

13 FAM 220

LANGUAGE-DESIGNATED POSITIONS (LDPs)

(CT:TPD-001; 05-20-2004)
(Office of Origin: FSI)

13 FAM 221 CRITERIA

(CT:TPD-001; 05-20-2004)
(Uniform State/USAID/BBG/Commerce)
(Applies to Foreign Service Employees)

a. The following offices are responsible, in consultation with the chiefs of mission, for designating those Foreign Service positions that require foreign language proficiency and specifying the level of proficiency required:

State	The Director, Office of Foreign Service Career Development and Assignments (HR/CDA)
USAID	The Deputy Assistant Administrator for Human Resources (DAA/M/HR)
BBG	Director of Personnel, M/P
Commerce	The Assistant Secretary and Director General, U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service, International Trade Administration

(Note: The remainder of this section does not apply to USAID. See USAID ADS 458.)

b. The criteria for designating LDPs are:

(1) Only those positions where language proficiency is essential, rather than merely helpful or convenient, should be designated; and

(2) An LDP is automatically dropped if two waivers are granted consecutively.

c. An employee assigned to a language-designated position must possess the required tested level of language proficiency designated for the position prior to assuming duties at post. Exceptions to this requirement shall be justified by memorandum explaining the emergency conditions necessitating a waiver of training for approval by the following responsible

officers:

State	The Director, Office of Foreign Service Career Development and Assignments (HR/CDA)
BBG	Director of Personnel, M/P
Commerce	The Assistant Secretary and Director General, U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service, International Trade Administration

13 FAM 222 DEFINITIONS

13 FAM 222.1 Terminology

13 FAM 222.1-1 Primary-A Language

(CT:TPD-001; 05-20-2004)

(Uniform State/USAID)

(Applies to Foreign Service Employees)

A primary-A language is an indigenous language, which is the sole and official national language of the area or an indigenous language, which is used officially on a co-equal basis, either nationally or regionally, with another primary language or a primary-alternate language. Examples are French in Paris, Urdu in Karachi, and Tamil in Madras.

13 FAM 222.1-2 Primary-B Language

(CT:TPD-001; 05-20-2004)

(Uniform State/USAID)

(Applies to Foreign Service Employees)

A primary-B language is an indigenous language, which is used by a significant segment of the population but is not used officially by the government. Examples are Lingala or Kituba in Kinshasa, Pashto in Kabul, and Visayan in Cebu.

13 FAM 222.1-3 Primary-Alternate Language

(CT:TPD-001; 05-20-2004)

(Uniform State/USAID)

(Applies to Foreign Service Employees)

A primary-alternate language is a non-indigenous language used officially or widely by the government in conducting both internal and foreign affairs and by educated circles whether or not an indigenous language is also used officially or generally by the people. Examples are French in Tunis and English in New Delhi.

13 FAM 222.1-4 Secondary Language

(CT:TPD-001; 05-20-2004)
(Uniform State/USAID)
(Applies to Foreign Service Employees)

A secondary language is any language other than a primary language used to communicate with a substantial segment of the population or with a minority group that is politically, economically, or culturally significant. Examples are Chinese in Bangkok, French in Ankara, and Quechua in La Paz.

13 FAM 222.1-5 Language-Designated Position (LDP)

(CT:TPD-001; 05-20-2004)
(Uniform State/USAID)
(Applies to Foreign Service Employees)

A language-designated position (LDP) is a position which has been officially designated by the Department or USAID as requiring a specified level of language competence on the part of the incumbent.

13 FAM 222.1-6 Job-Related Language Training

(CT:TPD-001; 05-20-2004)
(Uniform State/USAID)
(Applies to Foreign Service Employees)

Job-related language training is language training which demonstrably improves the effectiveness of the employee in the employee's present position or in a position to which assignment is pending.

13 FAM 222.1-7 Job-Related Proficiency

(CT:TPD-001; 05-20-2004)
(Uniform State/USAID)
(Applies to Foreign Service Employees)

Job-related proficiency is the level of language competence needed to carry out the duties of a given position at a Foreign Service post, whether or not it is a language-designated position (see 13 FAM 222.1-5). For LDPs, job-level proficiency is defined as the level at which the position is officially

designated. Except for language-designated positions, job-level proficiency is determined at each post by responsible officers in consultation with the regional language supervisor.

13 FAM 222.1-8 Officer

(CT:TPD-001; 05-20-2004)
(Uniform State/USAID)
(Applies to Foreign Service Employees Only)

The term "officer" includes Foreign Service officer (FSO) and Foreign Service specialists in classes FP-7 through 1.

13 FAM 222.1-9 Officer With Language Limitation

(CT:TPD-001; 05-20-2004)
(Uniform State/USAID)
(Applies to Foreign Service Employees Only)

An officer with language limitation is an officer who may receive only one promotion pending satisfaction of the minimum language proficiency qualification.

13 FAM 222.1-10 Tested Language Proficiency

(CT:TPD-001; 05-20-2004)
(Uniform State/USAID)
(Applies to Foreign Service Employees Only)

Tested language proficiency is a rating, according to the rating scales of 13 FAM 222.2, given by an examiner certified by M/FSI to give ratings in official M/FSI tests and officially recorded by the M/FSI Language Testing Unit.

13 FAM 222.2 Rating Scales

(CT:TPD-001; 05-20-2004)
(Uniform State/USAID)
(Applies to Foreign Service Employees Only)

To be able to speak in quantitative terms about foreign language proficiency, the Department and other agencies have adopted "base levels" for skill in speaking (S-0 through S-5) and reading (R-0 through R-5) with definitions as listed below. Each level includes the skills covered in all lower levels. The "plus level" (+) designation is assigned when proficiency substantially exceeds one base skill level and does not fully meet the criteria for the next base level. The "plus level" descriptions are, therefore, supplementary to the "base level" descriptions.

13 FAM 222.2-1 Speaking Proficiency

(CT:TPD-001; 05-20-2004)

(Uniform State/USAID)

(Applies to Foreign Service Employees Only)

(1) **S-0, No Practical Speaking Proficiency**—Is unable to function in the spoken language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Has essentially no communicative ability.

(2) **S-0+, Memorized Proficiency**—Is able to satisfy immediate needs using rehearsed utterances. Shows little real autonomy of expression, flexibility, or spontaneity. Can ask questions or make statements with reasonable accuracy only with memorized utterances or formulae. Attempts at creating speech are usually unsuccessful. The individual's vocabulary is usually limited to areas of immediate survival needs. An individual can usually differentiate between most significant sounds when produced in isolation, but when combined in words or groups of words, errors may be frequent. Even with repetition, communication is severely limited with people who are used to dealing with foreigners. Stress, intonation, tone, etc., are usually quite faulty.

(3) **S-1, Elementary Proficiency**—Is able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics. A native speaker must often use slowed speech, repetition, paraphrase, or a combination of these to be understood by an individual with an S-1 proficiency. Similarly, the native speaker must strain and employ real-world knowledge to understand simple statements or questions from this individual. This speaker has a functional, but limited proficiency. Although misunderstandings are frequent, the individual is able to ask for help and to verify comprehension of native speech in face-to-face interaction. The individual is unable to produce continuous discourse except with rehearsed material.

(4) **S-1+ Elementary Proficiency, Plus**—Can initiate and maintain predictable face-to-face conversations and satisfy limited social demands. However, he or she may have little understanding of the social conventions of conversation. The interlocutor is, generally, required to strain and employ real-world knowledge to understand some simple speech. The speaker, at this level, may hesitate and may have to change subjects due to lack of language resources. Range and control of the languages are limited. Speech largely consists of a series of short, discrete utterances.

(5) **S-2, Limited Working Proficiency**—Is able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements. Can handle routine work-related interactions that are limited in scope. In more complex and sophisticated work-related tasks, language usage, generally, disturbs the

native speaker. Can handle with confidence, but not with facility, most normal, high-frequency social conversational situations including extensive, but casual conversations about current events, as well as work, family, and autobiographical information. The individual gets the gist of most everyday conversations, but has some difficulty understanding native speakers in situations that require specialized or sophisticated knowledge. The individual's utterances are minimally cohesive. Linguistic structure is usually not very elaborate and not thoroughly controlled; errors are frequent. Vocabulary use is appropriate for high-frequency utterances, but unusual or imprecise elsewhere.

(6) **S-2+ Limited Working Proficiency, Plus**—Is able to satisfy most work requirements with language usage that is often, but not always, acceptable and effective. The individual shows considerable ability to communicate effectively on topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Often shows a high degree of fluency and ease of speech, yet when under tension or pressure, his or her ability to use the language effectively may deteriorate. Comprehension of normal native speech is typically near complete. The individual may miss cultural and local references and may require a native speaker to adjust to his or her limitations in some ways. Native speakers often perceive the individual's speech to contain awkward or inaccurate phrasing of ideas, mistaken time, space, and person references, or to be in some way inappropriate, if not strictly incorrect.

(7) **S-3, General Professional Proficiency**—Is able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary, in order to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics. Nevertheless, the individual's limitations, generally, restrict the professional contexts of language use to matters of shared knowledge and/or international convention. Discourse is cohesive. The individual uses the language acceptably, but with some noticeable imperfections; yet errors virtually never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker. The individual can effectively combine structure and vocabulary to convey his or her meaning accurately. The individual speaks readily and fills pauses suitably. In face-to-face conversation with natives speaking the standard dialect at a normal rate of speech, comprehension is quite complete. Although cultural references, proverbs, and the implications of nuances and idiom may not be fully understood, the individual can easily repair the conversation. Pronunciation may be obviously foreign. Individual sounds are accurate; but stress, intonation, and pitch control may be faulty.

(8) **S-3+ General Professional Proficiency, Plus**—Is often able to use the language to satisfy professional needs in a wide range of sophisticated and demanding tasks. Despite obvious strengths, may exhibit some hesitancy, uncertainty, effort, or errors which limit the range of language-use tasks that can be reliably performed. Typically, there is

particular strength in fluency and one or more, but not all, of the following: breadth of lexicon, including low- and medium-frequency items, especially socio-linguistic/cultural references and nuances of close synonyms; structural precision, with sophisticated features that are readily, accurately, and appropriately controlled (such as complex modification and embedding in Indo-European languages); discourse competence in a wide range of contexts and tasks, often matching a native speaker's strategic and organizational abilities and expectations. Occasional patterned errors occur in low frequency and highly complex structures.

(9) **S-4 Advanced Professional Proficiency**—Is able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels, normally, pertinent to professional needs. The individual's language usage and ability to function are fully successful. Organizes discourse well, using appropriate rhetorical speech devices, native cultural references, and understanding. Language ability only rarely hinders him or her in performing any task requiring language; yet, the individual would seldom be perceived as a native. Speaks effortlessly and smoothly, and is able to use the language with a high degree of effectiveness, reliability, and precision for all representational purposes within the range of personal and professional experience and scope of responsibilities. Can serve as an informal interpreter in a range of unpredictable circumstances. Can perform extensive, sophisticated language tasks, encompassing most matters of interest to well-educated native speakers, including tasks which do not bear directly on a professional specialty.

(10) **S-4+ Advanced Professional Proficiency, Plus**

Speaking proficiency is regularly superior in all respects, usually equivalent to that of a well-educated, highly articulate native speaker. Language ability does not impede the performance of any language-use task. However, the individual would not necessarily be perceived as culturally native.

(11) **S-5 Native or Bilingual Proficiency**—Speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken. The individual uses the language with complete flexibility and intuition, so that speech on all levels is fully accepted by well-educated native speakers in all of its features, including breadth of vocabulary and idiom, colloquialisms, and pertinent cultural references. Pronunciation is typically consistent with that of well-educated native speakers of a non-stigmatized dialect.

13 FAM 222.2-2 Reading Proficiency

(CT:TPD-001; 05-20-2004)

(Uniform State/USAID)

(Applies to Foreign Service Employees Only)

(1) **R-0 No Practical Reading Proficiency**—Has no practical reading proficiency.

(2) **R-0+ Memorized Proficiency**—Can recognize all the letters in the printed version of an alphabetic system and high-frequency elements of a syllabary or a character system. Is able to read some or all of the following: numbers, isolated words and phrases, personal and place names, street signs, and/or office and shop designations; the above is often interpreted inaccurately. Unable to read connected prose.

(3) **R-1 Elementary Proficiency**—Has sufficient comprehension to read very simply connected written material in a form equivalent to usual printing or typescript. Can read either representations of familiar formulaic verbal exchanges or simple language containing only the highest frequency structural patterns and vocabulary, including shared international vocabulary items and cognates (when appropriate). Is able to read and understand known language elements that have been recombined in new ways to achieve different meanings at a similar level of simplicity. Texts may include simple narratives of routine behavior; highly predictable descriptions of people, places, or things; and explanations of geography and government such as those simplified for tourists. Some misunderstandings are possible on simple texts. Can get some main ideas and locate prominent items of professional significance in more complex texts. Can identify general subject matter in some authentic texts.

(4) **R-1+ Elementary Proficiency, Plus**—Has sufficient comprehension to understand simple discourse in printed form for informative social purposes. Can read material such as announcements of public events, simple prose containing biographical information or narration of events, and straightforward newspaper headlines. Can guess at unfamiliar vocabulary if highly contextualized, but has difficulty with unfamiliar contexts. Can get some main ideas and locate routine information of professional significance in more complex texts. Can follow essential points of written discussion at an elementary level on topics in his or her special professional field.

(5) **R-2 Limited Working Proficiency**—Has sufficient comprehension to read simple, authentic written material in a form equivalent to usual printing or typescript on subjects within a familiar context. Is able to read with some misunderstandings straightforward, familiar, factual material, but in general, insufficiently experienced with the language to draw inferences directly from the linguistic aspects of the text. Can locate and understand

the main ideas and details in material written for the general reader. However, persons who have professional knowledge of a subject may be able to summarize or perform sorting and locating tasks with written texts that are well beyond their general proficiency level. The individual can read uncomplicated, but authentic prose on familiar subjects that are normally presented in a predictable sequence which aids the reader in understanding the prose.

Texts may include descriptions and narration in contexts such as news items describing frequently occurring events, simple biographical information, social notices, formulaic business letters, and simple technical material written for the general reader. Generally, the prose that can be read by the individual is predominantly in straightforward or high frequency sentence patterns. The individual does not have a broad active vocabulary, but is able to use contextual and real-world cues to understand the text. Characteristically, however, the individual is quite slow in performing such a process. He or she is typically able to answer factual questions about authentic texts of the types described above.

(6) **R-2+ Limited Working Proficiency, Plus**—Has sufficient comprehension to understand most factual material in non-technical prose as well as some discussions on concrete topics related to special professional interests. Is markedly more proficient at reading materials on a familiar topic. Is able to separate the main ideas and details from lesser ones and uses that distinction to advance his or her understanding of the material. The individual is able to use linguistic context and real-world knowledge to make sensible guesses about unfamiliar material. Has a broad active reading vocabulary. The individual gets the gist of main and subsidiary ideas in texts which could only be read thoroughly by persons with much higher proficiencies. Weaknesses include slowness, uncertainty, and inability to discern nuance and/or intentionally disguised meaning.

(7) **R-3 General Professional Proficiency**—Is able to read within a normal range of speed and with almost complete comprehension a variety of authentic prose material on unfamiliar subjects. Reading ability is not dependent on subject matter knowledge, although it is not expected that the individual can comprehend thoroughly subject matter which is highly dependent on cultural knowledge or which is outside his or her general experience and not accompanied by explanation. Text-types include news stories similar to wire service reports or international news items in major periodicals, routine correspondence, general reports, and technical material in his or her professional field; all of these may include hypothesis, argumentation, and supported opinions. Misreading is rare. Is almost always able to interpret material correctly, relate ideas, and “read between the lines” (that is, he or she understands the writers’ implicit intents in texts of the above types). He or she gets the gist of more sophisticated texts, but may be unable to detect or understand subtlety and nuance. Rarely has to

pause over or reread general vocabulary. However, may experience some difficulty with unusually complex structure and low frequency idioms.

(8) **R-3+ General Professional Proficiency, Plus**—Can comprehend a variety of styles and forms pertinent to professional needs. Rarely misinterprets such texts, or rarely experiences difficulty relating ideas or making inferences. Is able to comprehend many social linguistic and cultural references. However, may miss some nuances and subtleties. Is able to comprehend a considerable range of intentionally complex structures, low frequency idioms, and uncommon connotative intentions; however, accuracy is not complete. The individual is typically able to read with facility, understand, and appreciate contemporary expository, technical, or literary texts which do not rely heavily on slang and unusual idioms.

(9) **R-4 Advanced Professional Proficiency**—Is able to read fluently and accurately all styles and forms of the language pertinent to professional needs. The individual's experience with the written language is extensive enough that he or she is able to relate inferences in the text to real-world knowledge and understand almost all social linguistic and cultural references. Is able to "read beyond the lines" (that is, to understand the full ramifications of texts as they are situated in the wider cultural, political, or social environment). Is able to read and understand the intent of writers' use of nuance and subtlety. The individual can discern relationships among sophisticated written materials in the context of broad experience. Can follow unpredictable turns of thought readily in, for example, editorial, conjectural, and literary texts in any subject matter area directed to the general reader. Can read essentially all materials in his or her special field, including official and professional documents and correspondence. Recognizes all professionally relevant vocabularies known to the educated non-professional native, although he or she may have some difficulty with slang. Can read reasonably legible handwriting without difficulty. Accuracy is often nearly that of a well-educated native reader.

(10) **R-4+ Advanced Professional Proficiency, Plus**—Has a nearly native ability to read and understand extremely difficult or abstract prose, a very wide variety of vocabulary, idioms, colloquialisms, and slang. Has a strong sensitivity to and understanding of sociolinguistic and cultural references. Has little difficulty in reading less than fully legible handwriting. Has a broad ability to "read beyond the lines" (that is, to understand the full ramifications of texts as they are situated in the wider cultural, political, or social environment) and is nearly that of a well-read or well-educated native reader. Accuracy is close to that of the well-educated native reader, but not equivalent.

(11) **R-5 Functionally Native Proficiency**—Reading proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of the well-educated native reader. Can read extremely difficult and abstract prose; for example, general legal and technical as well as highly colloquial writings. Is able to read literary texts,

typically including contemporary avant-garde prose, poetry, and theatrical writings. Can read classical or archaic forms of literature with the same degree of facility as the well-educated but non-specialist native. Reads and understands a wide variety of vocabulary and idioms, colloquialisms, slang, and pertinent cultural references. With varying degrees of difficulty, can read all kinds of handwritten documents. Accuracy of comprehension is equivalent to that of a well-educated native reader.

(12) **R-N No Writing System Pertinent to the Needs of the Service**—M/FSI gives a score to certify that no writing system pertinent to the needs of the Foreign Service exists or that knowledge of the writing system is not pertinent to the needs of the Service. R-N would occur, for example, in a Somali rating.

13 FAM 223 THROUGH 229 UNASSIGNED