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SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE**

AIR FORCE INSTRUCTION 16-109

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Operations Support

FOREIGN AREA OFFICER PROGRAM



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This instruction implements Department of Defense (DOD) Directive 1315.17, *Service Foreign Area Officer (FAO) Programs*, February 22, 1997, by providing guidance for establishing and sustaining the Air Force FAO Program. The Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force for International Affairs (SAF/IA) directs policy.

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

This document is substantially revised and must be completely reviewed.

This instruction changes FAO Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) Qualification criteria (paragraph **2.1.**); identifies FAO AFSC shreds (paragraph **2.1.4.**); clarifies FAO Utilization via identification of FAO assignments, billets, support to contingency operations, and Air Force representation (paragraph **2.2.**); adds FAO skill development opportunities (paragraph **2.3.**); updates FAO program management responsibilities (paragraph **2.4.**); and updates office symbols and addresses (chapter 3).

Chapter 1

FAO PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1.1. Introduction. The Air Force requires personnel with global skills to support a broad range of political-military (Pol-Mil) assignments worldwide. The Air Force Foreign Area Officer (FAO) Program contributes to the Air Force mission by developing a cadre of officers who possess foreign language competency and regional expertise essential for effective interaction with foreign governments, militaries, and organizations.

1.2. FAO Support to the Air Force. FAOs play a critical engagement role advising operational commanders, supporting Force Protection programs, establishing cooperative relationships with Host Nation partners, and supporting the full range of Global Engagement activities, from humanitarian relief operations to coalition building in support of major theater warfare. FAOs ensure productive engagement with partners and allies across the range of operations. The overall focus of the FAO program is to develop, manage, track and sustain a cadre of FAOs who possess the language proficiency and regional area expertise necessary to enable the Air Force to respond quickly and effectively to Global Engagement needs worldwide.

1.3. Records Disposition. This instruction requires collecting and maintaining information protected by the Privacy Act of 1974 authorized by 10 USC 8013. Privacy Act system of records notice F036 AF PC Q, Personnel Data System, applies. All records created by this AFI are maintained and disposed of IAW AFMAN 37-139, "Records Disposition Schedule."

Chapter 2

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

2.1. FAO Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC). The Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force for International Affairs established the Air Force FAO Program within the International Airmen Division, Policy Directorate (SAF/IAPA). SAF/IAPA manages the FAO AFSC selection process. In this capacity, SAF/IAPA (in conjunction with personnel officials) determine AFSC prerequisite and upgrade criteria for the AFSC skill levels and suffixes. AFSC qualification criteria are maintained in AFMAN 36-2105, *Officer Classification*. A summary of the qualification criteria is provided below:

2.1.1. Entry Level (16F1/16F1X). To receive the entry level FAO AFSC, an officer must apply through the SAF/IAPA-run FAO program. A combination of three skills are considered when determining qualification for the FAO AFSC - foreign language proficiency, regional/pol-mil education and regional/pol-mil experience. With regards to language proficiency, a minimum score of 1/1 (listening/reading) on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) is required (MANDATORY). The individual must also possess a degree in some international pol-mil/regional studies formal education program (undergraduate/graduate level). FAO-related formal education includes, but is not limited to, international relations, area studies, national security affairs, or internationally-concentrated history/political science (MANDATORY). As a substitute for the education requirement, significant experience in a country or geographical area can be considered. The experience requirements include significant duty experience that included interaction with the host country's military/government or as a country desk officer in an analytical or policy function. Some civilian in-country experiences may be considered, such as study abroad programs, missionary work, or Peace Corps service. *Education or experience must correlate with the officer's foreign language.* Entry level FAOs are expected to progress in their language proficiency to a minimum score of 2/2 (listening/reading) on the DLPT for the language that correlates to their qualification, certified annually through DLPT testing (MANDATORY).

2.1.2. Qualified Level (16F3/16F3X). To upgrade to the qualified FAO AFSC, a FAO must have served for at least 12 months in a FAO billet (MANDATORY) and have attained a minimum score of 2/2 (listening/reading) on the DLPT for the language that correlates to their qualification (MANDATORY). The upgrade is accomplished through the personnel system and no application process through SAF/IAPA is required. Personnel who served in a FAO-type billet prior to the creation of the 16F AFSC and meet the minimum time/experience requirements, may be awarded the qualified skill level through the initial application process. Additionally, the qualified FAOs are expected (HIGHLY DESIRED) to maintain a minimum score of 2/2 (listening/reading) on the DLPT for the language that correlates to their qualification, certified annually through DLPT testing (MANDATORY).

2.1.3. Staff Level (16F4). Officers who meet the requirements for 16F1 or 16F1X and serve in a FAO staff assignment above wing level receive the 16F4 AFSC. Staff FAO positions above wing level are limited to OSD, SAF, Air Staff, Joint Staff, Unified and Combined Commands, MAJCOMs, NAF, and Component Commands.

2.1.4. FAO AFSC Shreds. The following shreds identify a FAO's region of expertise:

2.1.4.1. 16FXA - Air Attaché (any geographic region)

2.1.4.2. 16FXB - Central Asia / East Europe / Russia

- 2.1.4.3. 16FXC - Latin America
- 2.1.4.4. 16FXD - East Asia / China
- 2.1.4.5. 16FXE - Southeast Asia
- 2.1.4.6. 16FXF - Middle East / North Africa
- 2.1.4.7. 16FXG - Sub-Saharan Africa
- 2.1.4.8. 16FXH - Western Europe

NOTE: Officers who meet the education/experience criteria for a predominantly English-speaking country (Canada, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand) are awarded the 16FX AFSC *with no shred*.

2.1.5. **FAO AFSC as a Secondary AFSC.** The FAO AFSC is only awarded as a secondary AFSC (unless it is the only AFSC possessed). *FAO assignments are considered career broadening opportunities.* To fill a FAO position, an officer must first be released from his/her primary specialty.

2.2. FAO Utilization. Air Force FAOs provide the expertise necessary to develop, maintain, and exploit global situational awareness. When not assigned in their core career field, these officers, whose basic military expertise has been enhanced by a combination of language study, foreign area studies, and regional duty experience, may serve in a variety of FAO billets. FAOs are assigned to various organizations at the strategic, operational, and tactical level. FAO utilization continues to evolve as Air Force requirements change.

2.2.1. **FAO Assignments.** FAOs serve in selective duty assignments outside their core specialty in support of the following organizations:

- 2.2.1.1. Security Assistance Organizations
- 2.2.1.2. Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD)
- 2.2.1.3. Department of State
- 2.2.1.4. United Nations
- 2.2.1.5. Air Staff
- 2.2.1.6. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)
- 2.2.1.7. Combined and Unified Commands
- 2.2.1.8. Major Commands (MAJCOMs)
- 2.2.1.9. Numbered Air Force (NAF)
- 2.2.1.10. United States Air Force Academy (USAFA)
- 2.2.1.11. Air University (AU)
- 2.2.1.12. Air Force Special Operations Advisory Teams

2.2.2. **FAO Billets.** FAOs conduct duties in 16FXX billets that are currently designated as:

- 2.2.2.1. Air Attachés within the Defense Attaché System (DAS)
- 2.2.2.2. Exchange officers within the Personnel Exchange Program (PEP)
- 2.2.2.3. MAJCOM/HAF regional/country specialists/desk officers

2.2.2.4. Students in foreign military schools

2.2.3. **FAO Support to Contingency Operations.** AEF operations require interaction with allies and foreign partners on a wide variety of military matters. AEF operations benefit significantly by having officers with FAO skills and experience in the following deployed positions:

2.2.3.1. Commander and Selected Members of the Commander's Special Staff.

2.2.3.2. Mission Planners

2.2.3.3. Tanker/Airlift Control Element (TALCE)

2.2.3.4. Contracting

2.2.3.5. Intelligence

2.2.3.6. Force Protection

2.2.3.7. Logistics

2.2.3.8. Civil Engineering

2.2.4. **Air Force Representation.** SAF/IAPA represents the FAO program and officer foreign language issues through regular participation in/contribution to the following organizations:

2.2.4.1. AFIT Foreign Area Studies Program

2.2.4.2. Olmstead Scholarship Program

2.2.4.3. AF Command Language Program (AF CLP)

2.2.4.4. Air Force Education Review Board (AFERB)

2.2.4.5. Defense Foreign Language Panel (DFLP)

2.2.4.6. Foreign Language Committee (FLC)

2.2.4.7. Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR)

2.2.4.8. International Health Specialist (IHS) Program

2.3. FAO Skills Development. Skills development for FAOs should generally begin as early as possible via pre-commissioning education and training and continue throughout an officer's career. FAO skills include a working knowledge of a foreign language in addition to a blend of pol-mil/regional studies formal education and regional experience in a country or geographical area that normally uses that language.

2.3.1. **Pre-commissioning Programs.** USAFA, AFROTC, and OTS will encourage cadets to develop language and regional area expertise utilizing the following programs:

2.3.1.1. **Foreign Language Self-Assessment (FLSA).** Officer accession points (AFROTC, USAFA, and OTS) will administer the FLSA to all newly accessed officers and update the results in the Personnel Data System (PDS). If an accession point is incapable of updating the PDS, then the Military Personnel Flight (MPF) at the officer's first assignment will update the PDS.

2.3.1.2. **USAFA Academic Area Studies Program .** USAFA will maintain a rigorous academic area studies program. USAFA will maintain foreign language immersion and semester-abroad programs as funding allows.

2.3.1.3. **AFROTC Scholarship Programs.** AFROTC will offer undergraduate academic scholarships in foreign area studies programs and foreign language majors as funding allows. Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) evaluates academic foreign area studies programs for suitability for AFROTC scholarships on behalf of the Air Force. Suitable degrees under this program may include Foreign Area Studies and Foreign Languages.

2.3.1.4. **Degrees in Foreign Area Studies Program.** Foreign area studies are defined as programs of comprehensive study to include history, religion, culture, economics, politics, international relations, and languages. Foreign area studies focus on a single country or a region (such as East Asia, Africa, or the Middle East) and offer instruction in those inter-disciplinary fields necessary to provide a full understanding of the country or region. Programs in foreign area studies may include a degree requirement for a foreign language minor in the principle language or languages of that country or region, or a minimum of two years (four semester courses) foreign language study in a language of that country or region.

2.3.1.5. **Degrees in Foreign Language.** Cadets must obtain the foreign language degree from the college or university where the AFROTC Detachment is located or an accredited college or university having a formal cross-town or consortium agreement with AFROTC. AFIT academic evaluation is not required for these programs.

2.3.1.6. **Recruitment , Education and Training Programs.** USAFA and Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) will encourage recruitment of candidates possessing regional knowledge and language skills. The Officer Training School (OTS) and Academy of Military Science (AMS) accession program will seek candidates with foreign language skills, country experience, or academic studies with a regional focus.

2.3.2. **Commissioned Officer Programs.** Officers may take advantage of opportunities to obtain any foreign area studies (FAS) or foreign language advanced academic degree (AAD). AFIT and USAFA will sponsor a limited number of post-graduate scholarship programs that fulfill FAO academic requirements.

2.3.2.1. **Language Development & Sustainment Programs.** Maintenance of language proficiency is a FAO's responsibility. Officers awarded a FAO AFSC are eligible for training and recurrent assignments in FAO positions outside their core career field. In order to maintain and improve FAO skills, FAOs are encouraged to take advantage of language and regional studies programs. Officers with language skills may be offered opportunities to maintain and improve those skills as availability and funding allow.

2.3.2.1.1. **Language and Area Studies Immersion (LASI).** LASI programs are available for select officers to participate in short-duration, intensive, in-country language training. Air Force officers are not required to possess the FAO AFSC to participate in a LASI. Any officer who scores at least a 1/1 on the DLPT and desires to improve their DLPT score is eligible for a LASI.

2.3.2.1.2. **Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC).** Select officers will attend DLIFLC for foreign language education in the language that fulfills FAO requirements. Additionally, intermediate and advanced foreign language programs are available at DLIFLC for officers to increase their foreign language proficiency.

2.3.2.1.3. **Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP)** Officers may accomplish the DLPT for the purpose of receiving FLPP. FAOs are career linguists and are eligible for FLPP I if they

score 2/2 (listening/reading) or higher on the DLPT while serving in a DAFSC 16FX that requires language capability or a Language Designated Position (LDP). Refer to AFI 36-2605, Attachment 11, *Air Force Military Personnel Testing System, Foreign Language Proficiency Pay* for additional guidance on FLPP.

2.3.2.2. Regional Pol-Mil Development Programs. FAOs should maintain currency in the pol-mil situation of their region as well as the U.S. political, economic, and military objectives within their region. Officers awarded the 16FX AFSC will be considered for participation in various area studies programs.

2.3.2.2.1. AF Special Operations School (AFSOS). “Regional orientation” courses relevant to FAO areas of expertise are regularly offered at AFSOS.

2.3.2.2.2. Foreign Service Institute (FSI). State Department’s FSI offers two-week programs focused on pol-mil activities in specific geographical areas.

2.3.2.2.3. Area Studies Advanced Program (ASAP). ASAP is available for officers to conduct in-country field or academic research for up to three months.

2.3.2.2.4. In Country Training (ICT). ICT programs are available for officers. These programs are designed to help potential FAOs gain hands-on, regional experience.

2.3.2.3. Miscellaneous. Installation education offices normally located at military personnel flights will assist officers with tuition assistance (TA). Local language training opportunities continue to evolve as the FAO program develops.

2.4. FAO Program Management.

2.4.1. SAF/IAPA. SAF/IAPA performs the following actions:

2.4.1.1. Maintains a database of personnel information and validated completed training programs. Serves as the Air Force focal point and functional manager for the FAO 16FX AFSC.

2.4.1.2. Coordinates with AFPC for 16FX assignments.

2.4.1.3. Coordinates with Aerospace Expeditionary Force Center (AEFC) for 16FX contingency TDY assignments.

2.4.1.4. Validates USAF FAO and FAO LDP billets.

2.4.1.5. Determines FAO qualification criteria depicted in AFMAN 36-2105.

2.4.1.6. Maintains responsibility for Biennial Program Objective Memorandum (POM) for FAO program.

2.4.1.7. Manages FAO AFSC selection process.

2.4.1.8. Provides updated guidance to officers desiring/considering the FAO AFSC.

2.4.1.9. Manages FAO education and training opportunities.

2.4.1.10. Acts as the focal point for FAO issues with OSD, Air Staff, and other Agencies.

2.4.1.11. Participates in the Air Force Education Review Board (AFERB) as an Academic Specialty Monitor (ASM).

2.4.1.12. Provides an annual report on the FAO program to HQ USAF/CC.

2.4.2. **Military Personnel Flights.** Servicing Military Personnel Flights will administer DLPT and DLAB tests in accordance with guidance in AFI 36-2605, *Air Force Military Personnel Testing System*.

2.4.3. **Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC).** Personnel management for the FAO Program is managed at Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC). AFPC maintains a database that includes Foreign Language Self-Assessment (FLSA), DLPT, and other pertinent information in order to source candidates for contingency operations and FAO assignments. The FLSA and DLPT databases are made available to the FAO Branch to assist in scheduling language skill enhancement training. AFPC will:

2.4.3.1. Maintain personnel data systems for the FAO program to include AFSC, FLSA, and DLPT results.

2.4.3.2. Validate Officer Assignment Selection (OAS) for FAO billets.

2.4.3.3. Fill 16FX billets with FAO qualified officers.

2.4.3.4. Coordinate with the FAO Branch to obtain a list of qualified FAOs.

2.5. FAO Tracking. SAF/IAPA is the FAO functional manager. In this capacity, SAF/IAPA will directly support AFPC's FAO PCS assignment requirements, as well as Aerospace Expeditionary Force Center (AEFC) contingency TDY (CTDY) requirements. In order to support these processes, SAF/IAPA will maintain a validated FAO personnel database utilizing appropriate databases in order to maintain awareness of foreign language capabilities, regional expertise, and formal education among the Air Force FAO community.

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International Affairs

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

DODD 1315.17, *Service Foreign Area Officer (FAO) Programs*

DODD 5160.41, *Defense Language Program*

AFPD 16-1, *International Affairs*

AFJI 14-107, *Management of the Defense Foreign Language Program*

AFI 36-2605, *Air Force Military Personnel Testing System*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAD—Advanced Academic Degree

AEFC—Aerospace Expeditionary Force Center

AFIT—Air Force Institute of Technology

AFPC—Air Force Personnel Center

AFSC—Air Force Specialty Code

AFSOS—Air Force Special Operations School

AFROTC—Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps

ASAAD—Area Studies Advanced Academic Degree

ASAP—Area Studies Advanced Program

ASC—Academic Specialty Code

ASM—Academic Specialty Monitor

CTDY—Contingency Tour of Duty

DAO—Defense Attaché Office

DIA—Defense Intelligence Agency

DLIFLC—Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center

DLAB—Defense Language Aptitude Battery

DLPT—Defense Language Proficiency Test

DOD—Department of Defense

DPPAC—HQ AFPC/ USAF Classification Branch

FAO—Foreign Area Officer

FASP—Foreign Area Studies Program

FLPP—Foreign Language Proficiency Pay

FLSA—Foreign Language Self-Assessment

FSI—Foreign Service Institute

HQ AFRC/DP—Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Director of Personnel

IPT—Integrated Process Team

LASI—Language and Area Studies Immersion Program

LDP—Language Designated Position

MAJCOM—Major Command

MPF—Military Personnel Flight

NAF—Numbered Air Force

NGB/DP—National Guard Bureau, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel

NPS—Naval Postgraduate School

OAS—Officer Assignment Selection

OSD—Office of the Secretary of Defense

OSI—Office of Special Investigation

OTS—Officer Training School

PDS—Personnel Data System

PEP—Personnel Exchange Program

Pol-Mil—Political-Military (Affairs)

POM—Program Objective Memorandum

PDS—Personnel Data System

SAF/IA—Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force for International Affairs

SAF/IAPA—Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force, International Airmen Policy Affairs Division

TA—Tuition Assistance

USAF/DP—Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Air Force Headquarters

USAF/XOI—Director of Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Air Force Headquarters

USAFA—United States Air Force Academy