

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION****34 CFR Part 656**

RIN 1840-AC27

**Higher Education Programs in Modern Foreign Language Training and Area Studies—National Resource Centers Program for Foreign Language and Area Studies or Foreign Language and International Studies****AGENCY:** Department of Education.**ACTION:** Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

**SUMMARY:** The Secretary proposes to amend the regulations governing the Higher Education Programs in Modern Foreign Language Training and Area Studies—National Resource Centers Program for Foreign Language and Area Studies or Foreign Language and International Studies (National Resource Centers Program). These amendments are needed in order to improve the application review process and to update the regulations in light of developments in the field of foreign language, area, and international studies. In the spirit of reinventing government, the goal of the proposed changes is to markedly reduce the burden associated with the application process. These proposed regulations would (a) reduce the burden on applicants and readers by clarifying and redesigning selection criteria to remove ambiguity and eliminate repetition of information presented in applications, (b) facilitate grantee selection by providing a larger point spread for greater differentiation of rankings, and (c) improve program quality, efficiency, and flexibility by adopting changes program management experience shows to be appropriate.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before April 29, 1996.

**ADDRESSES:** All comments concerning these proposed regulations should be addressed to Sara West, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, S.W., Suite 600B, Portals Building, Washington, D.C. 20202-5331. Comments may also be sent through the Internet to "National\_Resource@ed.gov".

Comments that concern information collection requirements must be sent to the Office of Management and Budget at the address listed in the Paperwork Reduction Act section of this preamble. A copy of those comments may also be sent to the Department representative named in the preceding paragraph.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Sara West. Telephone: (202) 401-9782. Individuals who use a

telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Background**

The National Resource Centers Program is one of several international education programs authorized under Part A of Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. The main provisions of the regulations govern the awarding of grants designed to assist eligible institutions of higher education in improving and developing their programs in modern foreign languages and area or international studies.

In the spirit of reinventing government, it is the Secretary's goal to simplify the application process and management of the National Resource Centers Program. The Secretary proposes changes to add clarity to the review process, to decrease the current burden on applicants and peer reviewers, to facilitate the application of uniform standards among peer reviewers, and to increase flexibility in program management for funded grantees and for the Secretary.

The Secretary proposes to amend the regulations for the National Resource Centers Program by modifying the selection criteria for applications and by adding activities to the list of definitions and to the list of priorities.

**Selection Criteria.** The selection criteria currently used are very general, leading to some misinterpretation of questions asked, frequent repetition of information, and the inclusion of information that is not pertinent to the purpose of the National Resource Centers Program. The proposed changes seek to retain much of the sense of the current criteria while removing ambiguity regarding requested information. The purpose of the changes is to clarify what information should be presented so that (a) all applicants will provide more focused information necessary for evaluation of a proposal under this program, (b) applicants will be able to present all relevant information within fewer pages of proposal narrative, and (c) peer reviewers will be able to more easily and accurately evaluate and rank proposals based on comparative strengths.

A reorganized, broader point scale and clearly identified point allocations for individual paragraphs of the selection criteria are proposed in order to (a) enable peer reviewers to score

more carefully and accurately differentiate between proposals of high caliber, (b) discourage peer reviewers from overlooking any individual question to be scored, and (c) clarify for peer reviewers and applicants exactly what requested information corresponds to each point value.

**Expanded Definitions.** The Secretary proposes to amend the regulations in keeping with current standards in the field of area, language, and international studies by (a) expanding the definition of a comprehensive center to include curriculum development and community outreach and (b) expanding the activities that define a comprehensive center to include "training" as well as research. These activities have long been standard at successful comprehensive National Resource Centers.

**Expanded Possible Priorities.** The Secretary proposes to increase flexibility in program management by expanding the list of possible funding priorities to include course development. Course development has long been a standard activity at National Resource Centers because it is a primary means by which training programs are strengthened. Including it in the list of possible priorities is, therefore, in keeping with the purpose of the National Resource Centers Program.

**Explanation of Changes**

The proposed changes include the following:

**Section 656.3. What activities define a comprehensive or undergraduate National Resource Center?**

**Section 656.3(e)(2).** The Secretary proposes to expand the list of activities defining a comprehensive center to include training. The current list does not accurately reflect the fact that National Resource Centers train specialists in area, language, and international studies.

**Section 656.7. What definitions apply?**

**Section 656.7(d)(5).** The Secretary proposes to expand the list of activities under the comprehensive center definition to reflect two activities commonly engaged in by successful grantees: curriculum development and community outreach. Curriculum development is very important for strengthening language and area centers and programs, while community outreach is necessary in order for centers to function as national resources. These activities are, therefore, integral to the purpose of the National Resource Centers Program. Including curriculum development and

community outreach in the list of activities would further clarify to the public the purpose of the grants and activities commonly engaged in by grantees.

*Section 656.20. How does the Secretary evaluate an application?*

*Section 656.20(b).* The Secretary proposes to expand the range of possible points for applications in order to enable peer reviewers to more carefully and accurately differentiate among proposals of high caliber in scoring. It has been the Secretary's experience that competition for grants under the National Resource Centers Program is strong. Recent winning applicants have scored in the 80's and low 90's on the current 100-point scale. As a result, there has been narrow point differentiation between successful applicants and high-ranking unsuccessful applicants. The Secretary believes that expanding the possible point range would facilitate funding decisions by providing peer reviewers with a larger scale on which to rank applications, allowing for greater differentiation of scores for applications of similar but different merit. The changed point scale, reflecting changes in the technical review criteria and their point allocations, would add 50 possible points for competitions for which there are no announced competitive priorities and 60 possible points for competitions for which competitive priorities have been announced.

*Section 656.21. What selection criteria does the Secretary use to evaluate an application for a comprehensive center?*

The Secretary proposes extensive changes in the sections dealing with selection criteria for comprehensive and undergraduate centers in order to improve the program's application review process and to reflect current standards in the field of foreign language, area and international studies. Modifications to the criteria are meant to more clearly identify the information that is relevant to the competition and to allow applicants to streamline their applications, thereby facilitating proposal writing for applicants and evaluation for peer reviewers. The proposed criteria incorporate most aspects of the current criteria, and applicants would, therefore, be expected to provide much of the same information as in the past. By more specifically identifying information to be provided in an application, the proposed criteria would allow applicants to exclude less helpful, generalized, and sometimes repetitious information and provide a concise

justification for proposed activities in light of the purpose of the National Resource Centers Program.

*Section 656.21(a).* The Secretary proposes to replace the Plan of operation criterion with a criterion called Program planning and budget. The Program planning and budget criterion incorporates related elements of the current Plan of operation, Budget and cost effectiveness, and the Need and potential impact criteria. It has been the Secretary's experience that the language of these current criteria requires modification in order to avoid confusion among applicants and peer reviewers regarding the meaning of the questions asked. For example, one question under the Plan of operation criterion asks to what extent the objectives of the project relate to the purpose of the program. Applicants and evaluators are frequently uncertain whether "program" refers to the National Resource Centers grant program or to the applicant's training program. Additionally, the separation of these related elements under the present criteria frequently causes applicants to repeat the same information under several criteria. The Secretary proposes to clarify information to be presented and eliminate repetition by asking very explicit questions regarding the administration, cost-effectiveness, quality, and long-term impact of proposed activities in one criterion.

*Section 656.21(b).* The Secretary proposes to replace the Quality of key personnel criterion with a criterion called Quality of staff resources. The staff resources criterion would ask for the same kind of information as the current key personnel criterion but would also require more explicit information to be presented regarding faculty and staff involvement in center activities and oversight and professional development opportunities.

*Section 656.21(c).* The Secretary proposes to eliminate the current Budget and cost effectiveness criterion due to relocating questions on this subject matter under the proposed Program planning and budget criterion. The Secretary proposes a new Impact and evaluation criterion that would combine related aspects of the current Need and potential impact, Evaluation plan, and Plan of operation criteria. The combination of these questions in one criterion is logical due to the interrelatedness of questions about past performance and evaluating future performance.

*Section 656.21(d).* The Secretary proposes to eliminate the current Evaluation plan criterion due to the inclusion of similar questions under the

proposed Impact and evaluation criterion. The Secretary proposes to redesignate the criterion Commitment to the subject area on which the center focuses, with a minor modification of language in order to identify the information to be presented.

*Section 656.21(e).* The Secretary proposes to modify and redesignate the Strength of library criterion. Due to the changes in information technologies and the rising costs of maintaining traditional collections, a library's book and periodical holdings are no longer the only factor that should be considered in evaluating the strength of a National Resource Center's library. The proposed regulations would clarify information to be presented and take into account that library resources can be provided in print and non-print media, through cooperative collection and access arrangements with other library collections, and through on-line, electronic data bases.

*Section 656.21(f).* The Secretary proposes to insert a new criterion called Quality of the center's non-language instructional program. The proposed criterion would incorporate related elements of the current Quality of the center's instructional program and Quality of the center's relationships within the institution criteria. The Secretary believes that including all questions related to non-language course offerings in one section would allow grantees to streamline their proposals and avoid repetition. It has been the Secretary's experience that combining questions about non-language and language courses in the same criterion can lead to applicants' neglecting to provide full information about both non-language and language training. Further, the comprehensive nature of a resource center is reflected by the extent to which it incorporates non-language training in addition to training in language, literature, and linguistics. For these reasons, the Secretary proposes to ask parallel questions regarding the quality of language and non-language training under two separate criteria. It is the opinion of the Secretary that separate criteria would emphasize the importance to the National Resource Centers Program of both language and area or international studies training.

*Section 656.21(g).* The Secretary proposes to address under this criterion the Quality of the center's language instructional program. Questions asked under this criterion are similar to questions currently asked under Quality of the center's instructional program criterion but more specifically identify information to be provided.

*Section 656.21(h).* The Secretary proposes to eliminate the current Quality of the center's relationships within the institution criterion due to the inclusion of similar questions under the proposed Quality of the center's non-language instructional program criterion. The Secretary proposes a new Quality of curriculum design criterion that would combine elements of the current Quality of the center's relationships within the institution and Overseas activities criteria. The new criterion would allow applicants to focus on the issue of training options for students within the context of a single criterion.

*Section 656.21(i).* The Secretary proposes to eliminate the current Overseas activities criterion due to the inclusion of related questions under the proposed Quality of curriculum design, Commitment to the subject area on which the center focuses, and Quality of staff resources criteria. It has been the Secretary's experience in this program that overseas opportunities and activities have been critical to providing successful training options for students and professional development opportunities for faculty. Therefore, the Secretary believes that it is more appropriate and more clearly related to the purpose of the National Resource Centers Program to ask questions regarding overseas activities in the context of curriculum design and staff resources. The Secretary proposes to insert in this section a modified Outreach activities criterion. Proposed changes to this criterion reflect the Secretary's experience that outreach to postsecondary institutions, business, the media, and the general public is frequently overlooked in favor of elementary and secondary school outreach. By specifying separate point allocations for different kinds of outreach, the Secretary hopes to emphasize the importance to the National Resource Centers Program of outreach to all communities.

*Section 656.21(j).* The Secretary proposes to eliminate the current Need and potential impact criterion due to the inclusion of related questions under the proposed Program planning and budget and Impact and evaluation criteria. The Secretary proposes to replace this criterion with the current Degree to which priorities are served criterion, decreasing the point value from 20 points to 10. It has been the Secretary's experience that most proposals submitted for competitions under this program succeed in securing almost all of the points assigned to the competitive priority. A 20-point allocation to the competitive priority can result in

applications with weaker scores on the mandatory criteria outscoring more fundamentally sound applications that do not meet the priority. A 10-point competitive priority allocation would continue to ensure that quality proposals that meet the competitive priority are funded before quality proposals that do not meet the priority. The Secretary proposes to decrease the total possible points allocated for priorities in order to maintain proportion in the competition and to ensure that only high quality proposals are funded.

*Section 656.21(k).* The Secretary proposes to delete this paragraph since the Outreach activities criterion would be included as previously noted.

*Section 656.21(l).* The Secretary proposes to delete this paragraph since the Degree to which priorities are served criterion would be included as previously noted.

*Section 656.22. What selection criteria does the Secretary use to evaluate an application for an undergraduate center?*

Like the criteria for comprehensive centers, the proposed undergraduate center selection criteria incorporate most aspects of the current criteria but are restructured to enable applicants to present the appropriate information more succinctly and with less repetition. The same selection criteria proposed for comprehensive centers are proposed for undergraduate centers, with small variances in point values and questions. The primary difference is that, for undergraduate centers, only questions related to undergraduate training programs are asked, while the comprehensive center selection criteria encompass undergraduate, graduate, and professional training programs.

*Section 656.22(a).* As in the comprehensive centers selection criteria, the Secretary proposes to replace the Plan of operation criterion with a criterion called Program planning and budget. The Program planning and budget criterion incorporates related elements of the current Plan of operation, Budget and cost effectiveness, and Need and potential impact criteria. It has been the Secretary's experience that the language of these current criteria requires modification in order to avoid confusion among applicants and peer reviewers regarding the meaning of the questions asked. Additionally, the separation of these related elements into individual criteria frequently causes applicants to repeat the same information under several guises. The Secretary proposes to clarify information to be presented

and eliminate the need for repetition by asking very explicit questions regarding the administration, cost-effectiveness, quality, and long-term impact of proposed activities in one criterion.

*Section 656.22(b).* As in the comprehensive centers selection criteria, the Secretary proposes to replace the Quality of key personnel criterion with a criterion called Quality of staff resources. The staff resources criterion would ask for the same kind of information as the current key personnel criterion, but would also require more explicit information to be presented regarding faculty and staff involvement in center activities and oversight and professional development opportunities.

*Section 656.22(c).* As in the comprehensive center selection criteria, the Secretary proposes to eliminate the current Budget and cost effectiveness criterion due to relocating similar questions under the proposed Program planning and budget criterion. The Secretary proposes a new Impact and evaluation criterion that would combine related aspects of the current Need and potential impact, Evaluation plan, and Plan of operation criteria. The combination of these questions in one criterion is logical due to the interrelatedness of questions about past performance and evaluating future performance.

*Section 656.22(d).* The Secretary proposes to eliminate the current Evaluation plan criterion due to the inclusion of similar questions under the proposed Impact and evaluation criterion and to redesignate the current criterion Commitment to the subject area on which the center focuses, with a minor modification of language in order to identify the information to be presented.

*Section 656.22(e).* As in the comprehensive center selection criteria, the Secretary proposes to modify and redesignate the Strength of library criterion. Due to the changes in information technology and the rising costs of maintaining traditional collections, a library's book and periodical holdings are no longer the only factor that should be considered in evaluating the strength of a National Resource Center's library. The proposed regulations would clarify information to be presented and take into account that library resources can be provided in print and non-print media, through cooperative collections and access arrangements with other library collections, and through on-line, electronic data bases.

*Section 656.22(f).* As in the comprehensive center selection criteria,

the Secretary proposes to add a new criterion called Quality of the center's non-language instructional program. The proposed criterion would incorporate related elements of the current Quality of the center's instructional program and Quality of the center's relationships within the institution criteria. The Secretary believes that including all questions related to non-language course offerings in one section would allow grantees to streamline their proposals and avoid repetition. It has been the Secretary's experience that combining questions about non-language and language courses in the same criterion can lead to applicants neglecting to provide full information about both non-language and language training. For that reason, the Secretary proposes to ask parallel questions regarding the quality of language and non-language training under two separate criteria. It is the opinion of the Secretary that separate criteria would emphasize the importance to the National Resource Centers Program of both language and area or international studies training.

*Section 656.22(g).* The Secretary proposes to address under this criterion the Quality of the center's language instructional program. Questions asked under this criterion are similar to questions currently asked under Quality of the center's instructional program criterion but more specifically identify information to be provided.

*Section 656.22(h).* As in the comprehensive center selection criteria, the Secretary proposes to eliminate the current Quality of the center's relationships within the institution criterion due to the inclusion of similar questions under the proposed Quality of the center's non-language instructional program criterion. The Secretary proposes a new Quality of curriculum design criterion that would combine elements of the current Quality of the center's relationships within the institution and Overseas activities criteria. The new criterion would allow applicants to focus on the issue of training options for undergraduate students within the context of a single criterion.

*Section 656.22(i).* The Secretary proposes to eliminate the current Overseas activities criterion due to the inclusion of related questions under the proposed Quality of curriculum design, Commitment to the subject area on which the center focuses, and Quality of staff resources criteria. It has been the Secretary's experience in this program that overseas activities have been critical to providing successful training options for students and professional

development opportunities for faculty. Therefore, the Secretary believes that it is more appropriate and more clearly related to the purpose of the National Resource Centers Program to ask questions regarding overseas activities in the context of curriculum design and staff resources. The Secretary proposes to add under this section a modified Outreach activities criterion. Proposed changes to this criterion reflect the Secretary's experience that outreach to postsecondary institutions, business, the media, and the general public is frequently overlooked in favor of elementary and secondary school outreach. By specifying separate point allocations for different kinds of outreach, the Secretary hopes to emphasize the importance to the National Resource Centers Program of outreach to all communities.

*Section 656.22(j).* As in the comprehensive center selection criteria, the Secretary proposes to eliminate the current Need and potential impact criterion due to the inclusion of related questions under the proposed Program planning and budget and Impact and evaluation criteria. The Secretary proposes to replace this criterion with the current Degree to which priorities are served criterion, decreasing the point value from 20 points to 10. It has been the Secretary's experience that most proposals submitted for competitions under this program succeed in securing almost all of the points assigned to the competitive priority. A 20-point allocation to the competitive priority can result in applications with weaker scores on the mandatory criteria outscoring more fundamentally sound applications that do not meet the priority. A 10-point competitive priority allocation would continue to ensure that quality proposals that meet the competitive priority are funded before quality proposals that do not meet the priority. The Secretary proposes to decrease the total possible points allocated for priorities in order to maintain proportion in the competition and to ensure that only high quality proposals are funded.

*Section 656.22(k).* The Secretary proposes to delete this paragraph since the Outreach activities criterion would be included as previously noted.

*Section 656.22(l).* The Secretary proposes to delete this paragraph since the Degree to which priorities are served criterion would be included as previously noted.

*Section 656.23. What priorities may the Secretary establish?*

The Secretary proposes two modifications to this section that would

help to clarify and expand possible funding priorities.

*Section 656.23(a)(3).* The Secretary proposes to clarify that intensive language instruction is not limited to 10 contact hours per week by adding the phrase "or more." Ten contact hours of instruction per week is normally considered the minimum for what constitutes intensive language training rather than the standard.

*Section 656.23(a)(4).* The Secretary proposes to expand the list of types of activities to be carried out by adding "course development." Course development is an important tool for strengthening training programs and, therefore, is in keeping with the purpose of the National Resource Centers Program.

Executive Order 12866

#### *Clarity of the Regulations*

Executive Order 12866 requires each agency to write regulations that are easy to understand.

The Secretary invites comments on how to make these proposed regulations easier to understand, including answers to questions such as the following: (1) Are the requirements in the regulations clearly stated? (2) Do the regulations contain technical terms or other wording that interfere with their clarity? (3) Does the format of the regulations (grouping and order of sections, use of headings, paragraphing, etc.) aid or reduce their clarity? Would the regulations be easier to understand if they were divided into more (but shorter) sections? (A "section" is preceded by the symbol "\$" and a numbered heading; for example, § 656.20 *How does the Secretary evaluate an application?*) (4) Is the description of the proposed regulations in the "Supplementary Information" section of this preamble helpful in understanding the proposed regulations? How could this description be more helpful in making the proposed regulations easier to understand? (5) What else could the Department do to make the regulations easier to understand?

A copy of any comments that concern how the Department could make these proposed regulations easier to understand should also be sent to Stanley M. Cohen, Regulations Quality Officer, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW. (Room 5100 FB-10B), Washington, DC 20202-2241.

#### *Regulatory Flexibility Act Certification*

The Secretary certifies that these proposed regulations would not have a

significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

These proposed regulations merely correct or simplify and clarify provisions contained in previous regulations and would impose minimal requirements to ensure the proper expenditure of program funds. The small entities that would be affected by these proposed regulations are small institutions of higher education receiving Federal funds under this program. However, the regulations would not have a significant economic impact on the institutions affected because the regulations would not impose excessive regulatory burdens or require unnecessary Federal supervision.

#### *Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995*

Sections 656.21 and 656.22 contain information collection requirements. As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C 3507(d)), the Department of Education has submitted a copy of these sections to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for its review.

Collection of Information: National Resource Centers Program for Foreign Language and Area Studies or Foreign Language and International Studies.

Institutions of higher education and consortia of institutions of higher education are eligible to apply for grants under these regulations. The information to be collected is specified by the proposed selection criteria and includes information currently collected under regulations for this program. This information is needed and used by the Department to make grants.

The Secretary estimates that this information collection will decrease the current estimated burden of 155 hours per response to 100 hours per response. The estimated burden includes the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the application to be submitted. Competitions for the National Resource Centers Program are held every three years, with approximately 150 respondents per competition.

Organizations and individuals desiring to submit comments on the information collection requirements should direct them to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, OMB, Room 10235, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503; Attention: Wendy Taylor.

The Department considers comments by the public on these proposed collections of information in—

- Evaluating whether the proposed collections of information are necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility;

- Evaluating the accuracy of the Department's estimate of the burden of the proposed collections of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

- Enhancing the quality, usefulness, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

- Minimizing the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology; e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

OMB is required to make a decision concerning the collections of information contained in these proposed regulations between 30 and 60 days after publication of this document in the Federal Register. Therefore, a comment to OMB is best assured of having its full effect if OMB receives it within 30 days of publication. This does not affect the deadline for the public to comment to the Department on the proposed regulations.

#### *Intergovernmental Review*

This program is subject to the requirements of Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. The objective of the Executive order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism by relying on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

In accordance with the order, this document is intended to provide early notification of the Department's specific plans and actions for this program.

#### *Invitation to Comment*

Interested persons are invited to submit comments and recommendations regarding these proposed regulations.

All comments submitted in response to these proposed regulations will be available for public inspection, during and after the comment period, in Suite 600B, Portals Building, 1280 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday of each week except Federal holidays.

#### *Assessment of Educational Impact*

The Secretary particularly requests comments on whether the proposed regulations in this document would require transmission of information that is being gathered by or is available from any other agency or authority of the United States.

#### *List of Subjects in 34 CFR Part 656*

Colleges and universities, Education, International education, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.015)

Dated: March 25, 1996.

David A. Longanecker,  
Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.

The Secretary proposes to amend Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations by revising Part 656 as follows:

#### **PART 656—NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND AREA STUDIES OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

1. The authority citation for Part 656 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1122, unless otherwise noted.

#### **§ 656.3 [Amended]**

2. Section 656.3 is amended by adding "training and" before "research" in paragraph (e)(2).

3. Section 656.7 is amended by removing the word "and" at the end of paragraph (d)(3), removing the period at the end of paragraph (d)(4) and adding, in its place, "; and", and adding paragraph (d)(5) to read as follows:

#### **§ 656.7 What definitions apply?**

\* \* \* \* \*

(d) \* \* \*

(5) Engages in curriculum development and community outreach.

\* \* \* \* \*

4. Section 656.20 is amended by revising paragraph (b) to read as follows:

#### **§ 656.20 How does the Secretary evaluate an application?**

\* \* \* \* \*

(b) In general, the Secretary awards up to 150 possible points for these criteria. However, if the criterion in §§ 656.21(l) or 656.22(l) is used, the Secretary awards up to 160 possible points. The maximum possible points for each criterion are shown in parentheses.

5. Section 656.21 is revised to read as follows:

**§ 656.21 What selection criteria does the Secretary use to evaluate an application for a comprehensive center?**

The Secretary uses the following criteria in evaluating an application for a comprehensive center:

(a) *Program planning and budget.* (20 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine—

(1) The extent to which the activities for which the applicant seeks funding are of high quality and directly related to the purpose of the National Resource Centers Program (5 points);

(2) The extent to which 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 (5 points);

(3) The extent to which the costs of the proposed activities are reasonable in relation to the objectives of the program (5 points); and

(4) The long-term impact of the proposed activities on the institution's undergraduate, graduate, and professional training programs (5 points).

(b) *Quality of staff resources.* (20 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine—

(1) 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 (10 points);

(2) 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 (5 points); and

(3) The extent to which the applicant, as part of its nondiscriminatory employment practices, 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 (5 points).

(c) *Impact and evaluation.* (20 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine—

(1) 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; and the extent to which the applicant supplies a clear description of how the applicant will provide equal access 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 (10 points); and

(2) The extent to which the applicant provides an evaluation plan that will be comprehensive and objective and that will produce quantifiable, outcome-measure-oriented data; and the extent to which recent evaluations have been used to improve the applicant's program (10 points).

(d) *Commitment to the subject area on which the center focuses.* (10 points)

The Secretary reviews each application to determine 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.

(e) *Strength of library.* (10 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine—

(1) 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 (5 points); and

(2) The extent to which research materials at other institutions are available to students through cooperative arrangements with other libraries or on-line databases and the extent to which teachers, students, and faculty from other institutions are able to access the library's holdings (5 points).

(f) *Quality of the center's non-language instructional program.* (20 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine—

(1) The quality and extent of the center's course offerings in a variety of disciplines, including the extent to which courses in the center's subject matter are available in the institution's professional schools (5 points);

(2) The extent to which the center offers depth of specialized course coverage in one or more disciplines of the center's subject area (5 points);

(3) 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 teaching assistants are provided with pedagogy training (5 points); and

(4) The extent to which interdisciplinary courses are offered for undergraduate and graduate students (5 points).

(g) *Quality of the center's language instructional program.* (20 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine—

(1) 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 those language courses (5 points);

(2) 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 (5 points);

(3) Whether sufficient numbers of language faculty are available to teach the languages and levels of instruction described in the application and the extent to which language teaching staff (including faculty and teaching assistants) have been exposed to current language pedagogy training appropriate for performance-based teaching (5 points); and

(4) 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 (5 points).

(h) *Quality of curriculum design.* (15 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine—

(1) 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 (including language requirements) are appropriate for a center in this subject area and will result in an undergraduate training program of high quality (5 points);

(2) The extent to which the center's curriculum provides training options for graduate students from a variety of disciplines and professional fields and the extent to which these programs and their requirements (including language requirements) are appropriate for a center in this subject area and result in graduate training programs of high quality (5 points); and

(3) The extent to which the center provides academic and career advising

services for students; the extent to which the center has established formal arrangements for students to conduct research or study abroad and the extent to which these arrangements are used; and the extent to which the institution facilitates student access to other institutions' study abroad and summer language programs (5 points).

(i) *Outreach activities.* (15 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine the extent to which the center demonstrates a significant and measurable regional and national impact of, and faculty and professional school involvement in, outreach activities that involve—

(1) Elementary and secondary schools (5 points);

(2) Postsecondary institutions (5 points); and

(3) Business, media, and the general public (5 points).

(j) *Degree to which priorities are served.* (10 points) If, under the provisions of § 656.23, the Secretary establishes specific priorities for Centers, the Secretary considers the degree to which those priorities are being served.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1122)

6. Section 656.22 is revised to read as follows:

**§ 656.22 What selection criteria does the Secretary use to evaluate an application for an undergraduate center?**

The Secretary uses the following criteria in evaluating an application for an undergraduate center:

(a) *Program planning and budget.* (20 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine—

(1) The extent to which the activities for which the applicant seeks funding are of high quality and directly related to the purpose of the National Resource Centers Program (5 points);

(2) The extent to which 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 (5 points);

(3) The extent to which the costs of the proposed activities are reasonable in relation to the objectives of the program (5 points); and

(4) The long-term impact of the proposed activities on the institution's undergraduate training program (5 points).

(b) *Quality of staff resources.* (20 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine—

(1) 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 (10 points);

(2) 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 (5 points); and

(3) The extent to which the applicant, as part of its nondiscriminatory employment practices, 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 (5 points).

(c) *Impact and evaluation.* (20 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine—

(1) 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 students matriculate into advanced language and area or international studies programs or related professional programs; and the extent to which the applicant supplies a clear description of how the applicant will provide equal access 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 (10 points); and

(2) The extent to which the applicant provides an evaluation plan that will be comprehensive and objective and produce quantifiable, outcome-measure-oriented data; and the extent to which recent evaluations have been used to improve the applicant's program (10 points).

(d) *Commitment to the subject area on which the center focuses.* (10 points)

The Secretary reviews each application to determine 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.

(e) *Strength of library.* (10 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine—

(1) 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 (5 points); and

(2) The extent to which research materials at other institutions are available to students through cooperative arrangements with other libraries or on-line databases and the extent to which teachers, students, and faculty from other institutions are able to access the library's holdings (5 points).

(f) *Quality of the center's non-language instructional program.* (20 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine—

(1) The quality and extent of the center's course offerings in a variety of disciplines (5 points);

(2) The extent to which the center offers depth of specialized course coverage in one or more disciplines of the center's subject area (5 points);

(3) 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 teaching assistants are provided with pedagogy training (5 points); and

(4) The extent to which interdisciplinary courses are offered for undergraduate students (5 points).

(g) *Quality of the center's language instructional program.* (20 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine—

(1) 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 those language courses (5 points);

(2) 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 (5 points);

(3) Whether sufficient numbers of language faculty are available to teach the languages and levels of instruction described in the application and the extent to which language teaching staff (including faculty and teaching assistants) have been exposed to current language pedagogy training appropriate for performance-based teaching (5 points); and

(4) 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 (5 points).

(h) *Quality of curriculum design.* (15 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine—

(1) 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 (including language requirements) are appropriate for a center in this subject area and will result in an undergraduate training program of high quality (10 points); and

(2) The extent to which the center provides academic and career advising services for students; the extent to which the center has established formal arrangements for students to conduct

research or study abroad and the extent to which these arrangements are used; and the extent to which the institution facilitates student access to other institutions' study abroad and summer language programs (5 points).

(i) *Outreach activities.* (15 points) The Secretary reviews each application to determine the extent to which the center demonstrates a significant and measurable regional and national impact of, and faculty and professional school involvement in, outreach activities that involve—

(1) Elementary and secondary schools (5 points);

(2) Postsecondary institutions (5 points); and

(3) Business, media and the general public (5 points).

(j) *Degree to which priorities are served.* (10 points) If, under the provisions of § 656.23, the Secretary establishes specific priorities for centers, the Secretary considers the

degree to which those priorities are being served.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1122)

7. Section 656.23 is amended by revising paragraphs (a)(3) and (a)(4) to read as follows:

**§ 656.23 What priorities may the Secretary establish?**

(a) \* \* \*

(3) Level or intensiveness of language instruction, such as intermediate or advanced language instruction, or instruction at an intensity of 10 contact hours or more per week.

(4) Types of activities to be carried out, for example, cooperative summer intensive language programs, course development, or teacher training activities.

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