



**October 24, 2024**

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

## Technical Assistance Webinar

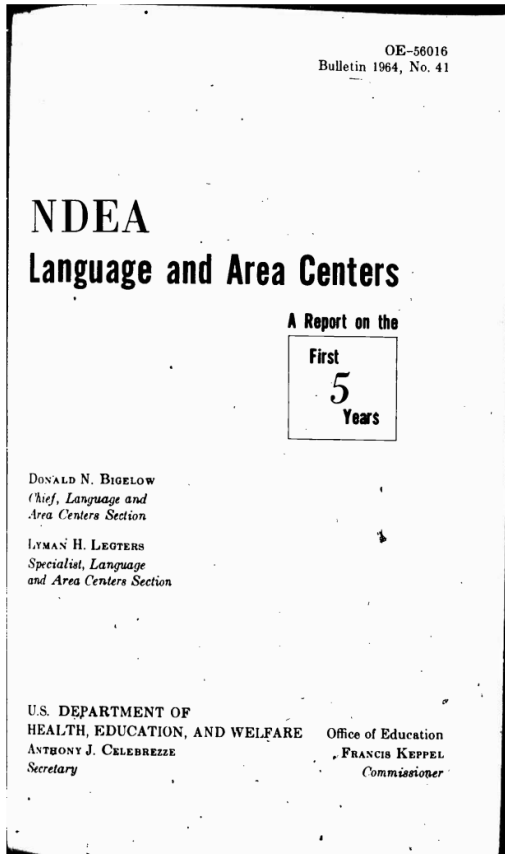
# Overview of Revised Regulations: 34 CFR parts 655, 656, and 657



**INTERNATIONAL AND  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
EDUCATION**

**FULBRIGHT HAYS  
TITLE VI**

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



- Congress first authorized these programs in Title VI of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958.
- The NDEA instructed the Office of Education to provide:
  - Contracts for institutions of higher education to support centers for the teaching of any modern foreign language, especially languages that were not readily available in the United States, and instruction in fields necessary to support a full understanding of the areas where the languages were used. (NRC)
  - Fellowships for students undergoing advanced training in modern foreign languages. (FLAS)
- The NRC Program (ALN 84.015A) and FLAS Fellowships Program (ALN 84.015B) continue to provide grants to IHEs and fellowships to individuals under Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

# 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 [TODAY]**

Find the recording on [IFLE's YouTube channel](#) after today's presentation.

- November 14, 2024 – 2:00 pm ET

## **Geographic World Area Requirement and Allowable Costs for NRC and FLAS**

To join the webinar, click [this link](#) at 2:00 pm ET on November 14.

- December 12, 2024 – 2:00 pm ET

## **FY 2026 Selection Criteria for NRC and FLAS**

[Register for the December 12 webinar at this link.](#)

- January 23, 2025 – 2:00 pm ET

## **FLAS Eligibility and Administrative Planning Considerations**

[Register for the January 23 webinar at 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.

# Do you have any questions?

- Type your questions the Q&A area or the chat during 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, especially written 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.

# Overview of Today's Webinar

- Navigating Major Regulatory Changes
- Major Changes to 34 CFR 655 (General Provisions)
- Major Changes to 34 CFR 656 (NRC) and 34 CFR 657 (FLAS)
- Planning for the Next Competition



# Navigating Major Regulatory Changes



# Finding, Reading, and Interpreting Changes

- [Notice of Final Rule](#) [NFR] (Explanations of changes and text of new regulations)
  - Analysis of Comments and Changes
  - Text of revised regulations
- [Code of Federal Regulations/eCFR](#) (Updated as regulations take effect)
  - [Part 655 \(International Education Programs—General Provisions\)](#)
  - [Part 656 \(National Resource Centers\)](#)
  - [Part 657 \(FLAS Fellowships\)](#)
- [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) [NPRM] (Additional explanations)
  - Summary of Proposed Regulations

**Note:** If explanations provided in the NPRM and NFR contradict one another, the explanations in the NFR take precedence. Technical assistance provided through these webinars generally will draw upon these discussions of changes.

# Hierarchy of Authorities & Interpretations

- Relevant sections of [Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended](#) (Most authoritative, binding, and least specific)
- Final text of revised program regulations from the NFR after the effective dates
- General regulations for discretionary grants and federal assistance programs contained in [EDGAR](#) and the Uniform Guidance ([2 CFR 200](#))
- Program notices published in the Federal Register, including Notices Inviting Applications, after September 2024
- IFLE's program-wide guidance (Program Administration Manuals, webinars, website, program announcements) published, released, or promulgated after September 2024
- Informal or context-specific guidance from IFLE program officers (email, conversations)

**Note:** The new regulations make substantial changes to the NRC and FLAS programs. Do not rely solely on guidance for these programs developed prior to September 2024.



# Unauthoritative Sources on New Regulations

- Proposed text of regulations in the NPRM not included in the NFR
- Explanations in the NPRM contradicted by or clarified in the NFR
- Public comments from the notice and comment period
- Current text of regulations that will be replaced when all new regulations become effective by August 15, 2025
- Previous program guidance not specifically prepared or updated with the new regulations in mind

**Note:** These sources do not provide authoritative guidance for the administration of the NRC and FLAS programs under the final rule published in August 2024.

# New Regulations: Timing and Scope

Affected programs (see [34 CFR 655.1](#)).

- National Resource Centers (NRC) (34 CFR 656)
- Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships (FLAS) (34 CFR 657)
- Language Resource Centers (LRC)
- Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language (UISFL)
- International Research and Studies (IRS)
- Business and International Education (BIE)

**Effective date for changes**

- September 26, 2024 ([34 CFR 655](#))
- August 15, 2025 (34 CFR 656 and 657, applies to new applications and grantees after this date)

# Key Unchanged Program Features

- General approach to funding levels and program sizes
- Grant length (four years)
- General approach to competition timing and review processes
  - Once every four years
  - Next competition in FY 26
  - NRC and FLAS competitions on same timeline
  - Generally same reviewers for NRC and FLAS applications
- Applicants may develop one narrative that addresses both NRC and FLAS selection criteria
- Basic structure of FLAS Fellowship payment components

# Major Changes to 34 CFR 655



# Overview of 34 CFR 655: International Education Programs – General Provisions

- Adds new definition of diverse perspectives (655.4)
- Adds other new definitions (655.4)
  - Areas of national need
  - Consultation on areas of national need
  - Intensive language instruction
  - Area studies (from the statute)
- Revises references to general education and grant terms (e.g., distance education).
- Adds purposes of the International Education Programs, adapted from the statute (655.5)
- Revises the general selection criterion at 655.31(e)(2)(i) to include libraries as a type of facility.

# New Definition of 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.

# Other New Definitions

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

- *Areas of national need* means the various needs in the government, education, business, and nonprofit sectors for expertise in foreign language, area, and international studies identified by the Secretary as significant for maintaining or improving the security, stability, and economic vitality of the United States.
- *Consultation on areas of national need* means the process that allows the head officials of a wide range of Federal agencies to consult with the Secretary and provide recommendations regarding national needs for expertise in foreign languages and world areas that the Secretary may take into account when identifying areas of national need.

# 34 CFR 655.5 What are the purposes of the International Educational Programs? – 1

(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.

(b) The regulations in this part govern the following programs that are authorized by part A of title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended:

- (1) The National Resource Centers Program for Foreign Language and Area Studies and the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships Program.
- (2) The Language Resource Centers Program.
- (3) The Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program.
- (4) The International Research and Studies Program.



# 34 CFR 655.5 What are the purposes of the International Educational Programs? - 2

(c) The following activities authorized by part A of title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, contribute to the coordination of the programs of the Federal Government in the areas of foreign language, area studies, and other international studies, including professional international affairs education and research:

- (1) The consultation on areas of national need.
- (2) The periodic survey of fellows who have participated in the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships Program to determine postgraduate employment, education, or training.

(d) Each of the programs authorized by part B 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) Increase and promotion of the Nation's capacity for international understanding and economic enterprise through the provision of suitable international education and training for business personnel in various stages of professional development; and develop a pool of international experts to meet national needs.
- (2) Promotion of institutional and noninstitutional educational and training activities that will contribute to the ability of United States business to prosper in an international economy.

(e) The regulations in this part govern the following programs that are authorized by part B of title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended: The Business and International Education Program.

# Major Changes to 34 CFR 656 (NRC) and 34 CFR 657 (FLAS)



# Overview of Major Changes to NRC and FLAS

- Broadly promotes alignment with program purposes and collective contribution towards those purposes.
- Requires designation of a geographical area of focus for discretionary grants under parts 656 and 657.
- Clarifies and streamlines the selection criteria the Secretary may use to make discretionary awards under parts 656 and 657.
- Clarifies the differences between comprehensive and undergraduate National Resource Centers for Foreign Language and Area Studies.
- Adds consideration of a student's educational program as an eligibility requirement for fellowships awarded under part 657.

# Geographical Area of Focus (NRC and FLAS)

- Emphasizes languages and world regional/area focus in a global/international context to support a synthesis of area, global, and international studies.
- Eliminates a standalone “International” program category in the next round of competitions.
- **§ 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.

# Selection Criteria (NRC and FLAS)

- Enhances clarity and increases alignment of project activities, project outcomes, and program purposes.
- Reduces total number of specific selection criteria and criteria similar across programs.

NRC Categories ( <u>656.21/22</u> )	FLAS Categories ( <u>657.21</u> )
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	<b>Project design and rationale</b>
Project planning and budget	<b>Project planning and budget</b>
Quality of project evaluation	Quality of project evaluation

# Comprehensive vs. Undergraduate (NRC)

- More 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.
- **Highlights differences below (See [34 CFR 656.3](#) for the official text):**

Characteristic	Comprehensive NRC	Undergraduate NRC
<b>Target student level</b>	(Post)Graduate/professional, undergraduate	Undergraduate
<b>Distinctive educational activities and educational resources</b>	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
<b>Cost and activity limitations</b>	Only general program limitations	Must predominantly benefit undergraduate instruction/training

# Educational Program Requirements (FLAS)

## § 657.4 Who is eligible to receive a fellowship?

- Aligns fellowships with institutional support for and student commitment to area studies, global studies, and international studies in the curriculum.
- Adds new requirement for academic year fellows to enroll in certain educational programs.
- Ensures flexibility for STEM and professional students who receive suitable advising.
- Provides additional flexibility for summer language study.

# Planning for the Next Competition





# What is a “Center” for These Programs?

- IFLE does not require any specific organizational structure for grantees under these programs.
- A “National Resource Center” is a designation for grantees that may take multiple organizational forms: a center, a group of centers, an institute, a sub-division of a provost’s office, a department, or any other unit with the administrative capacity to implement a grant and coordinate relevant educational resources. Regardless of form, these units tend to have clear oversight and governance arrangements in place.
- A FLAS Fellowships “Program” is any grantee that is not also a National Resource Center.

## § 656.6 What definitions apply to this program? (NRC)

*National Resource Center (Center)* means an administrative unit within an institution of higher education that is a grantee under this part that coordinates educational initiatives related to an area of focus as described in § 656.3(a) at that institution or for a consortium of institutions through direct access to faculty, staff, administrators, students, library collections and other research collections, and other educational resources that support research, training, and instruction in various academic disciplines, professional fields, and languages.

## § 657.7 What definitions apply to this program? (FLAS)

*Approved Center* means an administrative unit of an institution of higher education that has both received an allocation of fellowships under this part and a grant to operate a Center under 34 CFR part 656.

*Approved Program* means a concentration of educational resources and activities in modern foreign language training and area studies with the administrative capacity to administer an allocation of fellowships under this part.

# Anticipated Competition Timeline

- Applications become available in early Fiscal Year 2026, approximately one year from now in late 2025.
- Notifications of competition results distributed in mid-2026.

Watch IFLE communication outlets and the Federal Register for competition announcements.

# Advice for Potential NRC/FLAS Applicants

- Carefully review the entire [Notice of Final Rule](#), especially the full text of the new selection criteria and list of documents required for applications.
- Begin data collection and project planning for applications as soon as possible.
- Proactively identify new or revised internal policies and procedures needed to support grant/program administration if selected as a grantee.
- Contact IFLE program officers to ask questions.

# Other Notes

- Competition priorities vary and are set in the Notice Inviting Applications (NIA) for each program. The program regulations include many possible priorities, but the Department may set other priorities.
- Pre-application technical assistance in FY 2026 will address the details of the application process for potential applicants, including the precise expectations for application components.
- Post-notification technical assistance in FY 2026 will address the details of program administration for grantees, including reporting and documentation requirements.
- Details about the NRC Special Purpose Grants will be released if/when information becomes available.

# Upcoming IFLE Programming

- **FLAS Survey Webinar: Report on Postgraduate Employment, Education, and Training Outcomes of FLAS Fellows**

**November 6, 2024, 1:00 to 2:30 pm ET**

[Click here to join the meeting](#) (Microsoft Teams)

Meeting ID: 296 168 288 273

Passcode: XdWdXB

Dial in by phone +1 202-991-0393

Phone conference ID: 417 286 386#

- **International Education Week: Perspectives on the Future of International Education**

**November 19, 2024, 8:30 AM to 11:15 AM (preliminary)**

ED Headquarters (LBJ) & Virtual

U.S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Ave SW, Washington, DC 20202

Contact: Tanyelle Richardson ([tanyelle.richardson@ed.gov](mailto:tanyelle.richardson@ed.gov)) or Amy Marrion ([amy.marrion@ed.gov](mailto:amy.marrion@ed.gov))

<https://www.ed.gov/about/ed-offices/ope/international-education-week>

# 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)

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# General Questions About NRC or FLAS

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