenship as part of their interview. Those who have any serious issues which could

prevent them from receiving their clearance should give some thought to the likelihood of their being found ineligible before starting this process.

- **Will my family get to travel overseas with me?**

Medically cleared spouses, children under 21, and dependent parents may accompany an FSO at government expense. However, security concerns and the lack of adequate educational or health facilities at some posts may dictate against the family accompanying the officer to some posts.

- **What is included in the benefits package for the Foreign Service?**

Benefits include a health plan and a retirement plan, as well as annual and sick leave.

FSO salaries may be enhanced when officers are assigned overseas by such benefits as government-provided housing, furniture, and utilities at post, home leave (including travel expenses), the shipment of automobiles to overseas posts, and hospitalization benefits.

In addition, educational allowances and travel for dependent children, cost-of-living allowances to help cover extra expenses in high-cost foreign cities, language incentive pay and special pay for danger and hardship posts are available when appropriate.

- **Are provisions made for spousal employment?**

Foreign Service families, like American families everywhere, are often two-income families. The Department of State has tandem couples in the Foreign Service where both spouses are employees of the Foreign Service, as well as tandems with sister

agencies such as the Foreign Commercial Service or the Foreign Agricultural Service. When overseas, some non-tandem family members find work at the embassy or consulate, while others find employment in the economy of the host country. In addition, family members may be eligible to teach at international or American schools abroad, or work as freelancers.

- **How long does the FSO selection process take?**

After the FSOT, the process can be as short as six months or as long as two years, but will typically fall between those extremes. The Department has taken steps to shorten the processing time. Due to significantly increased hiring authorizations, we also expect the time that a successful candidate will spend on the Register of Cleared Candidates before receiving a formal offer of employment will be considerably less than in previous years. Thus some candidates could receive formal offers of employment within a few months of passing the oral assessment.

For more information on the Department of State Foreign Service Officer Selection Process or on Foreign Service Specialist and Civil Service careers, please visit our website, careers.state.gov, or write:
U.S. Department of State
Recruitment Division
2401 E Street, N.W., 5th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20522

Preparing for the Foreign Service Officer Test

Preparation for taking the Foreign Service Officer Test requires the candidate to be widely read or to have taken a wide variety of courses prior to taking the test. The job analysis of Foreign Service Officer positions identified the following general knowledge areas as critical to success on the job across all five career tracks (Consular, Economic, Management, Political and Public Diplomacy):

Communication. This knowledge area encompasses a general understanding of principles of effective communication and public speaking techniques, as well as general knowledge of the common sources of information, public media and media relations.

Computers. This knowledge area encompasses a general understanding of basic computer operations such as word processing, databases, spreadsheets, and preparing and using e-mail.

Correct grammar, organization, writing strategy, sentence structure, and punctuation required for writing or editing reports. This knowledge area encompasses English expression and language usage skills required for preparing or editing written reports, including correct grammar and good writing.

Economics. This knowledge area encompasses an understanding of basic economic principles, as well as a general understanding of economic issues and the economic system of the United States.

Management. This knowledge area encompasses a general understanding of basic management and supervisory techniques, and methods. Includes knowledge of human psychology, leadership, motivational strategies and equal employment practices.

Mathematics and Statistics. This knowledge area encompasses a general understanding of basic mathematical and statistical procedures. May include calculations.

United States Government. This knowledge area encompasses a general understanding of the composition and functioning of the Federal government, the Constitution and its history, the structure of Congress and its role in foreign affairs, as well as the United States political system and its role in governmental structure, formulation of government policies, and foreign affairs.

United States Society and Culture. This knowledge area encompasses an understanding of major events, institutions, and movements in national history, including political and economic history, as well as national customs and culture, social issues and trends, and the influence of U.S. society and culture on foreign policy and foreign affairs.

World History and Geography. This knowledge area encompasses a general understanding of significant world historical events, issues, and developments, including their impact on U.S. foreign policy, as well as knowledge of world geography and its relationship to U.S. foreign policy.

Thirteen Dimensions of Foreign Service Work

The Oral Assessment is an assessment, not a traditional job interview, for selection as an entry level Foreign Service Officer. Oral Assessment exercises are based on a job analysis of the work of the Foreign Service and reflect the skills, abilities, and personal qualities deemed essential to the performance of that work. **The oral assessment measures the following dimensions:**

Composure. To stay calm, poised, and effective in stressful or difficult situations; to think on one's feet, adjusting quickly to changing situations; to maintain self-control.

Cultural Adaptability. To work and communicate effectively and harmoniously with persons of other cultures, value systems, political beliefs, and economic circumstances; to recognize and respect differences in new and different cultural environments.

Experience and Motivation. To demonstrate knowledge, skills or other attributes gained from previous experience of relevance to the Foreign Service; to articulate appropriate motivation for joining the Foreign Service.

Information Integration and Analysis. To absorb and retain complex information drawn from a variety of sources; to draw reasoned conclusions from analysis and synthesis of available information; to evaluate the importance, reliability, and usefulness of information; to remember details of a meeting or event without the benefit of notes.

Initiative and Leadership. To recognize and assume responsibility for work that needs to be done; to persist in the completion of a task; to influence significantly a group's activity, direction, or opinion; to motivate others to participate in the activity one is leading.

Judgment. To discern what is appropriate, practical, and realistic in a given situation; to weigh relative merits of competing demands.

Objectivity and Integrity. To be fair and honest; to avoid deceit, favoritism, and discrimination; to present issues frankly and fully, without injecting subjective bias; to work without letting personal bias prejudice actions.

Oral Communication. To speak fluently in a concise, grammatically correct, organized, precise, and persuasive manner; to convey nuances of meaning accurately; to use appropriate styles of communication to fit the audience and purpose.

Planning and Organizing. To prioritize and order tasks effectively, to employ a systematic approach to achieving objectives, to make appropriate use of limited resources.

Quantitative Analysis. To identify, compile, analyze and draw correct conclusions from pertinent data; to recognize patterns or trends in numerical data; to perform simple mathematical operations.

Resourcefulness. To formulate creative alternatives or solutions to resolve problems, to show flexibility in response to unanticipated circumstances.

Working With Others. To interact in a constructive, cooperative, and harmonious manner; to work effectively as a team player; to establish positive relationships and gain the confidence of others; to use humor as appropriate.

Written Communication. To write concise, well organized, grammatically correct, effective and persuasive English in a limited amount of time.

Study Guide for the 2009 Foreign Service Officer Test and Selection Process

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