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Solicitation Amendment / Modification

1.	Solicitation No.	062323/ET
2.	Solicitation Name	2024-2028 Domestic Undergraduate Flagship Programs
3.	Issue Date	June 23, 2023
4.	Closing Date	October 31, 2023
5.	Solicitation Amendment No.	2
6.	Solicitation Amendment Date	October 2, 2023

7. The above numbered solicitation is amended as set forth in Item 9 below.

8. The hour and dates specified for receipt of proposals/quotations: is not extended; is extended as described in Item 9 below.

9. Description of Amendment/Modification:

The purpose of this solicitation amendment is to inform prospective offerors/bidders that the above numbered solicitation is hereby amended to provide responses to questions as follows (FINAL UPDATE).

2024-2028 Undergraduate Language Flagship Programs
For Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Persian, Portuguese and Russian

RFP Questions and Answers

FINAL

GENERAL

Q: Is the goal of this grant cycle to open new domestic Flagship programs to be able to feed students into the already developed international locations, or is it to expand Flagship language options?

A: The goal is to compete all domestic Flagship programs in the languages specified in the published RFPs. The domestic programs will send students to the already-established Capstone programs. New and incumbent applicants are encouraged to apply.

Q: Are there any limitations on languages?

A: The languages being requested are Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, and Russian.

Q: Does full and open competition mean both new and continuing programs will be competing in this cycle?



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A: Yes. Both new and continuing domestic Flagship program applicants will be competing for 2024-2028 funding.

Q: Does the anticipated number of awards listed in the RFPs include existing Flagship programs?

A: All institutions (new applicants as well as currently funded institutions) are competing for the listed number of awards.

Q: Are proposals starting a new program evaluated separately from those that already have a program?

A: All proposals for the same language are evaluated together in the same panel review.

Q: How many universities have received a Flagship grant in Portuguese?

A: Please refer to the [Flagship website](#) to see currently-funded Flagship programs.

Q: Can you provide the number of applications received per competition?

A: We cannot give figures on how many applications we receive.

Q: Can graduate students participate in the domestic program or Capstone experiences?

A: No. The Language Flagship is a program for undergraduate students. Graduate students can serve as graduate assistants or tutors for the Flagship program.

Q: Can a student who has cross-enrollment privileges at our university, but who is matriculated at a different university in the city, become a participant of our Flagship?

A: If a student with cross-enrollment privileges at your institution is able to complete all of the Flagship requirements on your campus, they may participate in the Flagship program and receive student support through the grant if your institution is able to support this arrangement. Institutions may propose eligibility for students from specific institutions with cross-enrollment. Applicants should address how support from partner institutions will reduce barriers to Flagship participation or add to the Flagship program.

Q: Can instructors be reviewers for panels?

A: Yes, qualified instructors that are not involved with any applicant proposals can be panelists.

Q: If an institution is not currently Flagship-ready, are there any resources to help build it into one that is?



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A: There are a number of grant programs that have helped as a steppingstone, specifically under Department of Education Title VI through the Undergraduate International Study and Foreign Language program (UISFL). A number of programs that hosted Project Global Officer summer programs, which are more limited in scope because they are only eight weeks, have leveraged that experience and grown their capacity. Take advantage of anything that may bolster the program including professional development opportunities for faculty.

Q: Can domestic institutions partner with foreign institutions?

A: The domestic institution is the primary grant recipient but may partner with foreign institutions in multiple ways. It is allowable to partner with foreign institutions for faculty exchange, language partners and tutors, and cultural activities. Salary and administrative costs should not go to foreign institutions, as foreign institutions should not be part of the academic year program.

Q: Is this call for proposals issued every year?

A: The open competition for the domestic undergraduate Flagship programs occurs every four years. Occasionally an additional RFP is released mid-cycle as funding and program priorities allow.

Q: Will other languages be considered for any later calls?

A: Additional languages for this program are not currently anticipated. Different languages were requested for the recently closed [Regional Flagship Languages Initiative RFP](#). There is also an upcoming open competition for Project Global Officer, which will include additional languages.

Q: Please provide clarification on the upcoming competition on the Capstone programs?

A: In past competitions, the Persian, Portuguese, and Korean RFPs requested proposals that included both the domestic and Capstone programs. In this competition cycle, all languages should apply for the domestic Flagship program only. The Capstone programs will be competed openly under separate awards at a later date.

Q: Do upcoming applicants in the Capstone program open competition need to have a domestic program to apply to host a Capstone program?

A: Guidelines for the Capstone program competition will be released next year, and the answer to this question will be confirmed at that time. In previous years, applicants did not need to have a domestic program in order to host a Capstone program.



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ELIGIBILITY AND COMPETITIVENESS

Q: Would two proposals from the same institution be in direct competition with one another, or would they be considered independently?

A: Two proposals from the same university would not be in direct competition with one another unless they were for the same language. Institutions frequently submit proposals for more than one language; however, each language requires a separate proposal and would be a distinct Flagship program. In the proposal, institutions can refer to other language programs on their campus and describe how they share resources to show collaboration. However, it is possible that one is funded, and one is not.

Q: Do applicants have a higher chance if they apply for multiple languages?

A: No. Applications are reviewed individually.

Q: What if the language program offers a minor but not a major?

A: Having a major in the language is not a requirement of a program. However, Flagship programs must be able to teach the language to the advanced level and offer in-language content courses. Institutions should also be mindful of the enrollment goals of 80 Flagship students, with a goal of 10 students annually qualifying for Capstone.

Q: Do applicants already need to be producing students with ILR 3 proficiency?

A: The official goal of the domestic Flagship program is to produce students with ILR 2 proficiency for speaking, reading, listening, and in a number of cases, writing. Students should be well-prepared and positioned to reach ILR 3 after their Capstone year overseas or domestically for Persian and Chinese at the Defense Language Institute (DLI). Any evidence to support students achieving advanced and professional levels should be included in the proposal.

Q: Is having a Project Global Officer award an advantage for this application?

A: Special preference is not provided to current NSEP grantees, but the experience of managing Project Global Officer language programs and the expertise developed on campus, especially relationships with ROTC commanders, can be leveraged in a Flagship proposal.

Q: Is it possible for two-year colleges to receive a domestic Flagship award?

A: It would be difficult to design a two-year program that would meet all requirements to qualify for Capstone, but there have been excellent language programs at community colleges and colleges feeding students into the later stages of a Flagship program.



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If interested, it is advisable to partner with a larger institution in the target language of interest. Currently many community college students transfer into Flagship and are successful.

While there are currently no formally supported relationships, it is certainly possible that grant funds could be provided for community college partners to strengthen their first couple years of instruction and ties to the Flagship program. This would also reduce tuition costs for students participating in the program and make it possible to reach a more diverse student body.

Q: Our institution is currently in the process of developing a program in the target language but does not currently have students enrolled. Are we eligible to apply?

A: No. This solicitation is open to U.S. IHEs with strong existing target language programs and demonstrated experience delivering high-quality undergraduate language instruction.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION

Q: Will webinar slides be posted as a file, and will there be a transcript or recording posted?

A: Slides are available as a file on The Language Flagship website. However, there will not be a recording or transcript.

Q: Is this award a research grant, and therefore does it need DoD OHRO Human Subjects approval?

A: No, this award is not a research grant and not subject to DoD OHRO Human Subjects approval.

Q: Are past applications open to the public?

A: Past applications are not available to the public.

Q: Is The Language Flagship able to review drafts and provide feedback prior to final submissions?

A: No, this is not possible. However, proposal feedback can be provided after the competition has closed.

Q: The application is asking for CVs of no more than three pages for each lead individual involved in the program and mini-bios for other key individuals. Who are considered “key individuals,” and does this include high-level administration personnel?



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A: The three-page CV is required for the director of the program, assistant director or other core faculty who will play a major teaching role, as well as others who are instrumental across campus in running the program such as a co-PI from another department or the director of the study abroad office. Mini bios apply to the rest of the staff with a role in the Flagship program.

Q: Is there any specific format for letters of support?

A: No specific format is required, but it is recommended that letters are detailed and specific. It is less compelling to reviewers when support letters are similar, identical, or general. More compelling support letters are detailed, specific, and highlight support that is being offered by the college, department or center and clearly benefits the key goals and mission of The Language Flagship.

Q: Could you elaborate on the Confucius Institute waiver process? Does each institution need to certify that they have not obtained the DoD waiver?

A: This refers to the presence of Confucius Institutes on campus. Proposals must contain a certification that the campus does not have a Confucius Institute. If the institution has a Confucius Institute, they must certify that they have obtained an approved [waiver](#) from the DoD Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering Confucius Institute Waiver Program (CIWP) per the provisions of the [2021 National Defense Authorization Act](#).

Q: Where can the Confucius Institute certification form be found?

A: It can be found in Appendix J, in the final page of the RFP.

Q: Does the proposal narrative needs to be double spaced and no more than 25 pages?

A: This is correct. Full specifications can be found under Section 5: Application Procedures in the RFP.

Q: Does the double-spacing requirement include CVs and appendices?

A: Double-spacing is required throughout the application. Template appendices included in the RFP may be used as-is.

Q: Any general tips for incumbent applicants?

A: It is advised not to assume that the panel reviewers are familiar with previous applicants. Applicants will need to describe the proposed program, and plans for the next four years. Successful proposals of current grantees will demonstrate impact value concisely. Have the proposal reviewed multiple times by multiple people to ensure the proposal is clear and addresses the guidelines in a way that helps official reviewers



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understand how the criteria are addressed. This advice is the same for all applicants: remember to make everything clear for expert reviewers who may not be familiar with the history of your specific program.

Q: What advice is there for reapplicants who were not previously successful/funded?

A: Look at the feedback that was previously provided. Prior applicants are encouraged to reapply this cycle and should demonstrate ways in which the program has developed to incorporate previous suggestions. Every year, every competition, and every set of review panels is different. All are encouraged to apply.

Q: Are there any features of proposals that are often underdeveloped?

A: Often the challenge is less about areas that are underdeveloped and more about a proposal being harder to follow for external reviewers. Reviewers will not know the strengths of each program, so applicants should work to make it easy for reviewers to follow.

Q: Are there previous Flagship models that can be referenced?

A: There is a lot of information available from individual programs, from [the Flagship website](#), and a wealth of research published on Flagship practice and principles including an edited volume and numerous articles. Prospective applicants can find information on these research topics or follow the current Flagship grantees who have been publishing this information. In addition, applicants may review [the National Security Education Program Annual Reports](#).

Q: What are some examples of successful articulation between Flagship programs and Community College and/or K-12 institutions for purposes of recruitment?

A: Some successful activities have included outreach and cultural events with feeder schools. Webinars have been conducted if no schools in the immediate vicinity teach the relevant language. Flagship programs have also worked directly with local community colleges to ensure that the two years of language classes at the community college articulate with the curriculum at the Flagship institution. Another strong area for recruitment from K-12 would be immersion schools.

Q: Beyond funding faculty and instructional lines, are there other criteria for additional institutional support?

A: Other typical examples of institutional support that are seen beyond funding for faculty and instructional lines are course releases, covering time for senior level administrators involved in the project, making space available for programs, and providing for high financial need students. Direct student funding available from Flagship is limited and students will need to plan to cover some of these costs. In addition, sometimes programs



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guarantee funding for graduate students who can serve as teaching assistants, assistant instructors, or tutors within the program.

Q: Please elaborate a little more on what level of institutional commitment is required. For example, must the institution commit to hire a full-time faculty line?

A: Institutional support can be demonstrated with a clear commitment to the Flagship program through alignment with the institution's long-term mission, provided financial support of proposed Flagship efforts that allow for program sustainment over time, the identification of additional university and external funding sources for student scholarships, and the provision of physical space, facilities and technological support. The hiring of a full-time faculty line is an example of this, but is not required.

Q: Please provide more details about the spatial requirements? Would limited space significantly weaken an application?

A: A successful Flagship typically has dedicated space for key staff offices, tutoring, and additional space for students to gather. Physical space is included under the evaluation criteria for Institutional Commitment.

Q: How important is describing the space where the Flagship will be?

A: Space is an important issue for all Flagship campuses. It is recommended to describe the facilities for administrative staff and faculty, as well as for tutoring, and student lounges for students working together.

Q: What are the enrollment expectations?

A: The recruitment goal for each program is to enroll 80 students across four program years and then is able to qualify 10+ students into Capstone each year.

It is understood that there will be some ramp up time if a program is new to Flagship, and it is not required to hit the ground running with 80 students. There is an understanding that universities recruit in cohorts and might be adding 20-30 students each year to achieve the ultimate goal of total 80 enrolled.

Q: Could you provide examples of student retention?

A: Strategies to retain students are many and varied. One example is that programs have worked to strengthen advising and support for students so that it is comprehensive, and students can be given holistic advice and support in language learning, study abroad, and financial aid, all in one.

Another retention strategy institutions have employed is focusing on community building. An advantage of having a dedicated Flagship space and/or Flagship student lounge is



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to have lively activities and events, providing mentors within the program, and providing opportunities for students to receive support directly from faculty and staff. These are some of the things that Flagship students report as helping them persist and are strategies that institutions successfully employ.

Q: What sort of statistics should be included in the application?

A: Any data that demonstrates the strength of the program should be included. Demonstration in success at graduating students with higher proficiency and bringing in diversity is encouraged. This includes enrollment data, proficiency data, and demographics. Assessment outcomes are included in a required appendix in the application.

Q: How can collaboration with partner schools be demonstrated?

A: Collaborations with partner schools can be demonstrated through letters of support from relevant schools and departments, plans for joint activities, and anything that provides evidence of cooperation. This would include evidence of administrative support to make necessary modifications so that students at other schools and departments can integrate Flagship requirements into their programs and navigate existing barriers to participation. A barrier might be a requirement like being on campus during the last semester of study, for example. Cooperation entails navigating these barriers so that students can complete both Flagship and their major of choice. The best evidence is the ability to demonstrate that the current cohort of students studying language comes from diverse majors.

Q: If a program does not have year-on-year data of final assessment of incumbent students, can qualitative or illustrative data be used for the application?

A: Yes. This type of information should be included in the proposal narrative, along with future plans to incorporate assessment into the curricular plan. Appendices, such as the assessment appendix, should be included as-is.

Q: Do the leaders of the project have to be experts in language pedagogy in the target language?

A: The academic leadership of the program should be an expert in language pedagogy in the target language. This does not necessarily mean that the PI needs to be an expert if there is adequate expertise at the director or associate director level.

Q: Does the institution have to state a commitment to add new faculty lines, or explain status of existing faculty lines, or both?



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A: Applications should detail the instructional staff that will teach in the Flagship program. Proposals do not need to include additional faculty lines if adequate instruction is available to support the needs of the program.

Q: Would it weaken an application if a co-director has an annually renewable contract as opposed to a multiyear contract?

A: The proposed program may be seen as having less stability if the leadership of the program lacks stability. This should be addressed in the application.

GRANTS ADMINISTRATION AND BUDGET

Q: Is F&A limited?

A: The Department of Defense does not ask for reduced F&A, but can accept it. There is no published maximum F&A rate that must be included as part of the proposal. However, institutions are asked to demonstrate institutional support, such as ensuring there is space, faculty lines, and financial assistance for high-need students. Reduced F&A is one of the ways that institutions have helped support the program in the past, but it is not required.

Q: Are there limitations or parameters for indirect costs? Are indirect costs generally finalized during the budget negotiations?

A: Indirect cost rates are fixed under each institutions NICRA. DoD grant programs do not set the rates or negotiate on indirect cost rates.

Q: Could you provide more information on the ideal indirect rate for a successful proposal?

A: DoD grant programs may not negotiate on an institution's established NICRA and therefore there is no comment on the ideal indirect rate for a successful proposal.

Q: What diagnostic testing is paid for by NSEP directly and thus would not be included in the proposal budget?

A: The standard diagnostic test paid directly by NSEP that does not need to be included in the individual domestic Flagship budgets are the pre- and post-Capstone testing. These include the scores necessary to qualify students into the Capstone program, usually at the end of the domestic Flagship, and at the end of the Capstone program.

Placement or benchmark testing as a way to monitor students' progress, including pre- and post-intensive summer programming in particular, should be included in the budget.

Q: How many days and nights should be budgeted for the September 2024 Onboarding Meeting?



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A: Applicants should budget for two full meeting days and the corresponding nights needed for participation.

Q: The RFP states that a higher level of annual funding (up to \$375,000 per project year) can be provided to those institutions that have the enrollment of more than 60 students in the SCS, along with a successful record of qualifying students for capstone. Can you please clarify the terms of 60+ students. Does this mean 60 actively enrolled students at present or at a single time, or does this include both actively enrolled and graduated Flagship students who are enrolled in the SCS?

A: This means 60+ enrolled at one time, at all levels of the program. The idea is that programs may need additional funding to support active students.

Q: Does the higher level of annual funding stated in the RFP require both higher enrollment and success in qualifying students for Capstone, or is one sufficient?

A: Programs must both demonstrate an enrollment of 60+ Flagship students and a successful track record of qualifying students for Capstone to receive up to \$375,000 in annual funding.

Q: Are current Flagship programs that have historically had over 60 students but currently have fewer eligible for increased funding?

A: Programs are eligible for increased funding when the program enrolls 60 or more students. They also must demonstrate a history of successfully qualifying students for Capstone.

Q: Can the funding be used to evaluate the effectiveness of certain pedagogical approaches?

A: Assessment funding is limited to benchmark student proficiency levels at different points in the program. Proficiency goals for each level of instruction should be clear, and therefore student proficiency assessment will naturally indicate the effectiveness of pedagogical approaches in practice.

Q: Can we use Flagship funding to hire language instructors?

A: Yes, this is an approved expense.

Q: Would the position of a Flagship coordinator for recruitment be an acceptable item on the budget?

A: Yes. The Flagship program takes a significant amount of staffing, for language but also for administration, recruitment and retention. There is a limit of no more than two full time administrative positions, but most have two full time positions.



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Q: Could a proposal include hiring of a full-time language instructor who will teach for the Flagship program as well as other related staff members (coordinator, etc.)?

A: Hiring language instructors is allowable. Hiring up to two full-time administrative staff (200% LOE total) is also allowable.

Q: What is allowable for spending in the summer? Would an instructor for an intensive summer program be appropriate?

A: Allocability to the program determines allowable summer spending. In all cases, programs must indicate a direct connection between Flagship funding and its benefits for the Flagship program and its students. If Flagship students are studying in the summer, the cost of their instructor is an allowable expense.

Q: What kind of budget implications does Capstone articulation have?

A: Instruction and preparation that are required for Capstone over and above general language proficiency should be included in the budget. Capstone articulation may also include an annual visit to the Capstone program.

Q: How will proposals be evaluated for their budget and cost effectiveness? What factors will be considered to determine if the proposed activities can be accomplished with the requested level of funding?

A: Proposed budgets will be reviewed internally based on allowability, reasonableness, and allocability. The Office of Special Research, or equivalent office at the applicant's institution, should help your proposal demonstrate that activities are allocable, allowable, and reasonable, drawing a direct connection between the budget item and its benefit to the Flagship program and students.

Programs are expected to treat federal money with the same care as other funding. Costs should be determined similarly to costs for items funded by the state or home institution.

Q: Can the applicant combine the Flagship initiative with STARTALK?

A: Past programs have demonstrated high levels of synergy between Flagship and STARTALK, primarily related to recruiting STARTALK students for Flagship or STARTALK professional development faculty training. While this cooperation is positive, the programs and funding are distinct, and Flagship summer programming should not be based entirely on STARTALK programming and content.

Q: The RFP states, "No student support funding should be included in the proposal budgets." Does this mean applicants should include in the budget any funds for the items



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listed later in the section (Tutoring / Language Partners, Student Professional Development Funds, Food and Beverages, Organized Events).

A: The quoted line is references direct student scholarships. The Language Flagship provides access to funding that can be used for this purpose on an annual basis and should not be included in the proposal budget. Tutoring / Language Partners, Student Professional Development Funds, Food and Beverages, and Organized Events are all allowable costs, within the guidelines as described in the RFP. Applicants may include them in the budget.

Q: Is it permissible to include the tuition of graduate assistant tutors (as part of their graduate assistantship award) in the proposed budget?

A: Tuition of graduate assistants is an allowable expense on the award.

Q: Is the allowable \$3,000 in student professional development provided on a per student, per year basis?

A: These professional development funds are \$3,000 total, per year. This may be divided as necessary between students.

Q: Can student professional development funds be used to cover tuition costs for regular classes during the fall/spring semesters?

A: No. Award funding cannot be used to cover tuition costs for Flagship students for the academic year.

Q: Can student professional development funds be used towards a study abroad program?

A: No, separate Flagship student support is provided on an annual basis in a separate award to existing Flagship programs. This funding may be used towards intensive summer programs and the Capstone year only.

Q: Can student professional development funds be used for summer non-regular classes (e.g., classes that designed exclusively for Flagship students)?

A: No, separate Flagship student support is provided on an annual basis in a separate award to existing Flagship programs. This funding may be used towards intensive summer programs and the Capstone year only.

Q: Is there a limit on requests for funding for additional instructors and staff who will work for the Flagship program?

A: It is expected that the budget will include at minimum a 50% Flagship Program Coordinator staff position. Applicants may request no more than a total of 200% LoE in administrative staff, including the coordinator. There is no specific limit on the number of



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additional instructors included in the budget, but programs can demonstrate university support if instructional lines are institutionalized. Sometimes this is done from the get-go or sometimes Flagship funding is used to seed a position, and support from the Flagship budget is reduced each year. This is an indication of the long-term sustainability and university investment in a language program.

STAFFING

Q: Please elaborate on the requirement that tenure track faculty should serve as Flagship director. Does it pose an issue if an institution has a non-tenure teaching professor track for language faculty?

A: The requirement for a tenure track position ensures that there is a long-term, sustainable, high-level leader at the helm of the program. If the institution has a parallel type of tenure system for the professional teaching track, and it is a secured long-term position with leadership, this is acceptable. The director provides oversight and represents the program to every level of administration, so this is typically the role of a tenured or tenure track faculty member. Senior lecturers or other non-tenure track faculty who oversee language instruction may serve as an associate or academic director.

Q: If a proposal includes Co-Director model, do both directors need to be tenure track faculty?

A: In these cases, it is recommended that the non-tenure-track faculty member serve as an academic or associate director. The proposal may include plans to transition this position to tenure-track with the intention of a more senior leadership role in the future.

Q: I will be up for promotion and tenure next year. Should I wait until the next round to apply?

A: Proposed directors that are not yet tenured do not need to wait to apply. However, it is important that the Flagship director is in a secure leadership level position at the university. A co-PI would be beneficial until tenure is secured.

Q: Does the Director of the Program need to have U.S. citizenship?

A: No. However, visa sponsorship cannot be charged to the award.

Q: How many full-time language teaching staff is the bare minimum for establishing a Flagship program?

A: Instruction in the Flagship program is offered at all levels from beginner to advanced, so it is difficult to determine an exact number of teaching staff needed. However, Flagship programs typically have instruction at all four levels, sometimes five due to content courses.



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The program must also anticipate enrollment. The goal for each Flagship program will be enrolling 80 students (across all the levels) over the grant period. It is understood that there will be some ramp up time if a program is new to Flagship and it is not required to hit the ground running with 80 students. There is an understanding that universities recruit in cohorts and might be adding 20-30 students each year to achieve the ultimate goal of total 80 enrolled.

Q: Could you provide more information about the instructional human resources support necessary to run a Flagship program?

A: There is no requirement regarding the number, rank, or status of language instructors needed to teach in a Flagship programs. Applicants will need to demonstrate the capacity to teach language and content courses through the advanced level, incorporate domain-training, as well as implement a tutoring program.

Q: Are full-time language faculty in the target language required?

A: While there is no status or rank requirement for Flagship language faculty, it would be difficult to run a Flagship program without full-time language faculty.

CAPSTONE YEAR

Q: How does Capstone differ from the regular Flagship program?

A: Capstone is separate from the domestic Flagship; it can be administered by a different institution. The Capstone program provides students with a yearlong immersive experience in the target language, where they take intensive language classes, study their major of choice at a university, and intern in their chosen field. The domestic Flagship program prepares students for Capstone by helping them reach an ILR 2, which is a requirement for Capstone. Through participation in Capstone, Flagship students should achieve an ILR 3.

Q: Does Capstone take place before or after graduation from the home institution or either?

A: All students who participate in Capstone and any part of the Flagship program must be matriculated undergraduate students at their home institution.

Students often finish most or all degree requirements before Capstone because it is often completed in their fourth or fifth year. They cannot officially graduate before participating in the Capstone year. Some institutions let students walk in a graduation ceremony before Capstone year, but they still need to be matriculated undergraduate students throughout the Capstone program.



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Q: Are there any pathways towards employment in the U.S. government after completing the Capstone program for students?

A: Many Flagship students apply for and receive a Boren Scholarship to fund their Capstone year. Boren Scholarships provide a direct pathway to employment in the U.S. federal government following graduation through special hiring authorities. Flagship students who do not receive a Boren Scholarship do not have special hiring authorities, but are often still an excellent fit for federal service.

Q: In what country is the Chinese Capstone?

A: The Chinese Capstone program is conducted overseas in Taiwan or in a special initiative for Boren Flagship students at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California. Students may choose to apply to either program.

Q: What is the calendar for the Capstone experience? When do students arrive on site and when do they finish their second semester?

A: Academic calendars vary by Capstone program. Information regarding the Capstone experience, including links to program websites, is included in each RFP.

Q: What is student visa status during Capstone, specifically with regards to their enrollment, graduation status, and graduate/undergraduate status?

A: Flagship students are required to be on a student visa (or comparable category) while on the Capstone program. The Capstone program will assist them in arranging for their visas. Students must be matriculated undergraduate students at their home institution for the duration of the Capstone program. They must not have graduated before participating in Capstone.

Q: If Capstone is not included in the application materials, should the Capstone experience be ignored in the proposals?

A: No. The Capstone program is a critical part of the Flagship experience. Domestic Flagship programs must articulate into the Capstone program, and therefore successful proposals will consider the Capstone experience and proficiency requirements.

Q: What is expected to see in the application regarding articulation into Capstone?

A: Applications should demonstrate that they are producing students that are meeting the proficiency standards for Capstone and have the capacity to provide cultural and domain training when the program launches so that students are ready to meet these requirements and be approved by a Capstone review panel. Programs should



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demonstrate full understanding of Capstone standards and readiness to implement corresponding preparation on campus.

Applicants should be mindful of skills needed overseas, such as dialect and culture training. For example, Arabic proposals should demonstrate training in Moroccan dialect, and Russian proposals should demonstrate training in basic, functional Kazakh, as Capstones for each language are in Morocco and Kazakhstan, respectively. Students need to be culturally prepared and ready to engage in the local language and dialect, in addition to meeting the stated proficiency standards in their chosen language.

Q: Do many students complete Capstone as a 5th year?

A: Many students complete their Capstone experience in their 5th year. However, they must still be matriculated as an undergraduate student at their home university for the duration of Capstone.

Q: What are the timeline expectations for a new institution to send students to Capstone?

A: It is not encouraged for programs to push students to apply for Capstone before they are ready. Most new programs would not have students ready to apply to Capstone during the first year of the program. It takes a few years to get students ready and trained, and the expectation is that students from a new program would qualify for Capstone by the second and third year. The more time students have within the Flagship learning experience, the more students are expected to qualify for Capstone.

Q: What is the cost of Capstone year?

A: All Flagship Capstone programs currently have a target Cost of Attendance (COA) of \$25,000, though there is some minor fluctuation as details are re-confirmed each year. This target excludes any home institution fees, such as study abroad fees, matriculation fees, or home tuition if the institution requires it. Many institutions do not require these additional costs.

CURRICULUM

Q: Does each Russian Flagship program need to develop their own Kazakh language materials?

A: There is an expectation that students will be able to communicate in the Kazakh language, such as communicating with their host families abroad. Each applicant should describe how students will meet the minimum requirement. Each institution has different resources and should capitalize on those resources to make a strong case for how their domestic program will also include functional Kazakh preparation as part of their Russian Flagship program. In addition, the Flagship-developed course, [Salem Kazakhstan](#), is



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available to Flagship institutions and students may use this course to satisfy this requirement. Applicants may request access to this course through the provided link.

Q: Are programs able to cooperate with other universities for courses such as Kazakh?

A: Yes, collaborations with other universities to help meet dialect and culture needs are allowable. Kazakh language materials are also available through the Flagship Technology Center, as referenced above.

Q: What constitutes functional Kazakh preparation?

A: Functional Kazakh includes the ability to have basic conversations with people, for example greetings, exchanges, minor negotiations and shopping. The requirement can be satisfied by completion of [Salem Kazakhstan](#) modules. Institutions are encouraged to provide in-person instruction if available on their campus.

Q: Is there an ILR target level of Kazakh for Russian Flagship students?

A: No. Russian Flagship students must enter the Capstone program with functional Kazakh, and will continue their Kazakh study during Capstone year. The goal is to set students up for success for living for an academic year in Kazakhstan.

Q: Do students need to be familiar with the Arabic dialects mentioned in the RFP, or should they be able to use it?

A: Students should be able to use the dialect for day-to-day conversations with people in the Levant or Egypt, as well as in Morocco.

Q: Do existing programs integrate online course offerings? Is there an expectation for language coursework to take place primarily in person?

A: This has been shifting over the last few years, but Flagship is currently looking at the best ways to apply existing educational technology in support of language learning. Applicants can refer to the Language Flagship Technology Innovation Center at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to see what kind of programming Flagship supports.

In terms of in person, online, and hybrid programming, it is still unclear what mix is best and what allows for the best outreach and flexibility.

For overseas programs that were implemented online, it was found that dedicated students who persisted did very well in language proficiency testing, but there were sociolinguistic nuances they did not pick up while online. It is up to the applicant to justify the mix of online, hybrid, and in-person instruction and to find the right balance.

Q: Can the curriculum include 100% online courses?



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A: The Language Flagship programs were conducted 100% online as necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic. As conditions allowed, The Language Flagship programs resumed in-person instruction or a mix of in-person and online courses. It is recommended that programs include significant in-person on-campus instruction and co-curricular activities to best prepare students linguistically and culturally for the in-person overseas Capstone program.

Q: Regarding cultural preparation, the RFP mentions the availability of key literature, history, politics, and media courses in preparation for Capstone. Does work need to be done in the target language?

A: Capstone students are expected to take literature, media, and history courses in the target language in preparation for Capstone. Though it may be helpful to take a historical survey or political science course in English as offered in departments across the university, the focus is on students who are able to engage in this kind of discussion in the target language.

Q: Is it a requirement that content subjects (e.g., history, culture, literature, etc.) taught in the target language are included in the curriculum design?

A: Key literature, history, politics, and media courses should be integrated into the curriculum. Cultural instruction and exposure to culture should be integrated into the curriculum design. In addition, domain-specific language learning should be incorporated, which may include language for special purposes courses, content-based instruction in the specific domain, work with language partners or tutors specializing in the domain, or experiential learning.

Institutions do not need to currently offer domain-specific coursework for all possible domains, but should indicate flexibility and creativity in offering coursework for students in a variety of majors.

Q: The RFP states that prospective programs need to offer target language training in the disciplinary domains of the participating students. How is this feasible given the diversity of student majors represented in a given program?

A: Domain-specific language learning may be achieved in different ways depending on the population and needs of the individual program. Options include language for special purposes courses, content-based instruction in the specific domain, work with language partners or tutors specializing in the domain, or experiential learning.

Q: Can you give any examples of domain training?



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A: Domain training may include language for special purposes courses, content-based instruction in a specific domain (e.g., business), work with language partners or tutors specializing in a domain, or experiential learning.

Q: How can students at an ILR 2 proficiency level fully benefit from content courses taught in the target language?

A: Content-based instructional models share the following characteristics: they are based on a subject-matter core, they use authentic language and texts, and they are appropriate to the needs of specific groups of students. With these considerations, students learn language more successfully when they use the language as a means of acquiring information, rather than as an end in itself. Courses should be designed with appropriate scaffolding to allow for impactful content taught in-language. Content courses in the Flagship program are preparing students for their Capstone direct enrollment and internship experiences. They not only teach content, but introduce vocabulary and language styles.

Q: Can Flagship students complete their upper-level language instruction at an overseas institution?

A: Flagship students may complete upper-level language instruction at an overseas institution. It is up to the individual program to determine whether the overseas instruction fulfills a specific Flagship course requirement for a course provided on campus.

Q: Any suggestions on how to prepare students for Capstone at a community college?

A: There have been excellent language programs at community colleges and colleges feeding students into later stages of a Flagship program. Those programs should work to integrate foreign language curriculum (all four modalities) to ensure a smooth transition to language courses at the Flagship program. Institutions may propose eligibility for students from specific institutions with transfer agreements or cross-enrollment. Applicants should address how support from partner institutions will reduce barriers to Flagship participation or add to the Flagship program.

Q: Why is reaching ILR Level 3 in Writing a requirement for some languages but not others?

A: These decisions were made in collaboration with current Flagship programs. Arabic and Russian have mandated writing tests that are graded for proficiency in order for students to qualify for Capstone. Korean, Persian, Portuguese, and Chinese do not have mandated, scored writing proficiency assessments, but may include writing samples as part of the student Capstone application. Across all languages, it is required for students to demonstrate ILR 3 in Speaking and at least 2+ in Reading and Listening in order to be certified as a Flagship Global Professional at the conclusion of their Capstone year. Writing is not a requirement for Flagship certification.



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Q: If a program has a summer program, is it important for that program to have all proficiency levels taught during the academic year?

A: Past programs have approached summer programs in different ways. Some programs focus on advanced students, while others focus on beginning and intermediate levels. It is important that this full range of levels exists for Flagship students, whether that be during summer or the academic year.

Proposals should demonstrate how a summer program fits into the larger Flagship program. For example, some existing programs are able to offer a spring start by offering a summer program that catches these students up to students who began the previous semester. Other programs start students in the summer as a pathway to bring students into the program.

Q: How are the writing exams used, and when are they administered?

A: For all languages, a solid command of writing is important for success on the Capstone program. Writing exams are administered at the national level for Arabic and Russian when students apply for Capstone year and upon Capstone program completion. Prior to Capstone, students are expected to achieve a 1+ or 2 in order to meet the proficiency standards to attend Capstone. Currently, the scores from post-Capstone writing exams are not used to determine Flagship certification. In preparation for these exams, each campus should find the method of assessing writing proficiency throughout students' time on campus. Overall, it is important to ensure students are made aware of expectations, including the minimum standard for Capstone and their current proficiency. These expectations should be built into the domestic program, utilizing assessments that provide diagnostic feedback to students.

Proficiency testing in writing is not used for Capstone qualification for Chinese, Korean, Persian, or Portuguese. For Chinese, currently the Chinese Flagship directors do not believe a writing proficiency exam informs a selection committee about the student's control over specific vocabulary and forms. Instead, writing samples are collected and are rated for specific strengths and weaknesses of the student rather than for a proficiency score.

Flagship provides assessment for students applying to Capstone and for students completing Capstone. Institutions should budget for strategic benchmark testing. In addition, students receiving Flagship student support to fund their summer program must receive pre- and post-program assessment, such as an OPI, to document progress on their funded program. Programs should budget for this accordingly.

Q: Can courses mix Flagship and non-Flagship students?

A: Non-Flagship students are welcome to take Flagship courses. It is rare that Flagship courses are isolated from other students. Courses are usually open to all students so that



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students who are not currently enrolled in Flagship can enroll later if they decide that Flagship aligns with their career or academic goals. To ensure this flexibility and multiple pathways to entry, it is preferable to see Flagship integrated into the general language program. It is beneficial for all language majors to join high quality courses even if they are unable to participate in the full Flagship program.

STUDENT FUNDING

Q: Please provide more information about Flagship student support funding.

A: The Language Flagship domestic grants may offer limited Flagship student support for approved intensive domestic and overseas summer programs, or for the Capstone year. The Language Flagship grant funding does not support tuition or expenses of the regular academic year undergraduate education. Flagship institutions are encouraged to leverage other sources of funding (e.g., FLAS, institutional funds) and advise students on scholarship opportunities such as Boren, Gilman, and the Critical Language Scholarship.

Q: There is no line for student costs in the budget. Where is this included and what kind of costs can be included? Should student support be addressed at all in the application?

A: Flagship operational grants cover a range of different activities, and many of these benefit students. Examples of activities frequently seen in Flagship budgets that directly benefit students include paying for tutors, language partners, diagnostic language testing, cultural activities, and a limited \$3,000 per year for professional development activities. Operational budgets do include room for and allow all kinds of interventions that are specifically language and culture based for students to improve their language.

Operational budgets do not include direct student support or scholarships. Flagship student support is awarded separately in a separate process with existing grantees. Once universities have gained Flagship status, program staff will work with them to estimate the amount of student support to request, with clear and detailed criteria on funding caps and how to award those scholarships. These funds are targeted for summers (domestic and overseas) and Capstone. Scholarship funds cannot be awarded for the academic year. Flagship institutions are encouraged to leverage other sources of funding (e.g., FLAS, institutional funds) and advise students on scholarship opportunities such as Boren, Gilman, and the Critical Language Scholarship.

Q: Could you provide clarification about student support funding, including eligibility, amount, and what can be supported with the funding, etc.?

A: Individual students have maximum funding they can receive. Currently, it is \$3,500 for an intensive summer domestic program, \$7,000 for an intensive summer overseas program, and \$15,000 for Capstone year. For each individual student, allowable student support funding is no more than \$20,000 over their lifetime in Flagship. Please keep in



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mind, Flagship student support is limited and dependent on how much funding is available each year.

Q: The RFP mentions that up to \$3,000 in funding can be used for student professional development. Are these funds allocated in the program budget or are they part of the student support funds?

A: These funds are part of the program budget and separate from Flagship student support. Funding typically includes opportunities for students to attend conferences, language competitions, internships that aid language development, and other similar activities. Limited funding is available for these opportunities.

Q: Can Flagship student support funds support students who are attending the study abroad programs hosted by their home institution?

A: For the Arabic, Chinese, Portuguese, and Russian programs, which each have two or more institutions, there is a process of approving which summer programs (study abroad and domestic) qualify for Flagship student support based on faculty review and input. Students taking their home institution's intensive summer courses domestically are eligible for student support whether or not it is on the list of approved programs.

Q: Are Boren Awards set aside for Flagship students?

A: Boren Awards are not set aside for Flagship students. Submitted applications tend to be competitive due to the dedication to language learning innate in the Flagship program.

END OF AMENDMENT