

**Information Circular – Circulaire d'information**

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Language Proficiency and Language Incentives - Guidelines**Section 1****General principles**

- 1.1. Staff members are strongly encouraged to become proficient in two or more official languages of the ICC (with special emphasis on the two working languages) in order to achieve and maintain linguistic balance in the Organization. Once a staff member has established such proficiency, he or she may receive a monetary language incentive, under conditions set out in section 4 below.

Section 2**Language proficiency**

- 2.1 For the purposes of these guidelines, adequate and demonstrated knowledge in one of the official languages of the International Criminal Court shall be established by means of a language proficiency certificate upon the staff member's successfully passing the language proficiency examination (LPE) in that language organised by the ICC in cooperation with the United Nations.
- 2.2 Staff members whose mother tongue is one of the official languages of the ICC cannot take the LPE in their mother tongue. They may demonstrate adequate knowledge in another official language by passing the LPE in any of those languages, including that in which they are required to be proficient by the terms of their appointment.
- 2.3 Staff members whose mother tongue is not one of the official languages of the United Nations cannot take the LPE in the working language in which they are required to be proficient by the terms of their appointment. They may demonstrate adequate knowledge in another official language by passing the LPE in any of those other languages.

Section 3

Conditions governing language proficiency examinations

Eligibility to take the LPE

- 3.1 The LPE is open to all staff members holding an appointment for at least one year who were admitted to participate in the ICC language programme, after they have completed the highest level of that course.
- 3.2 Additionally, the LPE may be taken by staff members holding an appointment for at least one year who have not attended or completed a language course in the ICC but can document that they possess an equivalent knowledge of the language in which they wish to be tested. Such equivalent knowledge may be demonstrated by language study outside the ICC for at least two years or use of the language on a regular basis for school or work and a preliminary test organised by the ICC.

Applications

- 3.3 Candidates for the LPE who meet the conditions set out above in the present section shall complete the appropriate application form and submit it with all required documentation in accordance with procedures set out in the information circular announcing upcoming examinations.

Requirements for passing the LPE

- 3.4 The LPE shall consist of a written part and an oral part, which shall be taken during the same session.
- 3.5 A minimum score of 65 per cent in both parts shall be required for a passing grade. Where candidates receive a score of 80 per cent or more on the written examination but fail the oral, the jury adjudicating the examination shall review the case and may allow candidates to retain their written score for the following examination session. In this event, the candidate shall receive written notification of the jury's decision and will be required to apply to retake the oral examination only at the following session.

- 3.6 Candidates who receive 80 per cent or more on the oral part but fail the written part; and candidates who have taken only one part of the examination at one session shall retake both the written and oral parts at a subsequent session.

Candidates who fail the exam, need to wait at least one year before they can present themselves for a repetition of the exam. They also need to demonstrate that they have improved their skills in the language they are applying for.

Section 4

Language incentives

Language allowance

- 4.1 Staff members appointed to posts in the General Service category may be paid a language allowance in accordance with the Staff Rules after they have successfully passed the LPE in accordance with section 2 of these guidelines, unless the entitlement is specifically excluded in the Staff Rules or in the conditions of service of the individual staff member.
- 4.2 The language allowance may be paid to a staff member who has met the conditions of section 4.1 of these guidelines as of the first of the month following the month in which the staff member passed the LPE.

Accelerated increments

- 4.3 Staff members appointed to posts in the Professional and higher categories and whose recruitment is subject to the principles of geographical representation may be eligible for accelerated increments after they have established proficiency in a second language. Ineligible staff members include, in particular:

(a) Staff appointed to posts with special language requirements up to and including the P-5 level;

(b) Staff who have been exceptionally authorized to retain their status as permanent residents in a country other than that of their nationality.

Additionally, Professional staff on special leave with partial pay or without pay shall be ineligible for accelerated increments for the duration of their special leave.

- 4.4 Subject to satisfactory service, staff members eligible for accelerated increments shall be allowed to pass through the steps within each grade at intervals between steps of 10 months instead of 12 for grades and levels where the normal qualifying period for in-grade increment is one year. The intervals between steps shall be reduced to 20 months for grades and levels where the normal qualifying period for in-grade increment is 24 months.
- 4.5 Eligibility for accelerated increments shall become effective as of the first of the month following the month in which the staff member successfully passed the LPE. For implementation purposes, the increment that would have otherwise been granted in the course of the following year shall normally be granted two or four months earlier, as appropriate, provided, however, that the first accelerated increment shall not be given back to a period prior to the effective date of eligibility for accelerated increments. Thereafter, increments shall be awarded, subject to satisfactory service, after 10 or 20 months, as appropriate.



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