LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION (LPE)
POLICIES & GUIDELINES

1. PURPOSE

In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 2480B (XXIII) of 21 December 1968 and 50/11 of 2 November 1995 concerning the need to achieve and maintain linguistic balance within the Organization, language proficiency examinations (LPE) are held to confirm the written and spoken knowledge of the six official languages of the United Nations, i.e., Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, and subsequent eligibility for language-related incentives. **The general principles and conditions governing language proficiency and language incentives are provided in ST/AI/2021/1 of 12 May 2021.**

2. ORGANIZATION OF THE EXAMINATION

The LPE is developed, organized and coordinated by the Department of Operational Support (DOS) of the UN Secretariat. The UN LPE Board of Examiners (of the UN Language & Communication Programme) is responsible for the development of exam content and the marking of the LPE.

The Special Assessments Section (SAS) is responsible for online exam preparation, coordination, score tracking, results dissemination, and the general administration of the LPE.

SAS is NOT responsible for verifying the eligibility of applicants, nor for the expenses incurred in the administration of the LPE outside New York (e.g., administrators and proctors; room rental; telephone, travel).

The LPE is intended for the staff members of the United Nations Secretariat. It is also offered to the staff members of other entities of the UN common system (Funds, Programmes and affiliates) on a cost recovery basis and who have agreed to the cost recovery mechanism.

3. FEE

The registration fee for the participating UN Funds and Programmes, Specialized Agencies and other UN entities in 2021 will be as follows:

i) US$ 300 (for New York Test Site) and

ii) US$ 200 (for all other Test Sites)

The above fees are per convoked registrant (i.e. irrespective of whether applicants actually sit for the examination) and per examination (should an applicant register for more than one language, the fee will be calculated accordingly).

For non-New York convoked candidates, some test sites charge registrants an additional local fee, to recover resources spent locally.

4. COST RECOVERY

As a business process improvement, the cost recovery mechanism is implemented at the headquarters level, not at the local or individual level.

Each participating UN entity nominates a Finance Focal Point. Only the organizations which have nominated a Finance Focal Point can have their applicants participate in the LPE. SAS will seek endorsement of the applicants for payment purposes at the Headquarters' level from the Finance Focal Point of each UN participating entity after the registration period and before exam convocation.

After the closing of the registration period, the Finance Focal Points will receive a log in and password to access the applications of the candidates from their organization. They will be asked to indicate in the system whether or not the payment of the applicants' LPE registration fee is endorsed (specific instructions will be sent in due course). SAS will send each Finance Focal Point a list of all eligible candidates from their organization with the corresponding cost. Financial Focal points will be required to print, date, duly sign and return by email this list to SAS. SAS will convoke ONLY those candidates endorsed by the Financial Focal Point. **Once an applicant's registration fee is endorsed by the Financial Focal Point, the applicant will be convoked, and the agency must pay the fee on behalf of the applicant, regardless of whether or not the applicant sits for the exam.**

If the endorsement of the registrants and the agreement to pay is not received by SAS by the deadline provided, candidates' applications from that Organization will automatically be rejected.

5. TEST SITES

All parts of LPEs, including the oral part, will be administered remotely using an online testing platform on four different dates in November 2021 as follows:

Wednesday, 3 November 2021 – Chinese and Spanish
Wednesday, 10 November 2021 – Russian and Arabic
Wednesday, 17 November 2021 – French
Wednesday, 24 November 2021 – English

The Local Administrator at the selected test site will be responsible for (a) disseminating the information to the other entities covered by the test site; and (b) verifying eligibility of candidates from all local agencies participating in the LPE.
Since the Local Administrators are no longer responsible for the administration of the oral part of the examination, every effort should be made to charge no fees to applicants. If a local fee must be charged to cover additional costs incurred to the office for playing the role of the Local Administrator, the test site must indicate their intent to charge a fee, and the amount of the fee, at the time of test site registration. Calculation of the fee amount must be spread over the estimated total number of candidates, even if a test site decides not to charge its own staff members. The fee should not unfairly burden staff members from the UN Secretariat, or other UN Funds and Programmes.

In order to facilitate coordination between each agency and Local Administrators, each participating agency in a given duty station is encouraged to designate a LPE focal point with whom the local LPE administrator will liaise throughout the examination cycle. Even though the applicants are required to submit online a complete and accurate application, the agency focal point should be able to help the local administrator establish candidates' eligibility, if required.

6. LPE TEAM AT TEST SITES

Officer-in-Charge

The Officer-in-Charge should be the supervisor of the LPE local administrator. Depending on the size and organisational structure of the test site, the Officer-in-Charge could be the Head of Office, Chief of Personnel, etc. His/Her role is to oversee the process. By signing the test site registration letter, the Officer-in-Charge certifies that the examination process (including applications review) will be conducted according to the instructions and guidelines received from SAS.

Local Administrator

The local LPE administrator is responsible for (a) disseminating the information to the other entities covered by the test site; and (b) verifying eligibility of candidates from all local agencies participating in the LPE. and should be empowered to conduct any related duties. The Administrator must hold a UN letter of Appointment. In this capacity, the administrator is, inter alia, in charge of:

1. disseminating all LPE-related information to all staff concerned, including staff from other UN entities in any given duty station throughout the examination cycle;
2. reviewing LPE applications to ensure that eligibility requirements are met;
3. liaising with the Special Assessments Section.

In addition, the local LPE administrators may be requested to support the on-site administration of the LPE in duty stations where candidates report technical issues in taking the online examination due to poor internet connections or restricted internet access. In such cases, the local administrators will be requested to provide a testing room with internet access and an invigilator(s).

The examinations are offered in the 6 UN official languages. The online exam is administered simultaneously in 1 or different languages per test session for one or two days (Chinese and Spanish on day 1; Arabic and Russian on day 2, French on day 3, and English on day 4). The local administrator he/she will remain in charge of all communications with SAS.

LPE Assistant

The role of the LPE assistant is to help with the various administrative tasks throughout the examination cycle.

In order to prevent any real or perceived conflict of interest, **individuals involved in the LPE process,** regardless of their level of involvement, **are NOT allowed to register for the exam. Should such situation occur, they would be automatically DISQUALIFIED.**

Examination Administrators, Assistants, and other personnel involved in LPE test administration should read through the instructions carefully.

7. COMMUNICATION WITH SAS

Any change of Officer-in-Charge, Local Administrator, or LPE Assistant must be communicated immediately to SAS, by emailing the form for nomination to oahunlpe@un.org.

Any problems or issues affecting the administration of the examination must be promptly reported to SAS by email to oahunlpe@un.org.