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# Language Program

## Flight Attendant Handbook

Effective October 1, 2018



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Introduction .....3

    Language Sub-Base Structure ..... 3

    Duties and Responsibilities of the LQFA ..... 3

    English Proficiency ..... 3

Training.....4

    Language Training Program ..... 4

    Language Training School Guidelines ..... 4

    Language Training Reimbursement ..... 4

Testing .....5

    Testing Procedures ..... 5

    What to Expect ..... 5

    Scheduling a Language Test ..... 6

    The Evaluation ..... 6

    Retesting ..... 7

    Removing Qualifications ..... 7

Bidding and Trading .....8

    Maximum Number of Language Positions by Aircraft Type ..... 8

    Assignment of Language ..... 8

    Bid and Award Process for LQFA ..... 8

    Seniority ..... 8

    Language Trip Trades ..... 9

    Language Pairing ..... 9

    White and Purple Flag Pay ..... 9

Onboard ..... 10

    Language Bar ..... 10

    Greeter ..... 10

    Announcements ..... 10

Pay ..... 11

Language Designators and Harmonization ..... 11



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## Introduction

As a global airline, language assistance at United Airlines is an important expectation of our customers in delivering exceptional service across our extensive route system. Having Language Qualified Flight Attendants (LQFAs) not only makes meaningful connections with non-English speaking customers, but also leaves a lasting cultural impression. When United merges all three workgroups into one on October 1, 2018, the individual language programs will be harmonized according to Section 9.G. of our Joint Collective Bargaining Agreement (JCBA). The new language program will have a number of changes that will impact LQFAs. This handbook should be used as a reference for the language program with a focus on some of the key language topics.

## Language Sub-Base Structure

Each month, the Company will determine the language needs of each Base and establish the number of Language Qualified positions needed for that month which creates a language sub-Base. The bid packet will consist of language lines as well as a number of language reserve lines. These will be assigned to LQFAs at the same time all other lines in the Base are considered. The Company reviews language needs for all international flights on a regular basis, and may add or remove language requirements based on these reviews.

## Duties and Responsibilities of the LQFA

While all Flight Attendants are responsible for assisting customers, the language qualification requires her/him to:

- Perform all Flight Attendant duties
- Be fluent in the language(s) for which the Flight Attendant is qualified
- Translate all FSL/Purser and Flight Deck P.A. announcements after they have been announced in English.
- Wear the Language Bar
- Provide translation assistance to:
  - Passengers who require language assistance while boarding or onboard the aircraft, i.e. international customs and immigration forms
  - Unaccompanied minors
  - To crew members and other United employees as needed

The requirements of the position are outlined in Section 9.G.1.a. of our JCBA.

## English Proficiency

United may test a Flight Attendant based upon credible information that she/he lacks the minimum level of English proficiency required. Proficiency testing shall be conducted by United's testing vendor. Refer to Section 9.G.4. of our JCBA for more details.



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## Training

### Language Training Program

United shall make language training available through a United approved program. Flight Attendants must obtain pre-approval from United in order to attend the language training program. (JCBA Section 9.G.)

To be considered for language training program enrollment, the Flight Attendant's request should include the following information and be emailed to: [inflightlanguages@united.com](mailto:inflightlanguages@united.com) or faxed to: 281-553-8220.

- Language training school name and accreditation
- Course catalog
- Estimated cost
- Approximate course duration

### Language Training School Guidelines

A Flight Attendant can select the learning institution that best meets her/his individual needs and current skill level. It is important for the Flight Attendant to select a learning institution that can truly bring her/him to the desired level of proficiency. Inflight Services Training Management will review all requests and make the final determination prior to approval. Below are the accredited institutions:

- Certified language schools
- Universities
- Community colleges
- Institutions/programs outside the US

Written approval from the Inflight Language Training Team will be emailed to the Flight Attendant and Flight Attendant's supervisor before the training program begins.

Please call or email the Inflight Services, Inflight Language Training Team, at 281-553-7336 or 281-553-7371 or email: [inflightlanguages@united.com](mailto:inflightlanguages@united.com) to submit a language school enrollment request.

### Language Training Reimbursement

Provided that a Flight Attendant passes the language proficiency test and is based in a location that uses the language, United shall pay her/his tuition costs, the cost of required training materials, parking fees (if any), and mileage expenses as provided in United policy to and from the location of the approved language training.

Once designated as an LQFA, a completed expense report with receipts for language training should be submitted via United email to the Inflight Language Training Team at [inflightlanguages@united.com](mailto:inflightlanguages@united.com). The Flight Attendant should retain a copy for her/his record.



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## Testing

### Testing Procedures

An LQFA is expected to demonstrate a high language proficiency level and strong conversational and reading skills in the additional language(s). Once a Flight Attendant becomes Language Qualified, this notation remains part of a Flight Attendant's permanent qualifications, and as such she/he is expected to maintain proficiency. At United, there is no limit to the number of languages used in which a Flight Attendant may become Language Qualified.

In order to become Language Qualified, a Flight Attendant must pass a test demonstrating a minimum level of language proficiency, as determined by United. Once designated as Language Qualified, United may re-test a Flight Attendant based upon credible information that she/he lacks the minimum level of proficiency required.

A Flight Attendant who fails to pass initial testing or retesting may avail her/himself of United's language training program. They may re-apply to the Language Qualified Program as set forth in Sections 9.G.2. and 9.G.3. of our JCBA. Re-testing after failure shall be made available only once every six months.

The new language program will no longer have a Pass with Condition (PWC) option (previous pmCO and pmCMI process) for Flight Attendants whose language skills do not fully meet the proficiency standards.

### What to Expect

Language testing is completed by a Language Testing Company. To become an LQFA, a Flight Attendant must successfully demonstrate proficiency in the targeted language in the areas of listening, speaking, and reading.

Flight Attendants are tested using a telephone conference method. The entire evaluation should take no more than 20-25 minutes. The test is conducted at an Inflight Base that the Flight Attendant selects. After verifying identity, the Flight Attendant will be provided with a Language Testing Book, and escorted to a landline phone located in a quiet room for testing. The Flight Attendant will then be evaluated on listening, speaking, and reading in the target language for the following:

- Comprehension
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Pronunciation
- Special Vocabulary - (airline related terms, scenarios)
- Reading



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Falsification or misrepresentation of identity may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Flight Attendants will receive a letter indicating test results via email within seven business days. If a Flight Attendant is successful in her/his test, the Inflight Supervisor will be copied and instructed to place a hard copy of the language test results in the Flight Attendant's Personnel File. Flight Attendants who are not successful shall be allowed to retest only once every six months.

Flight Attendants will receive Language Bars upon successful completion of the test. The Inflight Supervisor will be responsible for providing Flight Attendants with two Language Bars.

## Scheduling a Language Test

To schedule a language test, call the United approved language testing company, Alta Language Services at 1-888-465-4648. Tests are administered Monday through Friday between the hours of 0800 and 1700 Central Time, excluding holidays. Appointments must be made at least two business days in advance, and can be scheduled at the following Bases: BOS, CLE, DEN, EWR, IAD, IAH, LAX, ORD, SFO, FRA, NRT, HKG, HNL & GUM. To accommodate testing for those living in different time zones, Flight Attendants based in GUM, HNL or a non-US location, should work with the Inflight Language Training Team to arrange a testing time.

Cancellations or changes must be made by 1500 CT on the business day before the scheduled test. Flight Attendants may be responsible for the test fee assessed by the language testing company if she/he fails to cancel before 1500 CT on the business day before the test.

Last minute cancellations, no shows, or late arrivals will also be reported to the Flight Attendant's supervisor.

## The Evaluation

The evaluators are all professional, native speakers who are thoroughly familiar with the target language. They have all been carefully trained in spoken language evaluations based on United approved criteria.

The evaluation will begin with two readings in the targeted language. The evaluation will continue with the evaluator asking the candidate a series of 12 questions.

1. The first three questions will be randomly selected from a category of **"Personal Questions"**
  - Examples:
    - What do you do when you arrive at the airport?
    - What is your favorite activity and why?
2. The next three questions will come from the category of **"General Questions"**
  - Examples:
    - Describe what the weather is like in the fall in your city?
    - In your opinion, why do people go on vacation?



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3. The final six questions will come from the questions/statements under “**Onboard Situations**”

■ Examples:

- Excuse me, Flight Attendant, how do I turn off the overhead light?
- Is it possible to leave this package on the seat next to me?

The Flight Attendant’s responses demonstrate her/his working knowledge of the target language, so longer answers will be better than shorter ones. This is designed to give the evaluator a more thorough understanding of the Flight Attendant’s overall language ability. It is important to remember that the answer content is not as important as the way the answer is expressed in the language being tested.

Once the testing procedure is complete, the testing company will notify United of the outcome. The Inflight Language Training Team will provide the results to the Flight Attendant within seven business days of the test.

If a Flight Attendant has any questions about her/his test, please call 281-553-7336 or 281-553-7371 or email the Inflight Services, Inflight Language Training Team: [inflightlanguages@united.com](mailto:inflightlanguages@united.com).

## Retesting

All current language speakers are grandfathered into the language program and will not be required to retest to be part of the new language program. There is no retesting required except as stated in Section 9.G.3.b. of our JCBA.

The Company will no longer require Flight Attendants to requalify if they have not flown in a language Base in the previous 12 months. As the Base structure will change, Flight Attendants who have successfully passed a language exam will not be required to retest and will retain their language qualifications to provide them with full access to all flying assigned to any Base location. Flight Attendants who failed their last language qualification test will not be considered qualified in that language.

A Flight Attendant who fails to pass initial testing or retesting may avail herself/himself of the Company language training program and re-apply to the Language Qualified Program as set forth in Section 9.G.2. of our JCBA. Re-testing after failure shall be made available not more than once every six months.

## Removing Qualifications

An LQFA may request removal of her/his language qualification, subject to Company approval. (JCBA Section 9.G.1.g.) Flight Attendants should contact their supervisor to start this process.





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## Bidding and Trading

### Maximum Number of Language Positions by Aircraft Type

The new language program designates a maximum number of language positions per aircraft type as shown in the table below.

Aircraft Type	Maximum Number of Language Positions
A319/320, 737-700, 800 & 900	1
757	2
767, 777, 787, A350	3

### Assignment of Language

Each month the Company shall determine which languages will be assigned at each Base. Once determined, the Company will decide the number of language lines and reserves needed for each language. The language lines, both lineholder and reserve, will be available for bidding to all Flight Attendants at the Base and awarded in seniority order to qualified Flight Attendants. If an insufficient number of LQFAs bid a language line or language reserve line, then the most junior LQFA(s) qualified in that specific language will be assigned to those lines.

### Bid and Award Process for LQFA

Language specific lines of flying will be published as part of the Base bid packets, but only those Flight Attendants with the specific language qualification will be considered to fill those lines. Flight Attendants with language qualifications may bid any line offered in their Base, including domestic, international and language lines as well as reserve lines. The award process will consider each Flight Attendant's bid and qualifications, in seniority order. If there are insufficient bids to cover specific language lines (both lineholder and reserve) the most junior Flight Attendants qualified in that specific language with language qualifications will be assigned to cover the open language lines. Flight Attendants with multiple language qualifications will be considered for all lines in the multiple languages for which qualified and will be assigned, if necessary, based on her/his seniority.

### Seniority

LQFAs shall use their Flight Attendant bid seniority for all competitive bidding purposes. LQFAs shall bid and be awarded their vacations in conjunction with vacation bidding/awards for all other Flight Attendants in their geographic Base.

A Flight Attendant can view their seniority and relative ranking with similarly qualified LQFAs within their Base by using the Base specific seniority list published on [Flying Together > Inflight Services > Bases > Bidding > Combined Seniority List](#).





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## Language Trip Trades

LQFAs who are assigned language lines may pick up and trade for open LQFA and non-LQFA open time subject to the terms of Sections 6.I, 6.J. and 6.L. of the JCBA. A LQFA will be expected to have a minimum fifty (50) hours (twenty (20) for job shares, partnerships and half month leaves) of flying in their assigned language at the end of the bid month if they have traded or picked up from open time other than LQFA open time during the month.

## Language Pairing

A Flight Attendant will be able to identify language pairings in the bid packet with an identifying three letter language code within the pairing. An example of a Mandarin pairing is displayed below.

BASE: ----> EWR JUN 02-JUL 01, 2018		LANGUAGE F/As	
DAY	EQ DHFLT	DEP ARR DEPT ARRT	BLK GRND TBLK TDUTY LAYO TYP
E7500	RPT -->09:30		LS=01 MAN
1	77Y 86 EWR FVG	1045 1340 M 14:55	14:55 16:40 26:05
	RADISSON BLUE	862163599999	F
	RPT -->14:45		
3	77Y 87 FVG EWR	1545 1820 M 14:35	14:35 16:05
			MO TU WE TH FR SA SU
TOTAL CR:	29:30		2 3
TOTAL BLK:	29:30		4 5 6 7 8 9 10
TOTAL DHD:	00:00	TAFB: 57:20	11 12 13 14 15 16 17
TOTAL RIG:	00:00	PER DIEM: \$ 154.79	18 19 20 21 22 23 24
T/D=	3		25 26 27 28 29 30 1

## White and Purple Flag Pay

White and Purple Flag designators may apply to language pairings.



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## Onboard

### Language Bar

LQFAs must wear the appropriate Language Bar when working a language position or a designated Language Incentive Pay (LIP) flight. The Language Bar is required to be worn below the Flight Attendants' wings on the outermost garment. When wearing a serving garment, the Language Bar must be worn below the name bar. As a global airline, LQFAs are encouraged to wear the Language Bars at all times when in uniform.

Language Bars will be provided to the LQFAs by the Inflight Supervisor after passing the language proficiency test.

### Greeter

A LQFA will be assigned the door greeter responsibility. . Refer to the staffing sheet for work assignment.

### Announcements

Announcements are a shared responsibility with all LQFAs. Refer to the staffing sheet for announcement assignment.

When there are bid positions for two different languages, announcements in the primary language (i.e. language of the origination/destination) should be made following the English announcements, then followed by the second language announcements.

- To view English language announcements on Link, open the eFAOM (electronic Flight Attendant Operations Manual) app and select eFAAB (electronic Flight Attendant Announcement Booklet).
- To view non-English Language Announcements, follow the steps below:
  - From Link, click on FT mobile icon
  - Sign in → Menu → My Work → Training and Qualifications
  - Scroll down to the 'Translation Guides' table and select the desired Translation guide(s)
  - You will see the guide appear on the screen
  - Select the 'Upload' button at the bottom of the screen and choose 'Copy to iBooks'

For safety demonstrations, announcements are to be made in English, then followed by the language translation of the introduction in the languages identified for the specific pairing. All Flight Attendant and Flight Deck announcements will be translated similarly.

For emergency announcements, LQFAs are required to explain the nature of the emergency and that the Flight Attendants will be preparing the cabin for an emergency landing. All subsequent announcements will be made in English.



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## Pay

Flight attendants working on flights with language positions will receive Language Incentive Pay (LIP) if they are qualified in the language(s) designated for that flight. These flight attendants shall be paid an additional \$1.00 for each block hour actually flown and for all credited time except deadhead, sick/occupational leave and vacation. Flight Attendants cannot receive LIP and Language Qualified pay on the same flight. With the implementation of the LIP program, the pmCMI Basic Japanese language program which will be discontinued.

For more information regarding LIP processing, please refer to Section 9.G.7. of our JCBA, as well as the policies and procedures manual.

## Language Designators and Harmonization

The new language program harmonizes language designators and three letter codes and will differentiate the Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese dialects.

Language	pmCO/CMI Code	pmUA Code	New CMS Code
Cantonese	None	CTN	<b>CTN</b>
Chamorro	CHM	None	<b>CHM</b>
Chinese	CAM	None	<b>NONE</b>
Dutch	DUT	NLD	<b>NLD</b>
French	FRE	FRA	<b>FRE</b>
German	GER	GER	<b>GER</b>
Greek	GRK	GRE	<b>GRK</b>
Hebrew	HBR	HEB	<b>HBR</b>
Italian	ITA	ITL	<b>ITA</b>
Japanese	JPN	JPN	<b>JPN</b>
Korean	KOR	SKO	<b>SKO</b>
Mandarin	None	MAN	<b>MAN</b>
Portuguese	POR	POR	<b>POR</b>
Spanish	SPA	SPN	<b>SPN</b>
Tagalog	TAG	TAG/PHI	<b>TAG</b>

The new language program harmonizes languages assigned on flights to HKG, AMS, and BRU as seen in the table below:

Destinations	Languages Assigned
HKG	Cantonese & Mandarin
AMS	Dutch
BRU	Dutch & French