

# TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

## LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS COURSES AT HEADQUARTERS

1. Language and communication skills courses in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are offered to promote linguistic balance and multilingualism within the Secretariat and to improve the language abilities of staff, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolutions 2480 B (XXIII), 43/224 D and 50/11. The courses provide staff members and external participants (see para. 17 below) with the opportunity to learn the official languages of the Organization and to improve their communication skills.
2. The present Terms and Conditions contain information on the official policies of the Language and Communications Training Unit at the Capacity, Development and Operational Training Service, Office of Support Operations, Department of Operational Support. These Terms and Conditions also contain information on the types of training schedules and formats available, the course calendar for 2021, eligibility criteria and registration procedures, the responsibilities of participants and other information, including where to address enquiries.
3. Participants in the Language and Communications Training Unit trainings are responsible for reading and following all registration instructions and information contained in the present document, as well as those to be found on the human resources portal (see <https://hr.un.org/page/language-programmes-unhq>).

## I. TYPES OF COURSES AND SCHEDULES

### TYPES OF COURSES

4. The Language and Communications Training Unit offers learning activities for developing proficiency as well as work-related communication skills, in the six United Nations official languages. These activities are available as general courses, specialized courses and entity-specific customized trainings.

#### (A) GENERAL LANGUAGE COURSES

5. General language courses build on each other and are aligned to a UN I or Basic Level of Language Competence; UN II or Intermediate Level of Language Competence; and UN III or Advanced Level of Language Competence. The UN Levels are defined by the United Nations Language Framework (see <https://hr.un.org/page/un-language-framework>).
6. General courses focus on all language activities involving reception (listening and reading), as well as production and interaction (speaking and writing), and are aimed at developing both knowledge and use of language.



## (B) SPECIALIZED COURSES

7. Specialized courses focus on specific language skills, tasks or topics. They are offered in all six official languages and include preparatory courses for the language proficiency examinations, courses aimed at improving participants' understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals and learning activities focused on improving spoken fluency or promoting cultural awareness.
8. Specialized courses vary by term, and new courses are introduced to address the needs of participants.

## (C) CUSTOMIZED TRAINING

9. The Language and Communications Training Unit can also customize training for specific entities, including writing, oral presentation skills, data presentation, implementation of the United Nations Language Framework, gender-inclusive language, training of trainers and many other topics. Further information can be obtained at this email address: [dos-cdots@un.org](mailto:dos-cdots@un.org).

## SCHEDULES

10. General language courses meet for 30 hours over a 10-week term: 20-25 hours in a virtual or physical classroom when it is safe to return, typically twice a week. Course participants will complete the other 5-10 hours doing teacher-monitored self-paced activities online. Class sessions take place before work (8:00-8:30 am New York time); at lunchtime (between 12:00 and 3:00 pm New York time); or after work (between 5:00 and 6:00 pm New York time).
11. Classes for specialized courses generally meet for one to two hours per week and may last fewer than 10 weeks. These courses may also include an online self-paced component.
12. Schedules for customized training are tailored to the specific needs of the requesting entity.
13. Other course schedules may be offered during the year.

## II. COURSE DELIVERY FORMATS

14. To serve staff both at Headquarters and in the field with varied working conditions and schedules, the courses indicated above are offered in a variety of formats:
  - a. **In-person classroom instruction.** Classes will be held at the United Nations Learning Centre for Multilingualism and Career Development, located in the 3rd basement of the North Lawn Building (NL-3B), when it is considered safe for staff to return to United Nations Headquarters.
  - b. **Live online instruction.** Classes are held via videoconference, with a teacher.
  - c. **Online self-paced learning.** Participants complete coursework on a learning platform at their chosen time either with or without instructor support.
  - d. **Blended learning instruction.** Classes combine in-person classroom and/or live online instruction, and online self-paced learning.



### III. CALENDAR FOR 2021

#### LANGUAGE LEARNING CALENDAR

15. The 2021 language learning calendar consists of three terms, and an additional term in Summer, as follows:

| Winter term   | 4 January – 2 April   |
|---|-----------------------|
| Language classes  | 11 January – 19 March |
| Registration for general language courses for the Spring term | 1 March – 31 March    |
| Last day to cancel registration in a general language course  | 4 January             |

  

| Spring term  | 19 April – 16 July    |
|--|-----------------------|
| Language classes   | 26 April – 2 July     |
| Registration for courses for the Summer term                 | 7 June – 30 June      |
| Registration for general language courses for the Fall term  | 7 June – 17 September |
| Last day to cancel registration in a general language course | 19 April              |

  

| Summer term      | 12 July – 20 August |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Language classes | 12 July – 20 August |

  

| Fall term  | 13 September – 10 December |
|--|----------------------------|
| Language classes   | 27 September – 3 December  |
| Registration for general language courses for the 2022 Winter term | 8 November – 8 December    |
| Last day to cancel registration in a general language course       | 20 September               |

16. Dates for placement tests may vary depending on the language. Specific dates and further details about placement tests are available on the human resources portal (<https://hr.un.org/page/language-programmes-unhq>).

### IV. ELIGIBILITY

17. Detailed information about eligibility criteria can be found on the human resource portal (see <https://hr.un.org/page/eligibility>).

#### VALID UNITED NATIONS GROUNDS PASS OR CONTRACT

18. To enrol in a course, staff members' contracts must be valid until at least the end of that course. If the contract expires before the end of the course, staff members may still enrol if they submit an official letter or e-mail from their direct supervisor or Executive Officer confirming that their contract is expected to be extended until at least the end of the course and providing the expected dates of the contract extension.

19. All participants in language courses delivered via in-person classroom instruction must have a United Nations grounds pass valid until the end of course for which they register.



## FEES AND PAYMENT

### TUITION FEES

20. Only certain external participants (e.g., spouses and partners of staff members and spouses or partners of delegates of Permanent and Observer Missions) are required to pay full tuition fees upon registration. Detailed information about paying and non-paying external participants can be found on the human resources portal (see <https://hr.un.org/page/eligibility>).
21. Information on tuition fees can be found at <https://hr.un.org/page/eligibility> under the “Eligible (paying) category” section.
22. Once the enrolment has been submitted and the tuition fee has been paid, credit for future terms may be issued if a participant cancels their registration before the deadline. This credit is valid for nine months from the date when the original course was due to start.
23. Refunds will be issued only on a case by case basis. For requests, send an e-mail to [dos-cdots-training@un.org](mailto:dos-cdots-training@un.org).

### PAYMENT

24. Payments are done by credit card during the registration in Inspira and in accordance with the United Nations Cashier’s policy and procedures.

## V. REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

### GENERAL INFORMATION

25. Registration for language courses and placement tests must be submitted in Inspira. Supporting documentation related to the enrolments might also be required and submitted in Inspira. No in-person registration is available.
26. Step-by-step instructions on accessing Inspira and registering for courses and placement tests, as well as a Registration Assistance Form, are available on the HR Portal (see <https://hr.un.org/page/language-programmes-unhq>).
27. Registration does not guarantee enrolment in a placement test or course if the application is incomplete (i.e., supporting documentation or payment missing in Inspira) or if the candidate is not eligible. Enrolments will be reviewed for eligibility and completeness. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

### REGISTRATION PRIORITIES AND DEADLINES

28. Complete applications are processed in the order in which they are received. However, in the following cases, priority is given to participants who have not previously taken the course:
  - a. When the number of applications for a specialized course is higher than the maximum allowed.
  - b. When an applicant wishes to repeat a general course after successful completion.

In such cases, participants who have previously taken the course may be waitlisted.



## PLACEMENT TESTS

29. Only beginners may enrol directly in a general course 1 at a UN I Level. A participant must take a placement test for a language if he or she is:
  - a. A new learner who has some knowledge of the language;
  - b. A returning participant to the Language and Communications Training Unit who has not taken a course in that language in the nine months preceding the start date of the course.
30. Participants who can provide proof of their level of proficiency in a language may contact the Language and Communications Training Unit via e-mail: [dos-cdots-training@un.org](mailto:dos-cdots-training@un.org) for a written waiver of the placement test requirement and for course recommendations.
31. Placement test results are valid for nine months. The Language and Communications Training Unit will provide a list of suggested courses with the placement results.
32. Participants in a general course who do not pass the course cannot take the placement test in the following two terms. They must register again for the same course or skip two terms, then take the placement test.

## REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

33. Enrolments will be reviewed to ensure that eligibility conditions are met for admission to courses. Those who submitted a registration but do not meet the conditions (para. 17-19) will receive a notification via e-mail to take action. It is critical that registrants take action as instructed to ensure that their enrolment is maintained.
34. Participants will not be allowed to attend classes, in any format, without being enrolled in Inspira. Participants who are not sure about their enrolment status should send an e-mail to [dos-cdots-training@un.org](mailto:dos-cdots-training@un.org).
35. Wait-listed participants should regularly check their “My learning” page in Inspira to see if their status for the course has changed from “wait-listed” to “enrolled”. If the status changes to “enrolled”, they will be notified. If the course has started, participants are responsible for catching up on the course content and assignments. If the requirements seem too difficult or the work schedules have changed and the participant does not wish to continue, they may notify in writing the course instructor and [dos-cdots-training@un.org](mailto:dos-cdots-training@un.org) and drop the course in Inspira.

## MAXIMUM NUMBER OF ENROLMENTS PER TERM

36. Participants may register for courses in one or more languages in the same term, up to 50 hours and for a maximum of four courses.
37. Participants may register for one general course in one language in the same term.
38. Participants may register for only one section of a course. If they register for more than one, the registration will not be accepted.

## ROLE OF SUPERVISOR

39. Participants are required to discuss with their supervisor any plan to take language classes and to agree on a learning plan before submitting their registration.
40. Supervisors are expected to implement gender parity and equality in the workplace. Regarding the learning of language and communication skills, they must encourage and approve male and female staff members’ requests, equally, to participate in available courses.



41. Supervisors, taking into account the exigencies of service and requests received from other staff members, are encouraged to consider the approval of such requests.
42. Staff members in New York are entitled to a one-hour lunch break, which may be used instead for in-house training, such as a language class. In this case, it is recommended that supervisors grant an additional 20 minutes for a quick meal before or after the class.
43. For lunchtime courses that last more than 60 minutes, supervisors and staff members should agree on the coverage of duties when they agree on the learning plan.

## VI. LEARNER RESPONSIBILITIES

### CANCELLATION OR CHANGE OF ENROLMENT BY THE PARTICIPANT

44. Enrolled participants who are unable to attend a course are advised to cancel their registration as soon as possible to allow other participants to take their place. Participants who do not attend the first week of classes, and who do not inform their teacher in advance, may have their enrolment cancelled. Participants can also send an e-mail to [dos-cdots-training@un.org](mailto:dos-cdots-training@un.org).
45. Opportunities to change to a different course after enrolment are very limited. Participants must contact their language teacher as soon as possible and no later than the deadline for dropping the course as indicated in para. 15.
46. Any authorized change of course is final.

### ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

47. The punctuality of teachers and participants is an important part of the learning process. Learners are expected to arrive on time and actively participate in their classes, from the beginning to the end.
48. In the case of live online instruction, participants are required to have cameras and microphones available. They are expected to be ready to turn on their camera during the session and to turn on and mute the microphone as indicated by the teacher.
49. Participants should inform their teacher in advance if they will arrive late, leave early or be absent. Participants are responsible for catching up on the course content and assignments. Teachers are not required to provide an opportunity for the participants to make up the work missed.

### ASSESSMENT

#### GENERAL COURSES

50. Assessment is an integral and mandatory part of the general courses of the Language and Communications Training Unit.
51. To advance to the next general course in a language, participants must pass all components of the continuous evaluation, as established for each course and each language, and obtaining a minimum of 65 per cent or higher on the continuous evaluation criteria.
52. Participants may, however, submit in advance a written explanation to the teacher if they are unable to take all components of the continuous evaluation. The teacher will then determine whether the reasons provided justify a make-up assessment.
53. Participants who pass a course but choose to repeat it may do so in the subsequent term. In such situations, participants must take all components of the continuous evaluation.



## **SPECIALIZED COURSES**

54. Passing a specialized course requires a minimum of 65 per cent attendance and a minimum of 65 per cent or higher on the evaluation criteria set by the teacher at the beginning of the course. Some courses may require the completion of a final project in addition to the attendance requirement.

## **ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

55. The results of course assessments will be accessible to participants in Inspira.

# **VII. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

## **COURSE CANCELLATIONS**

56. A course that does not have the minimum number of participants may be cancelled. In such cases, participants will be notified. As a special courtesy, participants who were registered in the cancelled course may be enrolled into another course appropriate to their level of proficiency and needs if that option exists and the participant agrees.

## **CLASS CANCELLATIONS**

57. No classes will be scheduled during United Nations New York official holidays.

58. United Nations New York floating holidays and building closures may affect the total number of hours of some courses. No refunds will be given in the case of missed or cancelled classes.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

59. Participants are responsible for purchasing textbooks or other course materials, as instructed by the teacher during the first week of the term.

60. Participants are responsible for having the necessary equipment to access the virtual environment and participate in the class activities, and for making a responsible use of the learning materials.

# **VIII. ENQUIRIES**

61. For general enquiries and information, participants may contact the Language and Communications Training Unit via e-mail: [dos-cdots-training@un.org](mailto:dos-cdots-training@un.org).