

AFSC 16Z4\*, Staff  
 AFSC 16Z3\*, Qualified  
 AFSC 16Z1\*, Entry

**RATED FOREIGN AREA OFFICER (FAO)**  
**(Changed 30 Apr 21)**

**3. Specialty Summary.** Provides a cadre of rated Airmen with international insight, foreign language proficiency, cultural understanding, and political-military experience with aviation qualifications. Rated Foreign Area Officers (FAOs) combine professional military skills with an intimate, nuanced understanding of the history, language, culture, geopolitical, geostrategic, and political-military issues of the countries and regions in which the Air Force operates. AF FAOs employ this unique combination of knowledge, language skills, and regionally-concentrated/contextual understanding in which air, space, and cyberspace power is applied to integrate this into plans and operations and build increasingly effective relationships and regional partnerships that are critical enablers to the Expeditionary Air, Space and Cyberspace mission. 16Z is a subset of 16F. As such, 16Z is subject to all instruction and guidance pertinent to 16F and is managed by the same office (SAF/IAPA). Related Department of Defense (DoD) Occupational Group: 230100.

**4. Duties and Responsibilities:**

4.1. Develops Air Force policy positions on regional affairs of national, combined, or joint service interest to include recommendations concerning treaties and international agreements. Receives, evaluates, and translates information from national and international agencies into tailored Air Force guidance. Assists in developing, coordinating, and implementing National Security Council policies. Determines requirements for military actions to implement national policy objectives.

4.2. Advises combined, joint, and Air Force operational commanders supporting Force Protection programs, establishing cooperative relationships with Host Nation partners, and supporting the full range of Global Engagement activities, from humanitarian relief operations to coalition building in support of contingency operations and major theater warfare.

4.3. Liaises with the U.S. Department of State, DoD, and other governmental agencies involved with international affairs to present and interpret U.S. Air Force positions to interdepartmental and international committees and groups affecting negotiations on government-to-government and service-to-service levels.

4.4. Conducts analytical studies based on regional situations and trends, and prepares studies, reports, and surveys on political implications of proposed actions.

4.5. Rated FAO positions include billets with an international focus at the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), Headquarters Air Force (HAF), Joint Staff, Unified Command, Combatant Command (CCMD), Defense Agencies, Combat Support Agencies (CSA), Major Commands (MAJCOM), or Numbered Air Force (NAF). 16Z officers can also fill 16F billets, though 16F are not qualified to fill 16Z (rated) billets.

**5. Specialty Qualifications:**

3.1. Knowledge. Knowledge is mandatory of geopolitics, international relations, U.S. foreign policy, and U.S. military issues related to a specific region of qualification (see paragraph 4, Specialty Shred Outs), as well as both the culture of the region and at least one non-English language of the region to a minimum of ILR proficiency of 2/2 in two out of three modalities.

3.2. Education.

3.2.1. For entry into 16Z1, an officer must obtain a regionally focused advanced academic degree focusing on, but not limited to, the political, cultural, sociological, economic, and geographic factors specific to a region of specialization.

3.2.2. For award of fully qualified AFSC 16Z3/16Z4, FAOs need to complete FAO Orientation and JFAOC Phase 1.

3.2.3. A detailed explanation of education requirements is outlined in AFI 16-109 *International Affairs Specialist Program (IAS)*, and in the AFSC 16F Career Field Education and Training Plan (CFETP)

3.3. Training. 16Z1X. Entry Level. Rated officers designated for FAO development will be awarded the entry level Rated FAO AFSC (16Z1X) upon completion of their applicable education and training programs as outlined in AFI 16-109 and the 16F/Z CFETP.

3.4. Experience.

3.4.1. 16Z3X. Qualified Level. Rated officers will be awarded the qualified rated FAO AFSC (16Z3X) after successfully completing applicable education and training programs; documentation of 6 months of immersive experience in cultural, language, and strategic engagement in the region consistent with their academic regional specialty; and a minimum of 12 months experience in a FAO (16F or 16Z) billet.

3.4.2. 16F4X. Staff Level. Awarded based on position. Officers must be appointed to a staff position at the Air Staff, MAJCOM, NAF, Field Operating Agency, Direct Reporting Unit (DRU), Joint Force Headquarters, National Guard Bureau (NGB) or CCMD to achieve the Staff Level 16F4 AFSC.

3.5. Other. See AFI 16-109 for additional requirements.

**NOTES:**

2. Award of the entry level without a completed Tier 5 (T5) Investigation is authorized provided an interim temporary Top Secret security clearance has been granted according to DoD Manual 5200.02, *Procedures for the DoD Personnel Security Program (PsP)*, and Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 16-1405, *Air Force Personnel Security Program*.

3. AFSC 16ZXL (Generalist) refers to assignments (billet only) in which any rated FAO may serve.

4. Award and removal of all AFSCs related to this career field must be approved by SAF/IAPA, 112 Luke Avenue, Bldg. 5683, Suite 230 Washington DC 20032-0000, [SAF.IAPA.IAS.Program.Workflow@us.af.mil](mailto:SAF.IAPA.IAS.Program.Workflow@us.af.mil).

5. Decertification: The Chief and Deputy of the International Airmen Division (SAF/IAPA), who serve as the 16F (and Z) Career Field Managers (CFM), retain full decertification authority for FAOs in instances of gross misconduct, repeated failure to maintain certification standards, returned from assignment for cause and/or infractions to include violation of Partner Nation/U.S. laws. In cases of decertification, the decertified officer is no longer eligible to maintain the AFSC designation and the member's record will be processed per AFMAN 36-2100, (Disqualification). Note: Air Force Reserve (AFR) and Air National Guard (ANG) 16F Career Field Managers (or equivalent authority) and their Deputy CFMs retain the same level of authority over their respective Air Reserve Component members and programs as SAF/IAPA maintains for Regular Air Force (RegAF) FAO matters.

#### 4. \*Specialty Shredouts:

<i>Suffix</i>	<i>Portion of AFS to Which Related</i>
C	SOUTHCOM
D	INDOPACOM
F	CENTCOM
G	AFRICOM
H	EUCOM
L	Generalist (applies only to billets)