

## **ARTICLE 30: LANGUAGE INCENTIVES**

### **PURPOSE AND POLICY**

- 30.1 The provisions of this article outline the incentives available to individuals for acquiring and using languages in the field.
- 30.2 The authority for the FAS Language Incentive Policy is in Section 704(b)(3) of the FS Act.
- 30.3 It is FAS policy to use monetary incentives to encourage language study to enhance proficiency levels and use at post of language skills required for specific field assignments.

### **DEFINITIONS**

- 30.4 Incentive Pay: Pay based on performance in language, computed as a percentage of base salary, prorated over a year, and paid biweekly, during the tour at post.
- 30.5 Language Proficiency: Skill level assigned to a person through an authorized language examination.

### **CRITERIA**

- 30.6 To be eligible for language incentives, individuals must be:
  - a. members of the Foreign Service (FS);
  - b. on assignment in a country where an incentive language is the primary language.

### **LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TESTS**

- 30.7 Language proficiency tests are required proof of language proficiency. All official tests must be arranged through the Servicing Personnel Office (SPO) and administered by the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC) or other testing facility approved by management. All test results are:
  - a. valid for five years, except:
    - 1. a member who previously has tested at the S-4/R-4 level of proficiency is deemed to have at least an S-3/R-3 proficiency level indefinitely unless his or her supervisor requests that the proficiency level be re-certified; and,

2. a member receiving two test scores of S-4/R-4 at least four years apart, or one test score of S-5/R-5 is deemed to have at least S-4/R-4 proficiency indefinitely unless his or her supervisor requests that the proficiency be re-certified.
- b. filed in the employee's performance folder; and,
- c. comprised of a speaking (S) score and a reading (R) score.

## EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

### 30.8 Employees shall:

- a. raise their language proficiency to meet qualifying proficiency levels;
- b. request language testing to certify proficiency;
- c. ensure that their language proficiency test scores remain valid;
- d. ensure that the SPO has an accurate record of their language proficiency test scores;
- e. initiate and complete the language incentive application package;
- f. notify the SPO by cable (Travel Message) of arrival at post; and,
- g. notify the SPO by cable (Travel Message) of departure from post.

## SPO RESPONSIBILITIES

### 30.9 The SPO shall:

- a. provide the application form for language incentive pay, upon request;
- b. review requests for language incentive pay;
- c. process language incentive pay;
- d. review the list of incentive languages at least annually with the Deputy Administrator/FAA; and,
- e. forward to the Deputy Administrator/FAA all current and accurate records of

tested employees.

#### LANGUAGE INCENTIVE PAY

30.10 The following table contains the languages, by category, approved for incentive pay and the percentage of base pay awarded for each qualifying language proficiency level as of the effective date of this agreement. Management reserves the right to add to or delete from the languages listed under each category based on agency needs, in consultation with AFSA. An up-to-date list of the languages can be found in FAS Notice, "Language Proficiency Requirements for Commissioning of Foreign Service Officers and for Incentive Pay." The notice can be found in the Overseas Administrative Handbook on the FASTNET and currently on the FAA Homepage.

Language Categories  
(As of the effective date of this agreement)

<u>HARD</u>	<u>INTERMEDIATE</u>	<u>BASIC</u>	<u>ADDITIONAL</u>
Arabic	Bulgarian	French	Czech
Chinese (Mandarin)	Indonesian 1/	German	Chinese (Cantonese)
Japanese	Polish	Italian	Croatian
Korean	Russian	Portuguese	Danish
	Serbian	Spanish	Dutch/Afrikaans
	Thai		Greek
	Turkish		Hindi
	Ukrainian		Hungarian
	Vietnamese		Malay
			Romanian
			Swahili
			Swedish
			Tagalog
			Urdu

Incentive Pay

S-2/R-1	3%	S-2/R-2	2%	S-3/R-3	2%	S-3/R-3	1%
S-2+/R-1+	6%	S-2+/R-2+	4%	S-3+/R-3+	4%	S-3+/R-3+	2%
S-3/R-2	9%	S-3/R-3	6%	S-4/R-4	6%		
S-3+/R-3	12%	S-3+/R-3+	8%				
S-4/R-3+	15%	S-4/R-4	10%				

1/ For Indonesian, incentive pay is: S-3/R-3 4%; S-3+/R-3+ 6%; and S-4/R-4 8%.

30.11 Total annual language incentive pay per individual for all languages will not exceed: for hard languages, \$9,325; for all other languages, \$7,250. These amounts will be adjusted to match any increases from base pay rates as of December 31, 2002.

## PAYMENT SCHEDULE

30.12 Eligibility for payments will be effective as follows:

- a. at the beginning of the first full pay period after arrival at post, for individuals who have achieved the required proficiency for incentive payments prior to arrival at post;
- b. at the beginning of the first full pay period after the date of the language proficiency test, for individuals qualifying for incentive payments after arrival at post;
- c. at the beginning of the first full pay period after a language is added to the list.

30.13 No incentive payments will be authorized until the SPO receives certification of the individual's test score from the NFATC or other management-approved facility and the completed application form for incentive pay. The completed application form must be received by the SPO within 90 days of the payment eligibility effective date for pay to be retroactive to that date, unless the SPO fails to provide the requested form in a timely manner. Otherwise, payment will begin as of the first full pay period after receipt of the application form.

30.14 When a language is removed from the incentive language list, payment for eligible individuals will terminate at the end of their current tour.

30.15 When a change in the language category occurs which lowers the level of incentive pay for that language, payment for eligible individuals will continue at the level of the prior category until the end of their current tour.

30.16 Language incentive payments terminate on the last day of the pay period during which the individual departs from post.

30.17 An individual may receive incentive pay for more than one language, if the individual:

- a. is assigned to a country/region which has more than one principal or official language defined as an incentive language; and
- b. qualifies for incentive pay in more than one of these languages, in accordance with Articles 30.10 and 30.11.

## REASSESSMENT AND TERMINATION OF LANGUAGE INCENTIVE PROGRAM

- 30.18 The Parties recognize that continuation of the language incentive program is dependent on available funding. Management will review the availability of funding as part of its annual budget process and notify AFSA in a timely manner if the funding level will not permit the payment of language incentives to all individuals expected to qualify for such incentives. Management recognizes the importance of the language incentive program to the agency's overseas mission and, consequently, will fund the program to the maximum extent possible.
- 30.19 Should management believe any changes to the language incentive program qualifications are warranted, it will so inform AFSA/FAS and, if requested, negotiate the changes. Program qualifications include, but are not limited to: language categories, performance benchmarks, and incentive levels.
- 30.20 Management reserves the right to terminate the language incentive program upon the announcement of reduction in force and/or furlough actions that may be necessitated by budget or ceiling constraints beyond the control of management.