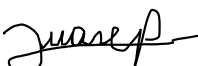


INFORMATION CIRCULAR

To: All staff members

Date: 03 Mars 2025

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From: Elza Maharramova, HR Officer and OiC
Human Resources Management Section 

Subject: Language Training Programme at ECA (2nd amendment)

I. General provisions

1. An essential factor in harmonious communication among peoples, multilingualism is of particular importance to the United Nations. By promoting tolerance, multilingualism ensures effective and increased participation of all in the Organization's work, as well as greater effectiveness, better outcomes and more involvement. Reading, interacting and writing in more than one language, at any level of competence, fosters our personal and professional development and helps us to contribute more effectively as a staff member in a multilingual Organization.

2. At the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) we offer six official language courses - Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish - with a view to promote multilingualism and ensure linguistic balance within the Secretariat as well as enhance the language capabilities of its staff as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolutions 2480 B (XXIII), 43/224 D and 50/11. In addition to the six official UN languages, a course in Amharic, Ethiopia's official language, is offered.

3. This information circular is to advise on the modalities of the United Nations Language Training Programme offered at ECA.

II. Course calendar

4. The general course calendar and enrolment timelines for any academic year are indicated in the table below. Specific calendars are announced every year in the Learning and Development Catalogue.

Term	Registration Period	Placement Exam	Course begins	Course ends	No. Weeks
1	1 to 31 August	1 st and 2 nd week of Sept	Mid-Sept	1 st week of Dec.	12
2	1 to 31 December	1 st and 2 nd week of Jan	Mid-Jan	1 st week of Apr	12
3	1 to 6 March	1 st and 2 nd week of Apr	Mid-Apr	1 st week of Jul	12



III. Course details

5. ECA-HR's Language & Career Resources Centre (LCRC) provides a great opportunity to develop oral and written communication skills for presentations, meetings, conversations, e-mail correspondence and beyond. It also strives to ensure that all courses and levels are offered each term.¹

- **Amharic:** The course is designed to help international staff members and their spouses based in Ethiopia to have working knowledge of the local Amharic language for their day-to-day interaction with the colleagues, government bodies, etc.
- **Arabic:** Arabic is one of UN official languages. Staff members are encouraged to have a working knowledge of this language to enhance their effectiveness at work as well as to advance their career opportunities. The course is designed from beginners' level to advanced knowledge of grammar, cultural elements of language, sentence and speech, etc. enabling participants prepare for the LPE.
- **Chinese:** Chinese is one of UN official languages. The course is offered to enhance staff members' communication skills in Chinese as it is one of the important languages of the UN. The course is open to all participants interested in advancing their language competencies. These courses coverage starts from beginners to more advanced knowledge of Chinese grammar, cultural elements of communication, etc.
- **English:** English is one of the two UN working languages. The course is being offered to enable staff members to communicate effectively and fluently in the English language. The class is of particular interest to participants who wish to enhance their proficiency in English. Unlike all the other language courses, English course starts from an intermediate level. Therefore, applicants to the English language course will necessarily undertake a placement test to determine their level.
- **French:** French is one of the two UN working languages. This course is being offered to participants who would like to advance their language skills in French, especially if they wish to leverage on their linguistic skills towards enhancing career growth at several duty stations across Africa where French is the primary language of communication. French course is available from beginners all the way to proficiency.
- **Russian:** The Centre is planning to start offering a Russian Language Course in the term that will run from April to July 2025 to allow staff members and participants from diplomatic missions of member countries located in Addis Ababa to advance their language competencies. The course coverage will start from the beginner level and will continue to leverage till they reach advanced level, just like for all the other UN official languages.

¹ Courses will only be offered if they attract a minimum number of students. The LCRC encourages interested participants to undertake early registration so as to ensure the availability of their preferred time and schedule.



- **Spanish:** Spanish is one of UN official languages. The course is offered to enhance staff members' communication skills in Spanish as it is one of the important languages of the UN. This is open to all participants interested in advancing their language competencies. These courses coverage starts from basic Spanish to more advanced knowledge of Spanish grammar, cultural elements of communication, etc.
- **Specialized communication courses:** The LCRC also organizes special communication courses consisting of a total of 24 to 48 hours of learning over a 12-week term. Courses may be delivered online or in person, or in a blended format.

IV. Course schedule and delivery

6. General language courses consist of a total of 60 hours of learning over a twelve-week period with an additional, a one-week timeline for student consultations, evaluation, and other course-related matters at the end of the term. The general language courses will be delivered on a hybrid mode i.e. face-to-face for those who are able to attend in-person and virtually for those who are not able to attend the same class in person.

7. Classes normally run from Monday to Thursday as per the following schedule, Addis Ababa time:

- 08:00 AM to 09:15 AM
- 12:15 PM to 01:30 PM
- 01:30 PM to 02:45 PM
- 05:00 PM to 06:15 PM

These time slots have been organised in order to allow UN staff members participate in these classes in a manner that allows the class hours to be shared between the working hours and the staff members' personal time.

V. Eligibility

8. Participants who wish to enroll in the language courses must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- (a) Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) staff members with temporary, fixed term, continuing and permanent appointments and their legal spouses;
- (b) United Nations Secretariat staff members based in Addis Ababa and their legal spouses;
- (c) Staff members of the United Nations funds and programmes as well as other international organizations and their spouses so long as they have been granted authorization by their respective organizations/offices;
- (d) Members of the diplomatic community and permanent missions and their spouses, international NGOs and their spouses.
- (e) Retired staff members of the UN Secretariat, agencies, funds and programmes;

- (f) On an exceptional basis, and subject to availability of classes, consultants, individual contractors, fellows, gratis personnel and interns associate with the UN may be eligible to participate.

VI. Tuition Fees

9. ECA and UN Secretariat staff are exempted from payment of tuition fees and may enroll in language courses at no cost.

Category	Fee per term	Remarks
ECA and UN Secretariat Staff members, interns and fellows working for ECA	NA	Free of charge
Spouse of ECA and UN Secretariat Staff	\$120	Per person
Staff of UN agencies, funds and programmes and their spouses	\$120	Per person
Consultants, Individual Contractors, UNV, Fellows and gratis personnel associated with the UN	\$50	Per person
Retired UN Staff	\$120	Per person
Members of the diplomatic community, permanent missions, international NGOs and host country government	\$150	Per person

VII. Enrolment Procedures

Application and enrolment

10. All enrolment applications should be completed using the on-line platform at <https://www.uneca.org/pages/language-classes>. No paper application forms will be accepted.

11. Applicants who are not staff of UN Secretariat, funds and programmes or other UN organizations or agencies must provide a copy of their employer attestation at the time of their application.

12. Proof of payment in accordance with the instructions below must be provided if the applicant is not exempt from payment of tuition fees.

13. Applications are processed on a first-come-first-served basis. Incomplete applications will not be processed. Applicants are encouraged to enroll early given the limited number of seats in each class. Where more applications are received than available seats in a course, priority will be given to applicants who completed the previous level. Applicants who wish to repeat a course they have successfully completed will not receive priority.

14. Applicants will receive confirmation of their enrolment by email before the beginning of courses.

15. Participants will not be re-enrolled automatically for subsequent terms. Participants may also be required to purchase course materials recommended by the teaching faculty within the first week after classes commence.

Payment of tuition fees

16. Applicants who are not exempt from the payment of tuition fees must pay tuition fees at the time of their application for enrolment. Payment should be made the following bank account:

Account Number	1000090977877 For USD Payments
Account Name	UNITED NATIONS - (ETCB2)
Bank	Commercial Bank of Ethiopia
Branch	ECA Branch
SWIFT Code	CBETETAAXX
Address	Menelik II Ave. P.O. Box 3001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel: 251-11-544-5000

Placement test

17. A placement test is mandatory for applicants who:

- (a) Have more than 50 hours of formal language training in the language in which the applicant intends to enroll;
- (b) Have not been enrolled in the ECA language training programme for over two terms; or
- (c) Have failed the same course level twice in two consecutive terms.

18. Applicants will receive an invitation to undertake the placement test at the end/start of the enrolment period.

19. It is important to undertake the placement test within the scheduled timelines in order to enroll in the language course. Applicants who are unable to take the placement test within the specified timelines should request for an extension of the placement test by advising the Language Courses Coordinator prior to the deadline. Due to the limited number of seats in each course, applicants who do not complete the placement test on time will not be guaranteed enrollment.

Cancellation of enrolment

20. Participants should cancel their enrolment at least four working days prior to the start of the term by sending a cancellation email request to Language Courses Coordinator (kedir.agraw@un.org).



21. Tuition fees will not be refunded to participants who cancel their enrolment beyond the deadline. Participants who cancel their enrolment before the deadline may elect to apply the tuition fees to the following term instead of receiving a reimbursement.

Reimbursement procedures

22. Tuition fees will be refunded if an applicant cancels his or her enrolment before the deadline or if the applicant is not given a seat in one of the courses.

23. Participants should send an email to the Language Courses Coordinator at kedir.agraw@un.org and workue.uneca@un.org to request a reimbursement .

24. Reimbursements may take up to eight weeks after the submission of the required documents.

VIII. Attendance and participation

Mandatory attendance

25. Participants must be present for at least 80% of the term. Students who are unable to attend must inform their instructor(s) and the Language and Career Resource Center (LCRC) in advance through at kedir.agraw@un.org and workue.uneca@un.org.

26. Participant's time and attendance are recorded. Mastering any language requires participant's commitment to attend classes, and actively participate in the classroom sessions. Similarly, as an adult learning language programme – participants will be expected to undertake homework as part of an autonomous online learning outside of class hours. At the end of term, participants must complete the end-of-term evaluation to enable LCRC to improve the language school and the programmes offered.

27. Managers are encouraged to approve requests from their staff to participate in language courses and to grant time to commute to and from classes.