



U.S. AIR FORCE

Engineer and Scientist Exchange Program (ESEP)

Candidate FAQ's

- **What is the ESEP Program?**
 - The Engineer and Scientist Exchange Program (ESEP) is a DoD effort to promote international cooperation in military research, development, and acquisition through the exchange of defense scientists and engineers. It provides on-site working assignments for US military and civilian engineers and scientists in allied and friendly governments' organizations and the reciprocal assignment of foreign engineers and scientists in US defense establishments. A prerequisite for establishing the program is a formal international agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each participant nation. Currently, DoD has signed agreements with Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Chile, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Singapore, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

- **What are the goals of the program?**
 - Primary goals of ESEP are:
 - Broaden perspectives in research and development techniques and methods
 - Form a cadre of internationally experienced professionals to enhance USAF research and development programs
 - Gain insight into foreign research and development expertise, methods, organizational structures, procedures, production, logistics, testing, and management systems Cultivate future international cooperative endeavors
 - Avoid duplication of research efforts

- **Who can participate?**
 - Air Force personnel (Officers and Civilians) selected on a competitive basis for a 2-year tour, which may be preceded by 24-28 weeks of language training. SAF/IA advertises the program to the USAF at large to recruit applicants, usually in October with an application due date in the following February.

- **How do I apply?**
 - The ESEP Call for Applications is sent once a year via the Air Force MyPers via automatic message to all civilian (GS-12 and above) and military (1st LT-Major) engineers and scientists across the USAF with program information, requirements, and application submission suspense information. The application template and supporting documentation is found on MyPers as well as the ESEP site on the Common Access Card (CAC) enabled Air Force Portal.

- **What are the participant expectations?**
 - As a participant of the USAF ESEP, it is expected for you to be self-starter, motivated, personable individual whom will take advantage of this opportunity to not only increase your skill sets and knowledge of international research and development functions, but also provide a return investment to the USAF via new cooperative agreements, data/information exchanges, or overall interoperability and the establishment of foreign allied relationships.



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- **How are candidates selected?**
 - A selection panel at the Headquarters Air Force in Washington, DC reviews each completed application. Selection panels' members include, but are not limited to, SAF/IAPC, SAF/AQ, AFOSR, AFRL, EOARD and additional agencies as available. The number of participants selected is primarily dependent upon available funding. Selected participants are assigned a country of placement based on the preference list within their application, current pol-mil activity, the research and development capability/relationship with the U.S. and the participant's scientific and engineering background.

- **Will my unit receive a backfill for me while I am in the program?**
 - No. It is imperative that your commander (or equivalent) acknowledge via memorandum that your position will remain within your organization.

- **Who pays for me to participate (language training, PCS costs, salary, etc.)?**
 - For military members, pay and PCS costs come out of the Military Manpower budget. No expense to the unit.
 - For civilians, the home unit continues to pay the salary. Instead of paying locality pay during the two-year assignment, the home organization pays the Post Allowance (PA) and Living Quarter Allowance (LQA) the ESEP selectee– it is usually close to an even trade. SAF/IAPC pays for TCS costs and language training.
 - Any ICASS (embassy support) costs are paid by SAF/IAPC.

- **Will I get COLA or other assistance with housing costs?**
 - Military members receive an overseas housing allowance and a COLA.
 - Civilians receive a PA and LQA in lieu of their locality pay. PA and LQA is not taxed.
 - ***Be sure to read the OPM guidance regarding living overseas. Depending on military rank and GS grade, these costs fluctuate.
 - Note: Military and civilian allowances vary greatly from country to country and from city to city within a country.

- **Will I have to attend language school?**
 - Yes for assignments in at a non-English speaking country. Most language training courses are approximately 24-28 weeks at Defense Language Institute in Arlington, Virginia.

- **I am scheduled to meet my Major's board in (Month) of (Year). Am I still eligible to participate?**
 - Yes. However, you need to consider some other factors. When you meet your board, you will also be competing for Intermediate Developmental Education (IDE). If you are not selected for promotion to major, you will compete for IDE selection for the next three years. It can be difficult to get the support you need to compete effectively



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(for just about anything in the Air Force) if you are far from the office that will be writing your PRF/3849/etc. If you do not have a strong desire to attend IDE in-residence, or are satisfied with completing IDE by correspondence, we would be happy to accept your application.

- **Do I have to have a graduate degree complete to be selected?**
 - Yes. If you are in the process of completing your graduate degree, include a transcript and indicate how close you are to completion.
- **Do I have to speak a foreign language?**
 - No, but it will make you more competitive. If you do speak a foreign language, make sure you have taken the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) so we know how proficient you are.
- **What is a good Defense Language Aptitude Battery score?**
 - Higher the better. Anything below 100 suggests it could be a challenge for you to learn a language. If the selection panel selects an individual with a score lower than 100, a placement in an English-speaking country will be considered (UK, Canada, Australia, and Singapore). If the score is above 120, it suggests that the individual may be able to learn a more challenging language.
- **What is the duration of the tour?**
 - Each USAF overseas ESEP tour is for two years with the possibility for an additional year extension. Year extensions are predicated on a case-by-case basis.
- **Will I incur an additional service obligation for participating in ESEP?**
 - Yes. There is a service commitment of 3 years after completion of the ESEP tour. Leaving the program before completion can result in a monetary pay back to the Air Force. This will include the costs for overseas move and language training (if applicable).
- **Who will be my Reporting Senior/Supervisor while on assignment overseas?**
 - Your primary supervisor will be from your home organization/sending agency. You will also be affiliated with the ESEP Program Office within SAF/IAPC, DLI (if applicable), military/government support offices, the in-country embassy team and your host facility overseas.
- **Do I still receive an Officer Performance Reports (OPR) and Civilian Appraisals?**
 - OPRs and civilian appraisals will still be written/signed by the supervisor from the ESEP participant's home organization. All ESEP participants are encouraged to copy their home organization's supervisor while submitting the bi-monthly activity report to SAF/IAPC.
- **How do you decide where to send people?**



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- Currently there are 16 ESEP Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place with the following countries: Australia; Canada; Chile; Czech Republic; France; German; Israel; Italy; Japan; Korea; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Spain; Singapore; and United Kingdom. The host country must be able to place the ESEP person in a government facility. We are open to suggestions from the candidates about potential placements in countries, organizations and facilities, but we balance the goals of the DoD, AF, host nations, and other entities. All placements are carefully executed to ensure the exchange is rewarding both, personally and professionally. As such, when the host organization submits the position description to SAF/IA, the participant and supervisor review it to ensure it is a good match before the final acceptance is send.
- **How are selected personnel assigned to a country?**
 - Upon selection notification, each participant is required to send SAF/IAPC a memorandum confirming their acceptance of placement in the assigned country.
 - After receipt of this memorandum, SAF/IAPC coordinates directly with the Ministry of Defense in the foreign country.
 - The selected individual's resume and career objectives is provided with the request for a position within one of their government research labs or facilities.
- **How do I get from my home organization to DLI then to my country?**
 - Military will do a PCS to language training and a second PCS to their overseas destination. AFPC has determined that a 24+-week school will be a PCS rather than a TDY en route. You are not to leave your home organization and/or DLI until you have a set of orders.
 - Civilians will do a Temporary Change of Station (TCS) to their overseas location with a TDY en route to language training.
- **Do I need a visa?**
 - Possible, yes. It is recommended to review the Foreign Clearance Guide upon your acceptance in to the ESEP assignment. There you will find information regarding passports and visas. A copy of the travel orders document is needed in order to initiate the process for no-fee passport and visa. Spouses/dependents of ESEP participants will require a no-fee passport.
 - Contact your local official passport office for assistance with submission. All ESEP participants will require an official or diplomatic passport.
 - The Foreign Clearance Guide and consular offices will clarify requirements.
 - You will receive guidance from the ESEP Program Office regarding overseas travel/living requirements.
- **Will I have computer access while overseas?**
 - In addition to renewing your military I.D., it is imperative to meet with your IT support team to ensure your e-mail/account/profile is not closed while you are overseas. You may be required to have your account be put in TDY status to ensure it does not close/expire. To access a computer and e-mail, the U.S. embassy, or



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- nearest base, will have systems for you to use. You will need your CAC. You will also be able to log into your e-mail via webmail. Your IT support team can provide a link or you can navigate to through the AF portal.
- **ESEP participants are NOT to bring any government issued computers or cell phones from the US to their assignment overseas.**

 - **What support can I expect for my Spouse and Dependents?**
 - The ESEP does not provide additional support for a spouse or dependents other than the coverage from the ICASS, and plane tickets to and from the country. For example, the ESEP will not assist in finding schools for children or job opportunities for a spouse. As part of the cultural emersion, it is the responsibility of the ESEP participant to find schooling for their child, research job opportunities for their spouse. The ESEP will provide a memorandum, if required, to a school stating the purpose of your presence in country and duration of stay. The UK often requires this memo for record. A resource for schools is the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) site <https://www.dodea.edu/>

 - **What Program Funding and Financial Allowances can I expect?**
 - ESEP participants will receive various forms of financial allowances and reimbursements before, during and after their tour. These allowances will slightly differ for military and civilian participants. All allowances, regardless of rank, must be listed in a set of orders.