

# State Department 101: Preparing for a Career as a Foreign Service Officer

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# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIPLOMACY IN ACTION

- Federal executive department responsible for the international relations of the United States
  - 270+ embassies, consulates and diplomatic missions worldwide
  - 5 career tracks
- US State Department accept about **2%** of applicants each year
- **BUT you can set yourself up for success!**



# Setting Yourself Up for Success

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1. Learn a Language
2. Build a resume that incorporates State's 13 Dimensions
  - a. scholarships, fellowships, and internships that can help
3. Choose a Career Track that fits goals and ambitions
4. Be Patient! It is rare that someone becomes a foreign service officer immediately after his or her undergraduate studies!

# Language Study

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Knowledge of a second language is not required but increases competitiveness

61 [languages](#) provide applicants a .17 bonus if they pass level 3 or higher of the FSI language telephone test

Includes: French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish

8 languages provide applicants an additional bonus if they pass level 2 or higher of the FSI language telephone test

**Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin),** Hindi, Korean, Pashto, Persian, and Urdu

# Developing Language Proficiency

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- Study Abroad!
  - CSU has 200+ Education Abroad Options
  - Choose an [immersive](#) program/program in a non-traditional location (and apply for a [Boren!](#))
- Apply for a [Critical Language Scholarship](#)
  - Fully-funded program sponsored by the US Department of State
- International Post-Bac Opportunities
  - [Fulbright](#), [Peace Corps](#), [JET](#), [EPIK](#), [French Ministry of Education](#), [USTA Austria](#), [Cultural Ambassadors Spain](#)



# 13 Dimensions

The successful candidate will demonstrate the following dimensions that reflect the skills, abilities, and personal qualities deemed essential to the work of the Foreign Service at the United States Department of State.



# 13 Dimensions: Building a Resume

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# Scholarships, Fellowships, Internships

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US Department of State [Internship Program](#)

- Unpaid program for students with 60 credit hours or more (March 1 deadline)

[Pathways Internship Program](#)

- Provides students with the opportunity to work with federal agencies; [USAJobs](#)

[Presidential Management Fellows Program](#)

- Flagship program for recent graduates with advanced degrees interested in federal service careers

[Diplomacy Fellows Program](#): 9 scholarships and fellowships that allow recipients to bypass the FSOT:

- **Boren Scholars/Fellows, Pickering Fellows, Rangel Fellows, Truman Scholars**





# 5 Career Tracks

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**Consular:** facilitate adoptions, help evacuate Americans, combat fraud to protect borders, and fight human trafficking.

**Economic:** work with foreign governments on technology, science, economic, trade, energy, and environmental issues.

**Management:** resourceful, creative, action-oriented, “go-to” leaders responsible for embassy operations from real estate to budget

**Political:** analyze host country political and negotiate with all levels of foreign government officials

**Public Diplomacy:** engage, inform, and influence opinion leaders, local NGOs, think tanks government officials in order to promote mutual understanding and support for U.S. policy goals

# Choosing a Graduate Degree

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Consular

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Political

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Public Diplomacy

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Management

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Economic

MA in International  
Studies/Affairs/Development

MA in specific discipline: History,  
Economics, Sociology, etc.

MA in Public Administration or Public  
Policy

Masters of Business  
Administration/Finance/International  
Business

# Graduate Programs that specialize in training FSOs

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1. **Georgetown University**, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Master of Science in Foreign Service (MSFS)
2. **American University**, School of International Service
3. **The George Washington University**, Elliott School of International Affairs
4. **University of Denver**, Josef Korbel Graduate School of International Studies
5. **Johns Hopkins University**, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies
6. **John F. Kennedy School of Government**, Harvard University
7. **Boston University**, Fredrick S. Pardee School of Global Studies

# FSOT—First Step in Application Process

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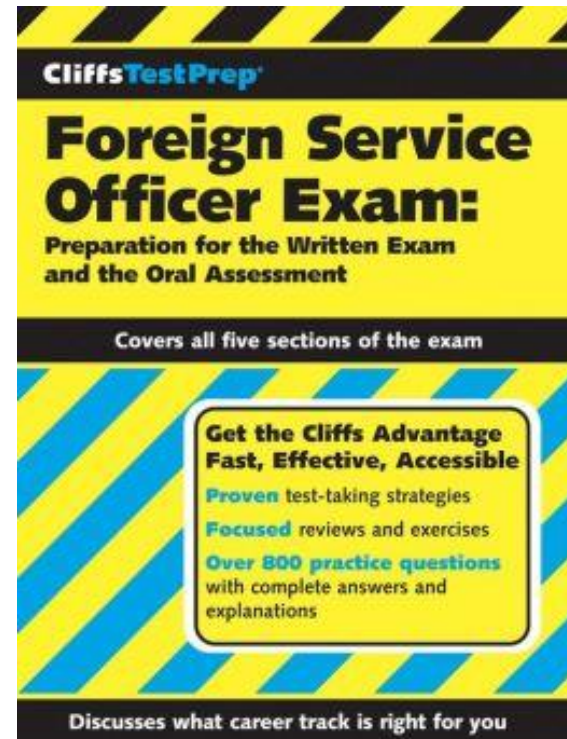
Test is administered 3 times a year in Feb, June, and October

Sign-up for test [online](#)

Sections

1. Job Knowledge (multiple choice)
  - a) General Knowledge
  - b) Career track
2. Written Expression (50 min)
  - a) Essay (choose 1 topic from 3)
3. Biographical Information

Passing Score: 154 on multiple choice; 6 on essay



# General Knowledge Practice Questions

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**1. The Department of Defense, National Security Council, and Central Intelligence Agency arose as a result of conclusions drawn by policy makers in the aftermath of:**

- a) WWII
- b) the Korean War
- c) Stalin's Death
- d) the East Berlin Uprising of 1953

**2. During the Clinton Administration, the Congressional Black Caucus received credit for which of the foreign policy actions?**

- a) Establishing in NYC the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
- b) Blocking the President's initiative to exclude Haiti from the North America Free Trade Agreement
- c) Pressuring the President to use force to restore the elected President of Haiti
- d) Increasing the priority assigned by the U.S. military to missions other than war

# General Knowledge Practice Questions

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**3. In the United States, there are primarily two levels of law: 1) the Constitution and 2):**

- a) Laws enacted by elected legislators
- b) presidential recess decrees
- c) Supreme Court rulings
- d) local initiatives carried out by a majority vote

**4. To justify military action without congressional approval, Presidents Harry S. Truman, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton relied on a resolution from which of the following organizations?**

- a) Organization of American States
- b) North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- c) United Nations Security Council
- d) European Union

# Practice Essay Question

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There are two words that politicians take care to avoid: foreign aid. Instead, decision makers often sidestep the issue. Many believe that it is the United States' obligation as the wealthiest nation in the world to help those who are poorer. Others feel that charity begins at home and question whether the people of those countries that receive aid actually benefit directly. Furthermore, they question whether there are any benefits for the United States. In your view, is foreign aid helpful? To whom? Carefully explain the rationale for your position.

# Next Steps

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Personal Assessment



Oral Examination



Medical and Security Clearances



Security Review Panel



Placed on the Register



# Questions?

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