December 12, 2024

National Resource Centers (NRC) Program
Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships Program

Technical Assistance Webinar

FY 2026 Selection Criteria, NRC & FLAS

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Technical Assistance Webinars About Revisions to the NRC and FLAS Program Regulations

- October 24, 2024 – 2:00 pm ET
  Overview of Revised Regulations: 34 CFR parts 655, 656, and 657
  Find the recording on IFLE's YouTube channel.

- November 14, 2024 – 2:00 pm ET
  Geographic World Area Requirement and Allowable Costs for NRC and FLAS
  Find the recording on IFLE's YouTube channel.

- December 12, 2024 – 2:00 pm ET
  FY 2026 Selection Criteria for NRC and FLAS [TODAY]
  Find the recording on IFLE's YouTube channel after today's presentation.

- January 23, 2025 – 2:00 pm ET
  FLAS Eligibility and Administrative Planning Considerations
  Register for the January 23 webinar this link.

Download File: Upcoming Webinars from ATRD IFLE.pdf
Presentations will be recorded and posted afterward to IFLE's YouTube channel.
Slides from all webinars will be available for download on the "Resources" sections of the NRC and FLAS pages on the IFLE website.

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Do you have any questions?

- Type your questions into the chat throughout the webinar.
- Continue to submit questions during and after today's webinar via the web form at https://forms.office.com/g/WLy4wz6s5t.
- Not all questions will be answered during today's webinar.
- Responses will be incorporated throughout the webinar series and in future guidance.
- Specific details about the next competition, such as competition priorities and precise dates, are not yet known. IFLE will share this information when it becomes available.

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Overview of Today's Webinar

- Types of National Resource Centers

- Overview of Changes to Selection Criteria

- Comparison of Selection Criteria
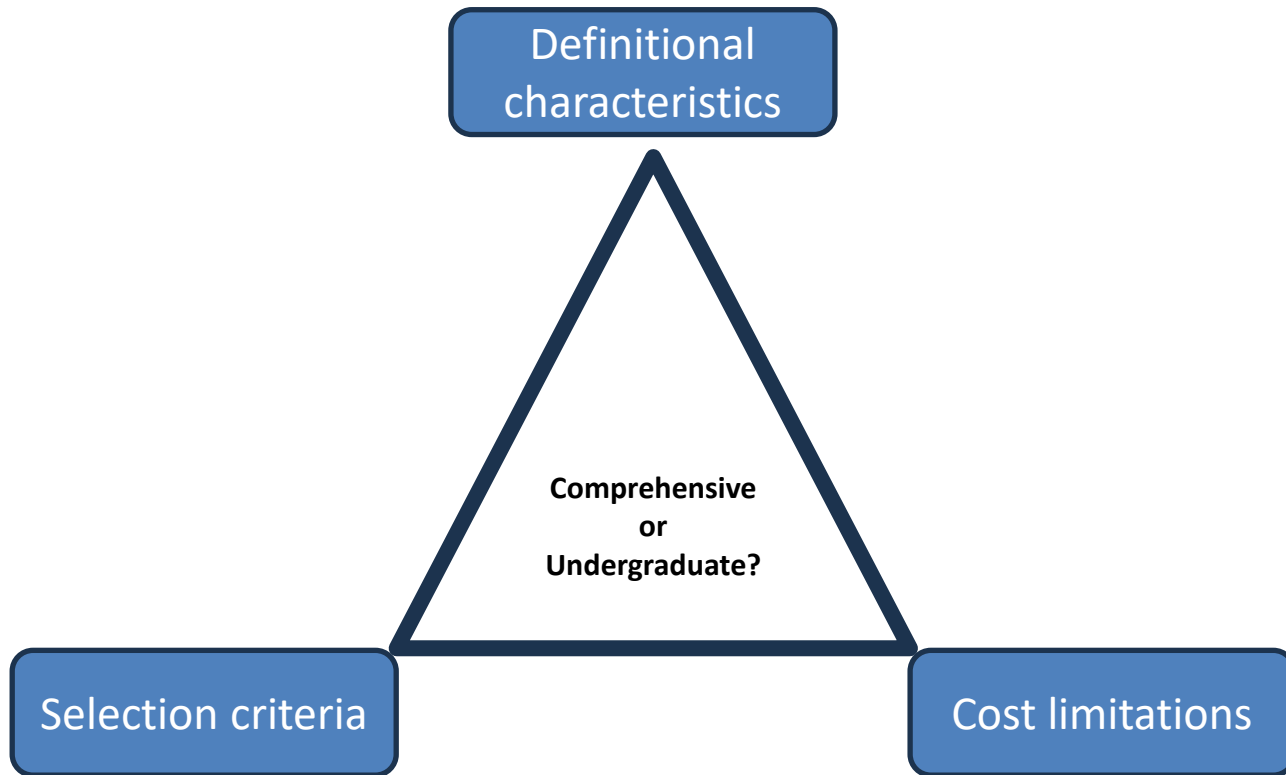
Types of National Resource Centers

Comprehensive vs. Undergraduate (NRC)

- Reflects a statutory definition of distinct center types.
- Clearly defines roles and characteristics of types of centers that better reflect the varied strengths and opportunities at institutions of higher education.
- Ensures selection criteria reflect differences in characteristics and purpose.

Characteristic	Comprehensive NRC	Undergraduate NRC
Target student level	(Post)Graduate/professional, undergraduate	Undergraduate
Distinctive educational activities and educational resources	Significant contribution to national interest through research, critical mass of scholars, important research collections, ability to provide specialized training	Focus on high quality undergraduate teaching and preparation of undergraduates to matriculate into advanced training
Cost and activity limitations	Only general program limitations	Must predominantly benefit undergraduate instruction/training

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Choosing the Appropriate Center Type

Definitional characteristics

Comprehensive or Undergraduate?

Selection criteria

Cost limitations

- Definitional characteristics (34 CFR 656.3), cost limitations (34 CFR 656.30), and selection criteria are the three major features that distinguish between comprehensive and undergraduate NRCs.

- Applicants may wish to consider institutional mission and other institutional characteristics when deciding which type of center is most appropriate.

- Applicants may propose a different center type in future competitions.

- NRC program eligibility criteria and selection criteria do not require applicants to discuss the type of center associated with any application previously submitted to the program.

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Comparability of Center Types

- Comprehensive and undergraduate centers have distinct and complementary purposes.

- In accordance with 20 USC 1127, the NRC program awards grants for the two center types "on the basis of criteria that separately, but not less rigorously" evaluate applications.

- In accordance with 20 USC 1128, the NRC program awards grants on the basis of excellence.

- The program regulations do not establish a hierarchy, evolutionary trajectory, or developmental pathway linking center types.

- Applicants should review the definitional characteristics, cost limitations, and selection criteria.

- Returning applicants may select a different center type in future competitions.

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Comprehensive NRC (34 CFR 656.3)

(b) A comprehensive Center is an administrative unit of an eligible institution of higher education that independently or through collaboration with other administrative units--

(1) Provides intensive modern foreign language training, especially for less commonly taught languages, in the Center's area of focus;

(2) Contributes significantly to the national interest in advanced research and scholarship in the Center's area of focus;

(3) Employs a critical mass of scholars in diverse disciplines related to the Center's area of focus;

(4) Maintains important library collections related to the Center's area of focus;

(5) Makes training available in language and area studies in the Center's area of focus, to graduate, postgraduate, and undergraduate students;

(6) Addresses national needs for modern foreign language and area studies expertise and knowledge, including through, but not limited to, the

placement of students into postgraduate employment, education, or training in areas of need; and

(7) Disseminates information about the Center's area of focus to audiences in the United States.

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Undergraduate NRC (34 CFR 656.3)

(c) An undergraduate Center independently or through collaboration with other administrative units--

(1) Teaches modern foreign languages, especially less commonly taught languages, related to the Center's area of focus;

(2) Prepares undergraduate students to matriculate into advanced modern foreign language and area studies programs and professional school programs;

(3) Incorporates substantial content related to the Center's area of focus into baccalaureate degree programs;

(4) Engages in research and curriculum development designed to broaden knowledge and expertise related to the Center's area of focus;

(5) Employs faculty with strong language, area, and international studies credentials related to the Center's area of focus;

(6) Maintains library holdings sufficient to support high-quality training and instruction in the Center's area of focus for undergraduate students;

(7) Makes training related to the Center's area of focus available predominantly to undergraduate students in support of the objectives of an undergraduate education;

(8) Addresses national needs for language and area studies expertise and knowledge, including through, but not limited to, the placement of undergraduate students into postgraduate employment, education, or training in areas of need; and

(9) Disseminates information about the Center's area of focus to audiences in the United States.

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Activity and Cost Limitations (NRC)

§ 656.30 **What activities and costs are allowable?**

(b) *Limitations.* The following are limitations on allowable activities and costs:

(1) Equipment costs exceeding 10 percent of the grant are not allowable.

(2) Undergraduate student travel is only allowable if grantees have received prior approval by the Secretary for the associated costs and the travel is made in conjunction with a formal program of supervised study in the Center's area of focus.

(3) Grant funds may not be used to supplant funds normally used by grantees for purposes of this part.

(4) The following limitations on compensation paid to personnel apply to each award under this part:

  (i) *Project director.*

   (A) Personnel costs and other related costs, including the cost of fringe benefits, associated with compensation for the project director are not allowable if such compensation only reflects the administrative tasks ordinarily associated with the role.

   (B) Personnel costs and other related costs, including the cost of fringe benefits, associated with compensation for the project director are allowable with the Secretary's prior approval if such compensation is directly tied to the implementation of an approved project activity that requires the project director's expertise.

  (ii) *Instructors of less commonly taught languages.* Personnel costs and other costs, including the cost of fringe benefits, related to the compensation of individuals directly engaged in the instruction of a less commonly taught language are allowable up to 100 percent of the actual costs associated with approved project activities.

  (iii) *Other project personnel.* Personnel costs and other costs, including the costs of fringe benefits, related to the compensation of project personnel who are not described in paragraph (b)(4)(i) or (ii) of this section are allowable up to 50 percent of the costs for a full-time equivalent position.

(5) Costs for international travel are only allowable if a Center has obtained prior approval from the Secretary.

(6) Activities must be relevant to the Center's area of focus and the type of Center (comprehensive or undergraduate).

(7) An undergraduate Center's project and related activities must predominantly benefit the instruction and training of undergraduate students.

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Overview of Changes to Selection Criteria

Key Changes

- Reduction in total number of specific selection criteria and criteria similar across programs.
- Greater alignment of project activities, project outcomes, and program purposes.
- More frequent use of terms that align with definitional characteristics and program requirements.
- Sharpened focus for criteria that address center operations (NRC) or the capacity to administer fellowships (FLAS) rather than a broader consideration of all educational resources at an institution of higher education or within a consortium.
- More consistent differentiation among existing resources, current impact, and proposed plans for the project period.
  - Criterion headings set a broad topic for a group of sub-criteria.
  - Criteria addressing existing resources or recent impact generally appear in present tense or past tense.
  - Criteria addressing plans for the project period generally appear in the future tense.

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Selection Criteria Categories

NRC Categories (656.21/22)	FLAS Categories (657.21)
Center scope, personnel, and operations	Scope, personnel, and operations
Quality of existing academic programs	Quality of curriculum and instruction
Impact of existing activities and resources	Quality of faculty and academic resources
Project design and rationale	**Project design and rationale**
Project planning and budget	**Project planning and budget**
Quality of project evaluation	Quality of project evaluation

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Locating and Reading Selection Criteria

- The definitive versions of the selection criteria are in the NFR and will appear in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) in August 2025.
- Selection criteria are listed separately in the CFR for each program and, with the NRC program, for each center type.
- All selection criteria are important during the review process.
- Definitions that appear in the program regulations govern the interpretation of those terms in the selection criteria.
- Highlighting in the following slides draws attention to notable differences in a comparative perspective. However, applicants should address the entirety of each relevant selection criterion when writing an application narrative.
- The comparisons shown in the following slides highlight relevant differences between old and new selection criteria, as well as among the three new sets of selection criteria for NRC-Comprehensive, NRC-Undergraduate, and FLAS.

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Comparison of Selection Criteria

Comparison Key
- NRC-C: Comprehensive National Resource Center
- NRC-U: Undergraduate National Resource Center
- FLAS: Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships
- [Pre-Revision: Prior to August 15, 2025](#)
- [New: After August 15, 2025](#)

Project Overview

NRC Categories (656.21/22)	FLAS Categories (657.21)
Center scope, personnel, and operations	Scope, personnel, and operations

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Scope, Personnel, and Operations

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
N/A	The extent to which the proposed Center's <mark>area of focus</mark> meets the requirements in § 656.3(a).	The extent to which the proposed Center's <mark>area of focus</mark> meets the requirements in § 656.3(a).	The extent to which the proposed allocation of fellowships meets the <mark>requirements in § 657.3(a).</mark>
The extent to which teaching faculty and other staff are qualified for the current and proposed Center activities and training programs, are provided professional development opportunities (including overseas experience), and participate in teaching, supervising, and advising students.	The extent to which the project director and other individuals, including relevant staff and faculty, are qualified to administer the proposed Center and oversee the implementation of project activities, including the degree to which they engage in ongoing professional development activities relevant to their roles at the proposed Center.	The extent to which the project director and other individuals, including relevant staff and faculty, are qualified to administer the proposed Center and oversee the implementation of project activities, including the degree to which they engage in ongoing professional development activities relevant to their roles at the proposed Center.	The extent to which the project director and other staff are qualified to administer the proposed allocation of fellowships, including the degree to which they engage in ongoing professional development activities relevant to their roles.

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Geographical Area of Focus

- The requirement eliminates a standalone "International" program category in the next competition.

- Any mention of an "area of focus" in the selection criteria and elsewhere is equivalent to a "geographic world area or a geographically designated region that spans multiple world areas."

- **NRC: § 656.3 What defines a comprehensive or undergraduate National Resource Center?**
    (a) A Center's area of focus for research, teaching, training, instruction, and project activities must be aligned with both of the following requirements:
      (1) The area of focus must be a geographic world area or a geographically designated region that spans multiple world areas.
      (2) Research, teaching, training, and instruction in specific languages, countries, regions, societies, or other units of analysis related to the area of focus described in this paragraph (1) must be conducted at the institution.
- **FLAS: § 657.3 What are the instructional and administrative requirements for an allocation of fellowships?**
    (a) An allocation of fellowships must support area studies and language instruction that aligns with all of the following requirements:
      (1) A geographic world area or a geographically designated region that spans multiple world areas and serves as the focus of research, teaching, training, and instruction.
      (2) Languages specific to the geographic area of focus.

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Scope, Personnel, and Operations

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
The adequacy of Center staffing and oversight arrangements, including outreach and administration and the extent to which faculty from a variety of departments, professional schools, and the library are involved.	The adequacy of governance and oversight arrangements for the proposed Center, including the extent to which faculty from a variety of academic units participate in administration and oversee outreach activities, and, for a consortium, the extent to which the consortium agreement demonstrates commitment to a common objective.	The adequacy of governance and oversight arrangements for the proposed Center, including the extent to which faculty from a variety of academic units participate in administration and oversee outreach activities, and, for a consortium, the extent to which the consortium agreement demonstrates commitment to a common objective.	The adequacy of governance and oversight arrangements for the proposed allocation of fellowships, and, for a consortium, the extent to which the consortium agreement demonstrates commitment to a common objective.

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NRC Application Elements

§ 656.11 What assurances and other information must an applicant include in an application?

(a) Each institution of higher education, including each member of a consortium, applying for a grant under this part must provide all of the following:

(1) An explanation of how the activities funded by the grant will reflect diverse perspectives, as defined in part 655, and a wide range of views and generate debate on world regions and international affairs.

(2) A description of how the applicant will encourage government service in areas of national need, as identified by the Secretary, as well as in areas of need in the education, business, and nonprofit sectors.

(b) An applicant must submit an Applicant Profile Form, as described in the application package.

(c) An applicant must submit a description of the applicant's policy regarding non-discriminatory hiring practices.

(d) An applicant must submit a description of the applicant's travel policies, if such policies exist, or a statement that such policies do not exist.

(e) Each consortium applying for an award under this part must submit a group agreement (consortium agreement) that addresses the required elements of 34 CFR 75.128 and describes a rationale for the formation of the consortium.

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FLAS Application Elements

§ 657.11 What assurances and other information must an applicant include in an application?

(a) Each eligible institution of higher education, including each member of a consortium of institutions of higher education, applying for an allocation of fellowships under this part must provide all of the following:

(1) An explanation of how the activities funded by the grant will reflect diverse perspectives, as defined in part 655, and a wide range of views and generate debate on world regions and international affairs.

(2) A description of how the applicant will encourage government service in areas of national need, as identified by the Secretary, as well as in areas of need in the education, business, and nonprofit sectors.

(3) An estimated number of the students at the applicant institution who currently meet the fellowship eligibility requirements.

(b) Each applicant institution must submit the Applicant Profile Form provided in the FLAS Fellowships Program application package.

(c) Each applicant institution must submit a description of the applicant's policy regarding non-discriminatory hiring practices.

(d) Each applicant institution must submit a description of the applicant's travel policy, if one exists, and if one does not exist, a statement to that effect.

(e) Each consortium of institutions of higher education applying for an award under this part must submit a group agreement (consortium agreement) that addresses the required elements in 34 CFR 75.128 and describes a rationale for the formation of the consortium.

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Scope, Personnel, and Operations

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
The extent to which the institution provides financial and other support to the operation of the Center, teaching staff for the Center's subject area, library resources, linkages with institutions abroad, outreach activities, and qualified students in fields related to the Center.	The extent to which the institution provides or will provide financial, administrative, and other support ==for the operation of the proposed Center== at a level sufficient to enable the administration of the proposed project and coordination of educational initiatives in the proposed Center's area of focus.	The extent to which the institution provides or will provide financial, administrative, and other support ==for the operation of the proposed Center== at a level sufficient to enable the administration of the proposed project and coordination of educational initiatives in the proposed Center's area of focus.	The extent to which the institution provides or will provide financial, administrative, and other support ==for the administration of the proposed allocation of fellowships==.

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Curriculum, Existing Resources, and Current Impact

NRC Categories (656.21/22)	FLAS Categories (657.21)
Quality of existing academic programs	Quality of curriculum and instruction
Impact of existing activities and resources	Quality of faculty and academic resources

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Curriculum, Existing Resources, and Current Impact

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
• The extent to which the Center's curriculum has incorporated undergraduate instruction in the applicant's area or topic of specialization into baccalaureate degree programs (for example, major, minor, or certificate programs) and the extent to which these programs and their requirements are appropriate for a Center in this subject area and will result in an undergraduate training program of high quality; and the extent to which Center's curriculum provides training options for graduate students from a variety of disciplines and professional fields and the programs and requirements (including language requirements) are appropriate for the Center and will result in graduate training of high quality. • The extent to which interdisciplinary courses are offered for undergraduate and graduate students. • The extent to which the Center offers depth of specialized course coverage in one or more disciplines of the Center's subject area. • The quality and extent of the Center's course offerings in a variety of disciplines. • The extent to which the applicant provides academic and career advising services for students.	The extent to which the institution makes high-quality training, especially integrated interdisciplinary training in modern foreign languages and area studies, appropriate to the applicant's area of focus, available in the ==curricula for graduate, professional, and undergraduate students in a wide variety of educational programs==.	The extent to which the institution makes high-quality training, especially integrated interdisciplinary training in modern foreign language and area or international studies, appropriate to the applicant's area of focus, ==available in educational programs for undergraduate students==.	• The extent to which the applicant's curriculum provides training options for students from a variety of disciplines and professional fields, and the extent to which the curriculum and associated requirements (including language requirements) are appropriate for the applicant's area of focus and result in educational programs of high quality for students who will be served by the proposed allocation of fellowships. • The extent to which instruction in modern foreign languages is integrated with area studies courses, for example, area studies courses taught in modern foreign languages. • The extent to which the applicant has established formal arrangements for students to conduct research or study abroad relevant to the proposed allocation of fellowships and the extent to which these arrangements are used. • The extent to which the applicant provides or will provide students who will be served by the proposed allocation of fellowships with substantive academic and other relevant advising services that address compliance with fellowship requirements, the potential uses of their foreign language and area studies knowledge and training, and, as appropriate, safety while studying outside the United States.

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Educational Program (34 CFR 655.4)

Educational program:

(1) A legally authorized postsecondary program of organized instruction or study that:

(i) Leads to an academic, professional, or vocational degree, or certificate, or other recognized educational credential, or is a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program, as described in 34 CFR part 668, subpart O; and

(ii) May, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, utilize direct assessment of student learning, or recognize the direct assessment of student learning by others, if such assessment is consistent with the accreditation of the institution or program utilizing the results of the assessment and with the provisions of § 668.10.

(2) The Secretary does not consider that an institution provides an educational program if the institution does not provide instruction itself (including a course of independent study) but merely gives credit for one or more of the following: Instruction provided by other institutions or schools; examinations or direct assessments provided by agencies or organizations; or other accomplishments such as "life experience."

Incorporated into 34 CFR 655.4 by reference to 34 CFR 600.2.

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Rule of Construction for Title VI Programs

20 USC 1132–2. Rule of construction

Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to authorize the Secretary to mandate, direct, or control an institution of higher education's specific instructional content, curriculum, or program of instruction.

(Pub. L. 89–329, title VI, §633, as added Pub. L. 110–315, title VI, §622, Aug. 14, 2008, 122 Stat. 3343.)

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Curriculum, Existing Resources, and Current Impact

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
The extent to which the Center provides instruction in the languages of the Center's subject area and the extent to which students enroll in the study of the languages of the subject area through programs or instruction offered by the Center or other providers. The extent to which the Center provides three or more levels of language training and the extent to which courses in disciplines other than language, linguistics, and literature are offered in appropriate foreign languages.	The extent to which the institution routinely provides language instruction, including ==intensive language instruction==, relevant to the applicant's area of focus at multiple levels, as well as ==the degree to which these offerings represent distinctive commitments to depth or breadth==.	The extent to which the institution routinely provides language instruction relevant to the applicant's area of focus, as well as ==the degree to which these offerings represent distinctive commitments to depth or breadth of coverage.==	The extent to which the levels of instruction offered for the modern foreign languages relevant to the proposed allocation of fellowships, including ==intensive language instruction==, and the frequency with which the courses are offered, is appropriate for advanced training in those languages.

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Intensive Language Instruction (34 CFR 655.4)

Intensive language instruction means instruction of at least five clock hours per week during the academic year or the equivalent of a full academic year of language instruction during the summer.

Curriculum, Existing Resources, and Current Impact

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
• The quality of the language program as measured by the performance-based instruction being used or developed, the adequacy of resources for language teaching and practice, and language proficiency requirements. • Sufficient numbers of language faculty are available to teach the languages and levels of instruction described in the application and language teaching staff (including faculty and instructional assistants) have been exposed to current language pedagogy training appropriate for performance-based teaching.	The extent to which qualified experts at the institution provide modern foreign language instruction in the applicant's area of focus, as well as the degree to which this instruction utilizes ==stated performance goals== for functional foreign language use and the degree to which stated performance goals are met or are likely to be met by students.	The extent to which qualified experts at the institution provide modern foreign language instruction in the applicant's area of focus, as well as the degree to which this instruction utilizes ==stated performance goals== for functional foreign language use and the degree to which stated performance goals are met or are likely to be met by undergraduate students.	• The extent to which the institution's instruction in modern foreign languages relevant to the proposed allocation of fellowships is using or developing ==stated performance goals== for functional foreign language use, as well as the degree to which stated performance goals are met or are likely to be met by students. • The extent to which the institution employs faculty with strong language, area, and international studies credentials related to the proposed allocation of fellowships, including enough qualified tenured and tenure-track faculty with teaching and advising responsibilities to enable the applicant to carry out the instructional and training programs in the applicant's area of focus.

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Performance Goals for Language Instruction

- 20 USC 1122(b)(2) references "an instructional program with stated performance goals for functional foreign language use" as an eligibility criterion for FLAS fellowships.
- Stated performance goals for language instruction establish criteria for determining both the anticipated depth and extent of a learner's ability to use a language other than English.
- Stated performance goals may guide curricula, support tracking student learning, inform placement of learners into appropriate courses, and facilitate program evaluation.
- IFLE does not require grantees to adopt a specific set of performance goals, but the development and implementation of such performance goals are important elements of grant projects.
- Stated performance goals may be responsive to institution-specific and language-specific factors.
- Examples of acceptable performance goals for language instruction:
  - ILR standards
  - ACTFL standards
  - CEFR standards
  - Institutionally-developed standards
  - Language-specific standards
- [Review discussion in the Notice of Final Rule (NFR).](#)

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Curriculum, Existing Resources, and Current Impact

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
The extent to which the institution employs a sufficient number of teaching faculty to enable the Center to carry out its purposes and the extent to which instructional assistants are provided with pedagogy training.	The extent to which the institution employs a **critical mass of scholars** in the applicant's area of focus, including the degree to which the institution employs enough qualified tenured and tenure-track faculty with teaching and advising responsibilities to enable the applicant to carry out interdisciplinary instructional and training programs supported by sufficient depth and breadth of course offerings in the applicant's area of focus.	The extent to which the institution employs faculty with strong language, area, and international studies credentials related to the applicant's area of focus, including the degree to which the institution employs enough qualified tenured and tenure-track faculty with teaching and advising responsibilities, to enable the applicant to carry out instructional and training programs supported by sufficient depth and breadth of course offerings for undergraduate students in the applicant's area of focus.	The extent to which the institution employs faculty with strong language, area, and international studies credentials related to the proposed allocation of fellowships, including enough qualified tenured and tenure-track faculty with teaching and advising responsibilities to enable the applicant to carry out the instructional and training programs in the applicant's area of focus.

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Critical Mass of Scholars (34 CFR 656.4)

Critical mass of scholars means a concentration of modern foreign language and area studies faculty, researchers, and other similar personnel associated with a Center who collectively make significant contributions in a field of area studies because of their expertise and are distinguished by their training in many different academic disciplines in addition to their active engagement in interdisciplinary initiatives related to the Center's area of focus. The following are examples of other factors that may be considered in determining whether there is a *critical mass of scholars*:

(i) Whether instruction in many foreign languages is offered.

(ii) Whether specialized area studies or language instruction is regularly offered.

(iii) The number of graduate student research projects (dissertations, theses, or equivalents) supervised.

(iv) The degree of collaboration with international partners.

(v) Participation in professional activities or consultations with partners outside academia.

(vi) Professional awards and honors.

(vii) Roles in professional associations.

(viii) Activities funded by external grants.

(ix) The number of scholars relative to all similarly qualified individuals in the United States.

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Curriculum, Existing Resources, and Current Impact

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
The extent to which the Center's activities and training programs have a significant impact on the university, community, region, and the Nation as shown through indices such as enrollments, graduate placement data, participation rates for events, and usage of Center resources.	The extent to which the applicant, affiliated faculty, and institutional partners contribute significantly to the national interest in advanced research and scholarship related to the applicant's area of focus.	The extent to which the applicant would contribute to the formation of a diverse network of undergraduate Centers through the training of undergraduate students who matriculate into advanced language and area studies programs and professional school programs related to the applicant's area of focus, especially through, but not limited to, innovative curriculum design, linkages with other institutions of higher education or organizations, requirements for student research or study abroad, support for relevant internship or other co-curricular opportunities, or specialized advising.	N/A

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Curriculum, Existing Resources, and Current Impact

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
• The strength of the institution's library holdings (both print and non-print, English and foreign language) in the subject area and at the educational levels (graduate, professional, undergraduate) on which the Center focuses; and the extent to which the institution provides financial support for the acquisition of library materials and for library staff in the subject area of the Center. • Research materials at other institutions are available to students through cooperative arrangements with other libraries or on-line databases and teachers, students, and faculty from other institutions are able to access the library's holdings.	The extent to which the institution's library holdings (print and non-print, physical and digital, English and foreign language) and other research collections ==are important library collections== in the applicant's area of focus that support advanced training and research, including the degree to which holdings are made available to researchers throughout the United States, the degree to which collections include unique or rare resources, and the degree to which the collections are managed by experts in the applicant's area of focus with appropriate professional training.	The extent to which the institution's library holdings (print and non-print, physical and digital, English and foreign language), other research collections, and staffing support high-quality undergraduate training in the applicant's area of focus through the provision of basic reference works, journals, and works in translation but ==do not constitute an important library collection in the applicant's area of focus.==	The extent to which the institution's library holdings (print and non-print, physical and digital, English and foreign language), other research collections, and relevant staff support students who will be served by the proposed allocation of fellowships.

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TITLE VI FULBRIGHT HAYS

Important Library Collections at NRCs

- "Important library collection" is not defined in the new regulations.
- An "important library collection" is a definitional characteristic of a comprehensive NRC.
- An "important library collection" may refer to holdings housed in multiple physical and/or digital repositories.
- Suggested factors from the selection criteria:
  - the degree to which holdings are made available to researchers throughout the United States
  - the degree to which collections include unique or rare resources
  - the degree to which the collections are managed by experts in the applicant's area of focus with appropriate professional training
- Applicants may provide other evidence related to the extent, use, and management of relevant resources that reflect professional standards.

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Curriculum, Existing Resources, and Current Impact

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
The Center demonstrates a significant and measurable regional and national impact of, and faculty and professional school involvement in, domestic outreach activities that involve the following: • Elementary and secondary schools. • Postsecondary institutions. • Business, media, and the general public. The activities of the Center address national needs and generate information for and disseminate information to the public.	The extent to which the applicant, including affiliated faculty and institutional partners, generates information about the applicant's area of focus, disseminates this information to various audiences in the United States, and ==effectively engages those audiences through sustained outreach activities== at the regional and national levels that respond to the diverse needs of, for example, elementary and secondary schools, State educational agencies, postsecondary institutions, nonprofit organizations, businesses, the media, and Federal agencies.	The extent to which the applicant, including affiliated faculty and institutional partners, generates information about the applicant's area of focus, disseminates this information to various audiences in the United States, ==and effectively engages those audiences through sustained outreach activities== at the regional and national levels that respond to the diverse needs of, for example, elementary and secondary schools, State educational agencies, postsecondary institutions, nonprofit organizations, businesses, the media, and Federal agencies.	N/A

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NRC Outreach

- Outreach to educators, students, and the public remains one of the components of the NRC program and a definitional characteristic of NRCs.
- As with other activities, consider sustainability, availability of resources, and alignment with intended outcomes when designing proposed outreach activities.
  - Fewer, more intensive activities are possible.
  - Large, collaborative activities are possible.
- Shifts emerging from new regulations:
  - Increased emphasis on languages and regional/area focus in global context.
  - Greater interest in describing outreach in terms of meaningful engagement with various audiences, potential depth of impact, thoughtful design of effective and sustainable programming, and alignment with specific NRC project goals and NRC program purposes.
  - Continued interest in regional/national impact (curriculum standards, statewide teacher training or state agency partnerships, long-term engagement with educators throughout career, formation of educator networks, engagement with national professional associations, elementary/secondary/postsecondary pipeline, partnership with organizations, national dissemination of materials)
- Potential considerations other than participant numbers: intensity (i.e., effort and potential or likely impact), audiences, scale/scope.

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TITLE VI FULBRIGHT HAYS

Curriculum, Existing Resources, and Current Impact

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
The applicant provided information to demonstrate its record of placing students into post-graduate employment, education, or training in areas of national need and the applicant's stated efforts to increase the number of such students that go into such placements. The activities of the Center address national needs and generate information for and disseminate information to the public.	The extent to which the applicant's activities address national needs related to language and area studies expertise and knowledge, including, but not limited to, the applicant's record in placing students into post-graduate employment, education, or training in areas of national need related to language and area studies knowledge.	The extent to which the applicant's activities address national needs related to language and area studies expertise and knowledge, including, but not limited to, the applicant's record in placing undergraduate students into post-graduate employment, education, or training in areas of national need related to language and area studies knowledge, including into education and training at a variety of other institutions.	The applicant's record of placing students into post-graduate employment, education, or training in areas of national need and the applicant's efforts to increase the number of such students that go into such placement.

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Description of Proposed Project

NRC Categories (656.21/22)	FLAS Categories (657.21)
Project design and rationale	**Project design and rationale**
Project planning and budget	**Project planning and budget**
Quality of project evaluation	Quality of project evaluation

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Project Design and Rationale

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
The activities for which the applicant seeks funding are of high quality and directly related to the purpose of the National Resource Centers Program.	The extent to which the ==intended outcomes== of the proposed project are clearly specified, are possible to achieve within the project period, and ==address specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities== related to the Center's area of focus, the purpose of the National Resource Centers Program described in § 656.1, and the comprehensive type of Center described in § 656.3(b).	The extent to which the ==intended outcomes== of the proposed project are clearly specified, possible to achieve within the project period, and ==address specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities== related to the Center's area of focus, the purpose of the National Resource Centers program described in § 656.1, and the undergraduate type of Center described in § 656.3(c).	N/A

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General Program Purposes (34 CFR 655.5)

(a) Each of the programs authorized by part A of title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, contributes to at least one, but not necessarily all, of the following purposes:

1) Provision of support for centers, programs, and fellowships in institutions of higher education in the United States for producing increased numbers of trained personnel and research in foreign languages, area studies, and other international studies.

2) Development of a pool of international experts to meet national needs.

3) Development and validation of specialized materials and techniques for foreign language acquisition and fluency, emphasizing (but not limited to) the less commonly taught languages.

4) Promotion of access to research and training overseas, including through linkages with overseas institutions.

5) Advancement of the internationalization of a variety of disciplines throughout undergraduate and graduate education.

6) Support for cooperative efforts promoting access to and the dissemination of international and foreign language knowledge, teaching materials, and research, throughout education, government, business, civic, and nonprofit sectors in the United States, through the use of advanced technologies.

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TITLE VI FULBRIGHT HAYS

What is the purpose of the National Resource Centers Program? (34 CFR 656.1)

(a) Under the National Resource Centers Program for Foreign Language and Areas Studies (National Resource Centers Program), the Secretary awards grants to institutions of higher education and consortia of institutions to establish, strengthen, and operate comprehensive and undergraduate Centers that act ==cooperatively== as national resources for—

    (1) Teaching of modern foreign languages, especially less commonly taught languages;

    (2) Instruction in fields of study needed to provide full understanding of areas, regions, or countries in which such languages are commonly used;

    (3) Research and training in international studies and the international and foreign language aspects of professional and other fields of study; ==***and***== [Emphasis added]

    (4) Instruction and research on issues in world affairs that concern one or more countries.

(b) Through the activities described in paragraph (a) of this section, the National Resource Centers Program contributes to the purposes of the programs authorized by part A of title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, listed in § 655.5(a).

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What is the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships Program? (34 CFR 657.1)

(a) Under the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships Program, the Secretary provides allocations of fellowships to Centers and other administrative units at eligible institutions of higher education that award the fellowships on a competitive basis to undergraduate or graduate students who are undergoing advanced training in modern foreign languages and area studies.

(b) The Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships Program contributes to the purposes of the programs authorized by part A of title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, listed in § 655.5(a), especially the development of a pool of international experts to meet national needs.

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Example: Alignment and NRC Outreach

Purposes of the International Education (Title VI, Part A) Programs

Purposes of the National Resource Centers Program

Intended outcomes of a center's NRC grant project

Intended outcome(s) of NRC-funded portfolio of initiatives within a project

Aligned

Responsive

Intended outcome(s) for a specific audience

Intended outcome(s) for a specific audience

Intended outcome(s) for activities

Intended outcome(s) for activities

Intended outcome(s) for activities

Intended outcome(s) for activities

| Activity | Activity | | Activity | Activity | | Activity | Activity | | Activity | Activity |

| Activity | Activity | | Activity | Activity | | Activity | Activity | | Activity | Activity |

An activity may simultaneously support multiple outcomes and/or serve different audiences.

Audience

Audience

Project Design and Rationale

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
The extent to which the Center's activities and training programs have a significant impact on the university, community, region, and the Nation as shown through indices such as enrollments, graduate placement data, participation rates for events, and usage of Center resources.	The extent to which the proposed project is likely to contribute to meeting national needs related to language and area studies expertise and knowledge, including, but not limited to, by the proposed project's intended outcomes and other stated efforts related to increasing the number of students that go into post-graduate employment, education, or training in areas of national need.	The extent to which the proposed project is likely to contribute to meeting national needs related to language and area studies expertise and knowledge, including, but not limited to, by the proposed project's intended outcomes and other stated efforts related to increasing the number of undergraduate students that go into post-graduate employment, education, or training in areas of national need.	The extent to which the allocation of fellowships will contribute to meeting national needs related to language and area studies expertise and support the generation of information for and dissemination of information to the public.

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TITLE VI FULBRIGHT HAYS

Project Design and Rationale

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
The description of the long-term impact of the proposed activities on the institution's undergraduate, graduate, and professional training programs. The description of the long-term impact of the proposed activities on the institution's undergraduate, graduate, and professional training programs.	The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build academic and/or institutional capacity in the Center's area of focus and sustain results beyond the project period.	The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build academic and/or institutional capacity in the Center's area of focus and sustain results beyond the project period.	N/A

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Project Design and Rationale

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
N/A	The extent to which the proposed project will reflect diverse perspectives, as defined in part 655, and a wide range of views and generate debate on world regions and international affairs. *Note:* *This criterion relates to project design. Applicants must submit a statement on this topic in addition to the application narrative. Applicants may direct reviewers to the statement as part of a response to this criterion, as appropriate.*	The extent to which the proposed project will reflect diverse perspectives, as defined in part 655, and a wide range of views and generate debate on world regions and international affairs. *Note:* *This criterion relates to project design. Applicants must submit a statement on this topic in addition to the application narrative. Applicants may direct reviewers to the statement as part of a response to this criterion, as appropriate.*	The extent to which the proposed project will reflect diverse perspectives, as defined in part 655, and a wide range of views and generate debate on world regions and international affairs. *Note:* *This criterion relates to project design. Applicants must submit a statement on this topic in addition to the application narrative. Applicants may direct reviewers to the statement as part of a response to this criterion, as appropriate.*

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Diverse Perspectives

- ## § 655.4 What definitions apply to the International Education Programs?

  Diverse perspectives means a variety of viewpoints relevant to understanding global or international issues in context, especially those derived from scholarly research or sustained professional activities and community engagement abroad, and relevant to building multifaceted knowledge and expertise in area studies, international studies, and the international aspects of professional studies, including issues related to world regions, foreign languages, and international affairs, among stakeholders.

- ## 20 U.S.C. 1122(e) Application

  Each institution of higher education or consortium of such institutions desiring a grant under this section shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information and assurances as the Secretary may require. Each such application shall include—

  (1) an explanation of how the activities funded by the grant will reflect diverse perspectives and a wide range of views and generate debate on world regions and international affairs; and

  (2) a description of how the applicant will encourage government service in areas of national need, as identified by the Secretary, as well as in areas of need in the education, business, and nonprofit sectors.

  (Pub. L. 89–329, title VI, §602, as added Pub. L. 105–244, title VI, §601, Oct. 7, 1998, 112 Stat. 1775; amended Pub. L. 110–315, title VI, §602, Aug. 14, 2008, 122 Stat. 3334.)

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Project Planning and Budget

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
The activities for which the applicant seeks funding are of high quality and directly related to the purpose of the National Resource Centers Program.	The extent to which all proposed activities are adequately described relative to their contribution to the proposed project's intended outcomes.	The extent to which all proposed activities are adequately described relative to their contribution to the proposed project's intended outcomes.	N/A
	The extent to which all proposed activities are of high quality, including the degree to which they align with the purpose of the National Resource Centers program described in § 656.1, the comprehensive type of Center described in § 656.3(b), and the proposed project's intended outcomes.	The extent to which all proposed activities are of high quality, including the degree to which they align with the purpose of the National Resource Centers program as described in § 656.1, the undergraduate type of Center described in § 656.3(c), and the proposed project's intended outcomes.	N/A

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Project Planning and Budget

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
The applicant provides a development plan or timeline demonstrating how the proposed activities will contribute to a strengthened program and whether the applicant uses its resources and personnel effectively to achieve the proposed objectives.	The extent to which the proposed timeline of activities and other application materials, such as letters of support, demonstrate the feasibility of completing proposed activities during the project period.	The extent to which the proposed timeline of activities and other application materials, such as letters of support, demonstrate the feasibility of completing proposed activities during the project period.	The extent to which the process for selecting fellows is thoroughly described and of high quality, including the institution-wide fellowship recruitment and advertisement process, the student application process, the FLAS Fellowships Program selection criteria and priorities, any supplemental institutional requirements consistent with the FLAS Fellowships Program requirements, the composition of the institution's selection committee, and the timeline for selecting and notifying students.

Project Planning and Budget

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
The costs of the proposed activities are reasonable in relation to the objectives of the program.	The extent to which all costs are itemized in the budget narrative and the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.	The extent to which all costs are itemized in the budget narrative and the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.	The extent to which the requested amount and proposed distribution of the allocation of fellowships is reasonable relative to the potential pool of eligible students with a demonstrated interest in relevant modern foreign language and area studies training and instruction.

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Project Planning and Budget

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
The applicant provided a clear description of how the applicant will provide equal access for and treatment of eligible project participants who are members of groups that have been traditionally underrepresented, such as members of racial or ethnic minority groups, women, persons with disabilities, and the elderly. As part of its non-discriminatory employment practices, the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have been traditionally underrepresented, such as members of racial or ethnic minority groups, women, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.	N/A *Note:* *All grantees are subject to general federal requirements. See 34 CFR 75.500 for more information.* *All applicants submit a form or equivalent statement, as directed in the application package, to address General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) requirements. View the current prompt/form.*	N/A *Note:* *All grantees are subject to general federal requirements. See 34 CFR 75.500 for more information.* *All applicants submit a form or equivalent statement, as directed in the application package, to address General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) requirements. View the current prompt/form.*	The extent to which the institution requesting an allocation of fellowships identifies barriers, if any, to equitable access to and participation in the FLAS Fellowships Program and how the institution proposes to address these barriers. *Note:* *All grantees are subject to general federal requirements. See 34 CFR 75.500 for more information.* *All applicants submit a form or equivalent statement, as directed in the application package, to address General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) requirements. View the current prompt/form.*

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Quality of Project Evaluation

Pre-Revision (NRC-C)	New NRC-C	New NRC-U	New FLAS
The applicant provided an evaluation plan that is comprehensive and objective, is likely to produce quantifiable, outcome-measure-oriented data, and shows that recent evaluation plans have been used to improve the applicant's program.	The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the proposed project.	The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the proposed project.	The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the proposed project.
	The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving the proposed project's intended outcomes.	The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving the proposed project's intended outcomes.	The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving the proposed project's intended outcomes.
	The qualifications, including relevant training, experience, and independence, of the evaluator(s).	The qualifications, including relevant training, experience, and independence, of the evaluator(s).	The qualifications, including relevant training, experience, and independence, of the evaluator(s).

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TITLE VI FULBRIGHTHAYS

Project Evaluation

- The new selection criteria emphasize aligning program purposes and intended outcomes with project resources, activities, and outputs. The criteria do not require an evaluation of each individual activity.

- Evaluations often explore questions related to the overall relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of a project.

- Quality evaluations depend on clearly articulating the project logic, or the theory of how resources and activities will achieve expected outcomes and support program purposes.

- Project evaluation begins with project design: Document the project's logic, identify key metrics and data sources, outline the evaluation methods and activities that will be used throughout the project, and record all evaluation roles and responsibilities when designing the project.

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Evaluation Resources and Planning

- Formative evaluation methods can be used by grantees to monitor project performance, learn what is and is not working, and make improvements. The required annual performance reporting process may be used to support formative project evaluation, which helps ensure that activities stay on track and within budget while contributing to outputs. The findings from these methods are documented in annual performance reports and inform the final project evaluation.

- External, end-of-project, mixed-method performance evaluations may be appropriate for many grantees.

- IFLE does not require any specific evaluation methods or the submission of logic models for applicants under the NRC Program or the FLAS program, but the following materials provided by the Institute of Education Sciences may be helpful when preparing an application:
  - [REL Resource | Program Evaluation Toolkit (ed.gov)](#) [especially Module 1 – Logic Models]
  - [Logic Models: A Tool for Designing and Monitoring Program Evaluations (ed.gov)](#)
  - [Logic models for program design, implementation, and evaluation: Workshop toolkit (ed.gov)](#)

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Wrapping up

Technical Review Forms

- Technical Review Forms (TRFs) are the forms provided to reviewers for scoring during the review process.

- Draft versions of sample TRFs will be available on the program websites for reference.
  - The initial drafts will not have point values assigned.
  - Subsequent drafts may include points and/or other formatting updates.
  - The Notice Inviting Applications (NIA) and finalized application package for each program will contain the point distributions for selection criteria.

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Future Competitions

- The regulations outline general application requirements. The NIAs and final application packages will contain detailed instructions for applying to these programs, including guidance on any appendices that applicants should submit as application components.

- The regulations list many potential competition priorities. The NIAs and final application packages will alert potential applicants to any competition priorities for a competition.

- Prospective applicants may wish to review the current version of the IRIS information collection as well as the proposed revisions and especially any subsequent finalized revisions to begin planning for the reporting aspect of grant administration.

- The next round of competition and funding for the first year of the next grant cycle is related to appropriations for fiscal year 2026 (October 2025-September 2026).

- IFLE has posted links to application narratives from prior competitions on the IFLE website. These may be a useful resource for prospective applicants, but please note that these applications responded to the previous (pre-2025) versions of selection criteria and application instructions.

- IFLE staff cannot review or provide substantive feedback on draft applications for these programs, but IFLE staff may provide general information about these programs, clarify guidance, and address general questions related to grant competitions.

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Specific Questions About the Regulations

Official regulation-related documents

- [Notice of Final Rule](#) (Explanations and full text of new regulations)

- [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) (Additional explanations)

34 CFR parts 655, 656, and 657 update team (2024)

Brian Cwiek brian.cwiek@ed.gov

Tim Duvall timothy.duvall@ed.gov

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ifle@ed.gov

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General Questions About NRC or FLAS

Staff Contact	Portfolio	Email
Sarah Beaton	Advanced Training and Research Division Director	sarah.beaton@ed.gov
Carolyn Collins	Western Hemisphere (Canada, Latin America and Caribbean)	carolyn.collins@ed.gov
Brian Cwiek	East Asia/Pan-Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and Pacific Islands	brian.cwiek@ed.gov
Tim Duvall	Middle East, Western Europe	timothy.duvall@ed.gov
Tanyelle Richardson	Africa, International	tanyelle.richardson@ed.gov
Dana Sapatoru	Russia/East Europe/Eurasia	dana.sapatoru@ed.gov

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