



Secretariat

IC/Geneva/2003/49
1 October 2003

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INFORMATION CIRCULAR No. 49

Subject: Language Proficiency Examinations

1. Language proficiency examinations in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish will be held on 20 and 21 January 2004.
2. Staff members wishing to take the examination must submit an application form to the Language Secretariat of the Staff Development and Learning Section (Annex Bocage 2 – room 3) by 24 OCTOBER 2003. NO APPLICATION WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DATE. A separate application must be submitted for each examination requested. Application forms, copies of sample examination questions and payment slips are available from the above office.
3. The Language Proficiency Examination consists of a written test and an oral interview. The written examination will be held on the following dates:

20 January 2004

Russian	09.00-12.30	Room to be announced later
Chinese	14.00-17.30	Room to be announced later
English	14.00-17.30	Room to be announced later

21 January 2004

Spanish	09:00-12:30	Room to be announced later
Arabic	14.00-17.30	Room to be announced later
French	14.00-17.30	Room to be announced later

Candidates are advised to arrive 30 minutes before the beginning of the written examination to allow time for check-in procedures.



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4. The oral examination will be conducted on an individual basis and will consist of a 15 minute interview. Candidates will be advised of the time and location of the oral examination by convocation.
5. Eligibility requirements are as follows:

Non-United Nations Secretariat staff members (ie. staff members of permanent missions, service organizations in the Palais des Nations, NGOs, press corps, consultants and dependents of staff or of diplomatic mission staff) are only eligible if they are currently enrolled in or have completed the highest level (level 8) of the UNOG language programme.

Proof of payment of the examination fee must be submitted with the application (see para. 7).

United Nations Secretariat /Specialized Agency staff members

Staff members need to be enrolled in or have completed the highest level of the UNOG language training programme (level 8). Students currently in the programme who have not yet reached level 8 are not permitted to sit this examination.

Alternatively, staff members who have achieved proficiency by studying the language outside the United Nations for at least two years or were/are required to use the language on a regular basis for school or work are also eligible.

The examination is free of charge for United Nations Secretariat staff members. Staff members of Specialized Agencies have to pay a fee of SF.64 and proof of payment must be submitted with the application (see para. 7).

Type of Appointment

PERMANENT AND PROBATIONARY APPOINTMENTS: All staff members of the organizations of the United Nations system who have a permanent or a probationary appointment are eligible to take the United Nations Language Proficiency Examination provided that they meet the eligibility criteria specified above.

FIXED-TERM APPOINTMENTS: United Nations staff members and staff members of specialized agencies who have fixed-term appointments are eligible to take the United Nations Language Proficiency Examination, provided that their contract expiration date is after the date of the Language Proficiency Examination for which they are applying. United Nations staff members whose contract expires before this date must obtain authorization from their chief and

staff members of other specialized agencies must obtain the authorization of their organization.

SHORT-TERM APPOINTMENTS: United Nations staff members who hold short-term appointments are not eligible to take the United Nations Language Proficiency Examination unless they obtain authorization from the Chief of Personnel Service.

6. Language incentive eligibility requirements for United Nations Secretariat staff members:

(a) A staff member may take the language proficiency examination to obtain a certificate establishing proficiency in a second official language and, in certain cases:

- (i) To benefit from the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 2480 B (XXIII);
- (ii) To qualify for the first or second language allowance under staff rule 103.6.

(b) Resolution 2480 B (XXIII) applies to Professional and higher level staff members subject to geographical distribution who work in one of the working languages of the Secretariat and who have an adequate and confirmed knowledge of a second official language. The criteria for benefitting from the language incentives provided for under the resolution are set out in administrative instruction ST/AI/207 of 23 December 1971.

(c) Under staff rule 103.6 staff members in the General Service and Trades and Crafts categories or in the Field Service below level 6 are eligible for language allowances. Staff members must be proficient in two official languages and must pass the language proficiency examination in one of them to receive the allowance. To receive a second language allowance they must be proficient in three official languages and must pass the proficiency examination in two of them. Staff members whose mother tongue is an official language of the Organization must pass the examination in another official language, which may be the language in which they are required to be proficient by the terms of their appointment. The language proficiency examination in their mother tongue is waived. Staff members whose mother tongue is not one of the official languages must pass the examination in an official language other than that in which they are required to be proficient by the terms of their appointment. The proficiency examination in that language is waived.

7. Fees:

The Language Proficiency Examination is free of charge for United Nations Secretariat staff members. Staff members of specialized agencies must pay a fee of SF. 64. Staff members of permanent missions, service organizations in

the Palais des Nations, NGOs, press corps, consultants and dependents of staff or of diplomatic mission staff who have completed the last level of the United Nations Language Training Programme must also pay a fee of SF 64. PTT vouchers are available from the Language Secretariat (Annex Bocage 2 – room 3) or from specialized agency Personnel Officers. PROOF OF PAYMENT, IF REQUIRED, MUST BE SUBMITTED AT THE SAME TIME AS THE APPLICATION FORM. FAILURE TO DO SO MEANS THAT YOUR APPLICATION WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

8. Candidates will receive written notification of their examination results. No results will be available prior to official notice.

(Signed) **Bertrand Juppín de Fondaumière**
Director, Division of Administration