

UN 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 and Communications Training Unit) 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.

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 which 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 2024 will be as follows:

- i) US\$ 300 (for New York Screening Centres) and
- ii) US\$ 200 (for all other Screening Centres)

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 Entities. 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 Entity will automatically be rejected.

5. SCREENING CENTRES

All parts of LPEs, including the oral part, will be administered remotely using an online testing platform on four different dates in **October 2024** as follows:

- **Wednesday, 2 October 2024 – English**
- **Wednesday, 9 October 2024 – Chinese and Spanish**
- **Wednesday, 16 October 2024 – French**
- **Wednesday, 23 October 2024 – Russian and Arabic**

The Local Administrator at the selected Screening Centres will be responsible for (a) disseminating the information to the other entities covered by the Screening Centre; 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 local 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 Screening Centre must indicate their intent to charge a fee, and the amount of the fee, at the time of Screening Centre registration.

6. LPE TEAM AT SCREENING CENTRES

Officer-in-Charge

The Head of Administration/HR at the Screening Centres is responsible for supervising the nominated local LPE administrator and overseeing the process. By signing the Screening Centre registration letter, the Head of Administration/HR certifies that the examination process (including the review of applications) 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 Screening Centre; and (b) verifying eligibility of candidates from all local Entities participating in the LPE. The Local 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 six UN official languages. The online exam is administered simultaneously in one 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).

LPE Assistant

The role of the LPE assistant is to help the Local Administrator 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 in the specific year. Should such a situation occur, they would be automatically DISQUALIFIED.**

7. COMMUNICATION WITH SAS

Any change of Head of Administration/HR, Local Administrator, or LPE Assistant should be communicated to SAS by emailing the form for nomination to oahunlpe@un.org. Any other questions can be sent to oahunlpe@un.org.