

## **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 Specialized Assessments Unit (SAU) 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 per candidate from participating UN Funds and Programmes, Specialized Agencies, and other UN entities is **US\$ 326**, effective June 2025.

This fee is 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 Screening Centres charge registrants an additional local fee, to recover resources spent locally. If a local fee must be charged, the Screening Centre needs to indicate their intent to charge a fee, and the amount of the fee, at the time of Screening Centre registration.

#### **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.

Only UN Entities that have nominated a Finance Focal Point (FFP) will have their applicants participate in the LPE. SAU will seek endorsement of the applicants for payment purposes at the Headquarters' level from the FFP of each UN participating entity after the registration period and before exam convocation.

After the closing of the registration period, the FFPs will receive a log in credentials to access the applications of the candidates from their Entities in Inspira and 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). SAU will send each FFP a list of all eligible candidates from their UN entity with the corresponding cost. FFPs will be required to print, date, duly sign and return by email this list to SAU. SAU will convoke ONLY those candidates endorsed by the FFP. **Once an applicant's registration fee is endorsed by the FFP and the last date to drop all applications has passed, the applicants will be convoked, and the UN Entity 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 applicants and the agreement to pay is not received by SAU by the deadline provided, candidates' applications from that UN entity will be automatically rejected.**

#### **5. EXAM SCHEDULE**

The LPEs will be administered remotely using an online testing platform. The schedule will be published on the LPE webpage ahead of the registration period.

#### **6. LPE TEAM AT SCREENING CENTRES**

##### Officer-in-Charge

The Head of Administration/Human Resources at the Screening Centres is responsible for supervising the nominated local LPE administrator and overseeing the process. By signing the Screening Centre registration survey, the Head of Administration/Human Resources certifies that the examination process (including the screening of applications) will be conducted according to the instructions and guidelines received from SAU.

##### Local Administrator

The Local Administrator (LA) at the selected Screening Centre will be responsible for (a) disseminating the information to the other UN entities covered by the Screening Centre; and (b) verifying eligibility of applicants.

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 by all application from all local Agencies, Funds and Programmes participating in the LPE.
3. liaising with the Special Assessments Unit.

In addition, the LA 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 LA will be requested to provide a testing room with internet access and an invigilator(s). These cases are rare.

The examinations are offered in the six UN official languages. All three parts of the examination – Listening and Reading, Writing, Speaking are administered online on the same day and in either one or different languages per test session (English on the first date, French on the second date, Chinese and Spanish on the third date, and Arabic and Russian on the fourth date in October 2025).

#### 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 eligible to register for the exam in the specific year.** Should such a situation occur, they would be automatically DISQUALIFIED.

## **7. COMMUNICATION WITH the Specialized Assessment Unit**

Any change of Head of Administration/Human Resources, Local Administrator, or LPE Assistant should be communicated to SAU by emailing the nomination form to [oahunlpe@un.org](mailto:oahunlpe@un.org). Any other questions can be sent to [oahunlpe@un.org](mailto:oahunlpe@un.org).