

## Frequently Asked Questions UN Language Proficiency Exam (LPE)

### 1. Where do I obtain information and instructions on how to register for the UN LPE in inspira?

All information and instructions a candidate will need to register for the UN LPE can be found on the LPE website on the HR Portal: [hr.un.org/page/language-proficiency-examination-lpe](https://hr.un.org/page/language-proficiency-examination-lpe). There you will find which agencies and test sites are participating, the contact information for each local administrator, policy guidance, eligibility criteria, templates of needed forms, and detailed instruction on how to register in inspira (including screenshots) for both internal UN Secretariat staff members and external applicants. Simply click on the relevant section to find the information you need.

### 2. Am I eligible for the LPE if I have not taken any language courses and I do not use the language regularly at work, but I speak the language at home, with my child or with my spouse?

No, using the language at home does not fulfill the eligibility criteria.

### 3. May I take the LPE in my mother tongue?

As stated in [ST/AI/2016/9](#), staff members whose 'mother tongue' is one of the official languages of the United Nations **need not take the examination** in that language.

They may demonstrate adequate knowledge in another UN official language by passing the Language Proficiency Examination in any of those languages, including that in which they are required to be proficient by the terms of their appointment. In no instance will UN Secretariat staff members receive language allowance for the LPE taken in what they indicated in UN records is their mother tongue.

### 4. How do I know which is my mother tongue in my UN official records?

The determination of mother tongue was made by the UN staff members at the time of UN employment and was officially recorded at the time of recruitment and noted in his or her official status file. Only one language can be officially recognized as the staff member's mother tongue. Once recorded by the UN, staff members are not permitted to change the officially recognized mother tongue. If you do not recall what you indicated in your official UN records regarding your mother tongue, please contact your HR officer. Such records are not handled by ETS.

### 5. If the agency/organization I work for does not endorse the payment of my LPE registration fee, can I opt to pay the fee myself?

No, individuals may **not** pay the registration fee directly to the UN to register for LPE.

**6. I have a UNDP-issued letter of appointment. Am I considered a staff member of the United Nations Secretariat, or the UN common system?**

If your letter of appointment is issued by a UNDP office, on behalf of an agency, fund or programme, you are considered a staff member of the UN common system, but not a staff member of the UN Secretariat, and you must select your corresponding agency, fund or programme when registering for the LPE. You are considered an external applicant for LPE purposes and for purposes of LPE registration in inspira.

Alternatively, and strictly for the purpose of registering for the LPE, if your letter of appointment is issued on behalf of an office or department belonging to the UN Secretariat, then you are considered a staff member of the UN Secretariat and you must register for the LPE using your internal (UN Secretariat) inspira account when registering for the LPE.

**7. Are all UNDP staff members eligible to register for the LPE Examination?**

While UNDP staff may meet the established UN Secretariat eligibility criteria, it is UNDP's policy and practice that only UNDP staff members who are in the General Service Category and on Fixed Term or Permanent Appointments are eligible for UNDP financial endorsement to take the Language Proficiency Exam. If you need further clarification, please contact UNDP directly.

**8. Are Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) considered staff members of the UN common system?**

Yes, JPOs are staff members of the UN entity that issued their letter of appointment. Therefore, Associate Experts or Junior Professional Officers of the UN Secretariat are considered staff members (internal). Those working with UNDP or UNICEF, for instance, are considered staff members of UNDP or UNICEF, and are considered external (non- UN Secretariat) staff members for the purposes of the LPE.

**9. Are National Professional Officers working in UN Secretariat field missions considered staff members?**

Yes, National Professional Officers working in UN Secretariat field missions are considered UNS staff members, as they have a UN Secretariat -issued letter of appointment.

**10. Are international military observers, civilian police, and members of national military contingents serving in missions considered UN Secretariat staff members?**

No, civilian police, military observers and members of national military contingents serving in missions are not considered UN Secretariat staff members.

**11. Are interns of United Nations common system considered staff members of United Nations common system?**

No, interns are not considered staff members of United Nations system.

**12. Are United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) considered staff members of United Nations common system?**

No. For the purpose of the LPE, UNVs are considered external candidates (similar to intern and contractors). While the Office of UNV in Bonn is considered an entity of the UN common system, the UN Volunteers themselves are not considered staff members.

The UN Secretariat shall not financially endorse or pay the registration fee for UN Volunteers, and UNVs should NOT select the UN Secretariat as their paying entity. Most UNVs hold UNV letters of appointment as part of the United Nations Volunteer programme, which is administered by UNDP.

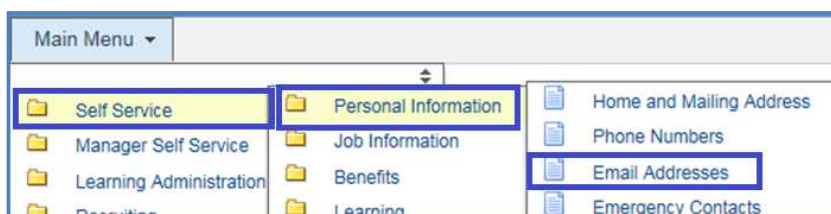
The current practice/policy of UNV-Bonn and UNDP is to NOT endorse payment of the registration fee for UN Volunteers, even if they have passed the highest level of UN language course. If you need further clarification, we suggest you contact UNV-Bonn or UNDP directly.

**13. What if my name is misspelled in inspira?**

Please contact the inspira help desk through "Contact us". Please ensure your name is properly spelled, as this name in inspira will be the name printed on your language certificate. Please bring any errors immediately to the attention of the Inspira support centre.

**14. What if my email is incorrect in inspira?**

It is important that your email address is current in inspira, as this is how OHRM will communicate with you. Your LPE convocation and result letter will also be sent to this email address. Please keep it up-to-date in inspira. OHRM is not responsible to reproduce convocation and result letters that are not received because they were sent to an incorrect or out-of-date email address. Please follow the steps below in Inspira to update your email address:



**15. If I register for, but do not sit for the LPE exam in September, is the LPE registration fee paid by my agency on my behalf, or any local administration fees paid by me, refundable?**

No. Once you have been financially endorsed by your agency to sit for the exam, your agency must pay the registration fee to the UN Secretariat on your behalf. In 2018, OHRM will send the final list for endorsement by 30 May 2018. There are no

refunds of the registration fee after that date. No refunds will be granted for convoked candidates, regardless of whether or not they sit for the exam.

Regarding the payment of any local administration fees paid directly by the applicant to the hosting office, the decision regarding a refund shall be made at the discretion of the hosting office/agency, and may be based on the particular circumstances.

**16. How do I change test sites before or after registration is closed in inspira? Or after I have been convoked?**

Changes of test site within the registration period, must be made in inspira by cancelling/dropping your existing enrollment at your current test site, and then enrolling again by creating a new application for the LPE at the new test site. After the 2018 LPE registration in inspira closes on 2 May 2018, it will no longer be possible to make test site changes in inspira.

Changes of test site after the close of the LPE registration period on 2 May 2018 will only be considered for reasons of UN official travel or UN redeployment. To request such a change, for UN official business purposes only, please send an email to the LPE email box, copy to your local administrator, stating where you would like to take the exam. We will consider each request on a case-by-case basis, but be aware that not all request can be accommodated. Should a request for a change of test site be approved by OHRM, the candidate should not be charged a local administration fee, if any, at the new test site.

**17. What do I do if I mistakenly register for the wrong language?**

Changes of language within the registration period, must be made in inspira by cancelling/dropping your existing enrollment, and then enrolling again by creating a new application for the LPE in the new language. After the 2018 LPE registration in inspira closes on 2 May 2018, it will no longer be possible to make language changes in inspira.

**18. Can I sit for exams in two languages which are scheduled to be held on the same day?**

Yes, you may register to sit for more than one exam on the same day. The two exams will be held "back to back" on the same day. One exam will be considered a "special session."

**19. What do I do if I determine I cannot or do not want to sit for the LPE after I have been financially endorsed, or after I get my convocation letter?**

If for some reason, you determine you are unable to take the LPE exam in September, after you have been either financially endorsed by your agency and/or formally convoked by OHRM, it is essential that you notify the Local Administrator of your test site in writing, with a copy to the LPE mailbox (oahunlpe@un.org). This will reduce the number of exam materials to be send to the test site, reduce the number of "no shows", and help the Local Administrator have a better idea of the actual

number of candidates (and languages) they need to prepare for and accommodate on exam day. If your name had already been submitted to your parent agency for endorsement, your agency will be expected to pay the administration fee on your behalf. Local fees paid by the applicant are non-reimbursable.

**20. In Inspira, after I click on "Browse Catalog" in "My Learning", I see the message "You do not have access to Catalog items. Please contact your System Administrator." Who should I contact?**

This message means that you have not requested access to the LPE examination catalog items. Go to **My Learning**, then click **Request for Learning**, then select **LPE** as the **Learning Type**. The guide "**How to create an account in inspira (for external applicants)**" is posted on the LPE website and covers how to request for such access. Please follow the steps outlined in the guide.

**21. The "Appointment Type" and/or "Appointment Expiry" date in inspira does not reflect my contract type and/or expiry date. How can I correct this?**

For internal applicants, these fields in Inspira are pre-populated with data from Umoja, but the data may not be the most up-to-date. Internal applicants must supply the information manually. These fields will not always be used in the eligibility screening process. If your appointment type or contract expiry date is not provided or is not current in inspira, please attach a copy of your current contract /Letter of Appointment, which states the correct contract type and expiry date, to the application. Click **Add Attachment**, and then select **Contract Extension** as **Document Type**. You may also make a note in the comment box to the Local Administrator that the correct expiry date is shown in your attachment.

**22. What should I do if I get the message below after I click "Submit Enrollment"?**

Please attach a proof of your contract, which states the correct appointment expiry date, to the application. Click **Add Attachment**, and then select **Contract Extension** as **Document Type**. It is important that you choose **Contract Extension** and NOT Contractual Status as Document Type in order to bypass this error message.



Please review the following item(s):

1. At the time of LPE registration, each applicant must demonstrate they will have a valid UN contract on the date of the LPE written exam.

**23. Where do we find the details on how our exam is scored?**

At the end of the marking process, the Office of Human Resources Management issues detailed result letters to every candidate who sits for the LPE. These letters are sent from the inspira support centre directly to the candidate's inspira email address after the results are finalized for all candidates, usually in late February following the written exam in September. The results letters provide a numerical breakdown of how a candidate performed in each section of the exam. Many candidates find the result helpful, as a way to assess current strengths and weakness, and as a basis for

continued language learning. The decision of the LPE Board of Examiners is FINAL, and requests to have an exam re-scored will not be considered.

**24. What are some of the reasons that I can be disqualified from the current LPE examination?**

A candidate may be disqualified from the current LPE exam if he/she does not follow the rules established for the LPE exam. In the past, candidates have been disqualified for leaving the exam room early, before all candidates have finished, and before the exams have been collected and counted. Candidates have also been disqualified for continuing to work on the exam after the announced stop time. Candidates must adhere to the instruction of the Local Exam Administrator. Of course, examinees will be disqualified for cheating or sharing of exam content during the exam.