



# Functional Bureau Strategy

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**FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE**

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## 1. Executive Statement and Mission Statement

The Foreign Service Institute (FSI)'s mission is to promote excellence across the Department and at U.S. missions around the world by providing world-class training and education and supporting transparency about the history of U.S. foreign policy. FSI trains all professional cadres of the State Department – including Foreign Service generalists and specialists, Civil Service, and Locally Employed (LE) Staff, as well as personnel from about 50 other U.S. foreign affairs agencies. Training covers the full range of foreign policy skills, including diplomatic tradecraft, foreign language acquisition, regional studies, leadership development, management of people and programs, information technology, and more. FSI is also the parent bureau for the Department's Office of the Historian, which publishes the statutorily mandated documentary history of U.S. foreign policy in the "Foreign Relations of the United States" series, provides historical context as policy support for Department principals, and trains personnel about diplomatic history.

FSI's programs align with the FY 2022-2026 Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) goal to revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and infrastructure. FSI prepares Department personnel to confront growing and evolving challenges around the world and is committed to providing career-long learning opportunities to advance the interests of the American people and U.S. foreign policy goals. To meet these objectives, FSI training and historical resources must align with and support U.S. national security objectives and will be evaluated against four broad criteria: effectiveness, relevance, reach, and impact. In addition, to promote recruitment and retention of a workforce that is more representative of the American people, FSI will continue to emphasize diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA).

To fulfill its mission and to support the Secretary's vision to modernize American diplomacy, FSI developed a comprehensive strategic framework with three overarching goals: 1) strengthen the Department's culture of career-long learning and workforce support; 2) build the capacity of the Department's workforce to better address rapidly evolving global challenges and issues central to U.S. national security; and 3) leverage new technology, workforce systems, and practices to strengthen learning opportunities, historical transparency, and effectiveness of our workforce. This strategic framework is a road map to prepare individuals to design strategies for our foreign policy and national security, lead our diplomatic operations around the world, and produce outcomes that serve the best interests of our country.

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Current priorities include:

- Completing construction of a new building that will provide state-of-the-art facilities and reunite the entire School of Language Studies once again on FSI's main campus. Separately, FSI is working internally and collaborating with Department of State partners to build "classrooms of the future."
- Launching three new major training management systems. These information technology upgrades – replacing badly obsolete systems – will improve both our internal administrative processes and the student experience.
- Strengthening the substance and delivery of our training programs. FSI's policies and standards bring adult education best practices into curriculum development, training evaluation, and educational technology work, and result in a more experiential approach to training that increases the effectiveness, relevance, reach, and impact of our programs.
- Strengthening the Department's expertise in the areas that are at the forefront of global affairs, e.g., climate change, public health, global issues, commercial diplomacy, data analytics and visualization, cyber issues, and emerging technologies.
- Increasing historical context and lessons learned at every level with the development of training curricula for a wide range of U.S. diplomatic history, foreign policy, and institutional history courses and sessions.
- Expanding access to leadership coaching and launching a Department-wide assessment of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility training needs, with an eye to developing additional DEIA activities and/or courses.
- Reforming Department language testing to ensure testing reflects the real-world requirements of Foreign Service work and to keep pace with modern developments in applied linguistics and measurement.
- Strengthening the quality and reach of training provided to the State Department's 50,000 locally employed staff (LE staff), in alignment with recommendations from a comprehensive needs assessment conducted by FSI, in partnership with the Regional Training Centers and other stakeholders in the Department.

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- Increasing opportunities to boost resilience of the foreign affairs community at the individual, mission, and organizational levels. Resilience, or the ability to adapt in the face of adversity, is key to meeting 21st-century diplomacy demands.
- Assessing the lessons learned from our pivot to emergency virtual instruction, to determine which classes should remain virtual or hybrid and how we can further professionalize their content and delivery. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated our use of technology in the classroom, as we shifted 575 of our 613 course offerings – 94 percent – into the virtual world.

FSI's ability to achieve its objectives is hampered by limited staffing, budget, and the Department's focus on assignment-specific training. These constrain FSI's ability to effect wide-ranging change in the content, delivery, and impact of training. FSI needs the tools and resources to reach and engage stakeholders in a fast-accelerating, technology-driven landscape. In addition, FSI's campus is not currently equipped to host large-scale virtual training. FSI's success in pivoting to emergency remote instruction was based in large part on the willingness of staff to use their personal devices and home Wi-Fi to teach classes. Separately, a Department-wide shift in our learning culture, that would incentivize direct-line supervisors and employees to prioritize training, is needed to ensure employees avail themselves of short and long-term training opportunities.

To assure the success of this FBS, FSI will conduct strategic reviews to assess FSI's progress in meeting bureau goals and objectives, and identify roadblocks, course corrections, and next steps. With the support of leadership, FSI will continue to identify and meet evolving training requirements to support the Department's priorities and enhance the skills of U.S. foreign affairs professionals. FSI is proud to serve the U.S. Department of State and the entire foreign affairs community as a strategic catalyst for diplomatic excellence.

## 2. Bureau Strategic Framework

**Bureau Goal 1:** Strengthen the Department's culture of career-long learning and workforce support.

- **Bureau Objective 1.1:** Expand and facilitate access to training opportunities to support employees seeking needed skills and knowledge.
- **Bureau Objective 1.2:** Increase understanding, use, and impact of FSI training across the Department.
- **Bureau Objective 1.3:** Expand targeted learning opportunities to better equip and prepare the foreign affairs workforce for resilience and adaptability to career transitions.

**Bureau Goal 2:** Build the capacity of the Department's workforce to better address rapidly evolving global challenges and issues central to U.S. national security.

- **Bureau Objective 2.1:** Strengthen intra-departmental and interagency collaboration on training to enhance support of US foreign policy priorities.
- **Bureau Objective 2.2:** Increase the responsiveness of FSI programs to Department priorities, including DEIA and on-the-job demands to increase effectiveness, relevance, reach, and impact of FSI training.
- **Bureau Objective 2.3:** Increase Department capacity to manage change, address risk, respond to crises, and integrate historical and real-world perspectives to navigate complex and emerging challenges more effectively.

**Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Goal 1:** Leverage new technology, workforce systems, and practices to strengthen learning opportunities, historical transparency, and FSI's effectiveness.

- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 1.1:** Broaden access to training, expertise, and historical publications, such as the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) series.
- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 1.2:** Build and equip a dynamic (FSI) workforce to meet the Department's current and emerging needs.
- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 1.3:** Modernize and align business processes and systems across FSI components.



### 3. Bureau Goals and Objectives

**Bureau Goal 1:** Strengthen the Department's culture of career-long learning and workforce support.

- **Bureau Goal 1 Description:** A well-trained and well-prepared workforce is vital to U.S. national security. In early 2021, the White House directed select agencies, including the State Department, to prioritize efforts to revitalize the national security workforce through training and other professional development programs. FSI has a lead role to play in advancing this initiative by fostering a Department-wide culture of career-long learning. An essential first step is expanding the scope and reach of course offerings to ensure employees have access to appropriate training at every stage of their career; this expanded curriculum should be accompanied by new tools to help employees identify learning options to address areas for development. FSI must also work to increase understanding among customers, stakeholders, and partners of how training and continuous learning support the advancement of foreign policy goals. This should include working with Department leadership to incentivize training and underscore its importance across the institution. Finally, FSI must expand efforts to support the changing needs of the Department's workforce to improve retention, increase employee engagement, and nurture resilience in the face of crisis and the uncertainty that is endemic to careers in the foreign affairs sector.

**Bureau Objective 1.1:** Expand and facilitate access to training opportunities to support employees seeking needed skills and knowledge.

- **Bureau Objective 1.1 Justification and Linkages:** Training provides employees with the skills and knowledge required to participate fully in an effective and efficient workforce and to meet the needs of the Department. Currently, the Department offers employees at the entry through executive level internal and external training and professional development opportunities through the Foreign Service Institute and other bureaus. However, these various opportunities are not lashed up and there are no clear career long learning paths for employees. There are also gaps in training opportunities for employees at certain critical junctures in their career. This objective supports National Security Memorandum Section 3 and Joint Strategic Plan Objective 4.1 – Build and equip a diverse, resilient, and dynamic workforce.
- **Bureau Objective 1.1 Risk Considerations:** Without clear learning paths, not all employees know about or are given the opportunity to fully develop those essential skills and knowledge, creating uneven training throughout career spans. The Department risks failing to retain employees seeking to develop those skills and knowledge, as well as overall Department readiness and adaptability to change. Additionally, the lack of coordination among training opportunities across the Department and FSI means there are redundancies and missed opportunities to pool resources to address critical gaps. To meet this objective, FSI will partner with other bureaus to determine current internal and external training opportunities, as well as the skills and knowledge those opportunities are trying to address and to seek to develop a framework for career long learning pathways and identify those gaps that need to be addressed across the Department.

**Bureau Objective 1.2:** Increase understanding, use, and impact of FSI training across the Department.

- **Bureau Objective 1.2 Justification and Linkages:** FSI seeks to develop and implement a comprehensive communications strategy to increase stakeholder engagement to deliver on its mission strategic goals more effectively. Internally, FSI is increasing communications with Department employees and their supervisors to help them better understand that training not only improves overall job performance, but also contributes to career advancement. This includes efforts to increase awareness about available course offerings and where they fit into an employee's career-long education and training plan as well as how they contribute to employees' professional development. Externally, FSI continues to build its reputation as an industry and thought leader in the foreign affairs, education, and training community to foster new partnerships for collaboration, benchmarking, content amplification, and peer-to-peer engagement. Additionally, FSI continues to execute short and long-term initiatives to educate the public about the value of U.S. diplomacy and to highlight, as appropriate, FSI's training mission. This objective supports Joint Strategic Plan Objective 4.1 – Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.

- **Bureau Objective 1.2 Risk Considerations:** FSI's ability to effectively message about the value and benefits of training is dependent on top-level Department leadership's commitment to prioritizing continuous education and training for Department employees. While FSI can establish a framework for career-long learning paths and increase the number of programs offered, direct-line supervisors need to be incentivized to empower their employees to take advantage of short and long-term training opportunities, developmental rotations, domestic and overseas TDY opportunities, and details, as well as have mechanisms in place to fill gaps left behind due to staffing shortages. Furthermore, FSI must ensure that it has the tools and resources needed to reach and engage stakeholders in a fast-accelerating, technology-driven landscape. This includes developing the capacity to build new partnerships and activate networks in new industries as well as use targeted messaging and outreach strategies to reach new stakeholders.

**Bureau Objective 1.3:** Expand targeted learning opportunities to better equip and prepare the foreign affairs workforce for resilience and adaptability to career transitions.

- **Bureau Objective 1.3 Justification and Linkages:** The foreign affairs career comports requirements for personnel – such as frequent family relocations, postings to high-threat/high-stress posts, and occasional separation from family – that create uncertainty and stress for both the professional and the family. In addition, an “up or out” career system may induce uncertainty about the duration of the career and affect decisions about or commitment to the career. FSI will provide training and information to foreign affairs personnel and family members to facilitate preparation for overseas postings; develop and implement a curriculum and resources to help build personal resilience among Department personnel; and manage a retirement planning training program to help prepare personnel for separation from the career. Through such workforce support, FSI seeks to empower foreign affairs personnel to make informed decisions about next steps in their careers, mitigate uncertainty, and facilitate readiness for overseas assignments and engagement in their jobs. This objective supports Joint Strategic Plan Objective 4.1 – Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.

- **Bureau Objective 1.3 Risk Considerations:** The ability of FSI's transition, resilience, and retirement training and resources to positively impact the foreign affairs professional's retention or engagement on the job is bound by the constraints of the Foreign Service assignment system. Even with access to full information about a particular next assignment, personnel may feel that the conditions at their directed or chosen post are not adequate for their family's needs and may not mitigate unfavorable perceptions of assignment. Similarly, retirement training may provide personnel with valuable information to plan their retirement, but a separation that occurs prior to someone's preferred timeline may still affect an individual's outlook about the foreign affairs career. FSI's transition, resilience, and retirement training also is limited by its voluntary nature and dependence on an individual's awareness of the resources and willingness to invest the time to access them. Expanding outreach to key stakeholders both within the Department and among the interagency may widen awareness and access to these key FSI resources and result in greater impact on personnel's perceptions about the career.

**Bureau Goal 2:** Build the capacity of the Department's workforce to better address rapidly evolving global challenges and issues central to U.S. national security.

- **Bureau Goal 2 Description:** The profound and rapidly changing threats to global prosperity and security in the 21st century, combined with shifting U.S. foreign policy priorities, require the Department to constantly strengthen the training of its workforce to maintain U.S. competitive advantage. Department employees must also increasingly learn how to successfully manage challenges and navigate crises. To meet these demands, FSI's programs and core curricula must provide the skills our workforce needs to do their jobs effectively and efficiently and to successfully prepare for emerging threats, wherever they are located.

**Bureau Objective 2.1:** Strengthen intra-departmental and interagency collaboration on training to enhance support of US foreign policy priorities.

- **Bureau Objective 2.1 Justification and Linkages:** FSI will support the Department's mission by providing training that aligns with policy priorities in a timely manner. FSI units, leaders, and other staff will continue to build and sustain processes and relationships, both intra-departmental and interagency, to ensure training meets the needs of Department stakeholders, including regional and functional bureaus. FSI will address obstacles to collaboration and responsiveness, which may include staff capacity and internal processes. As new threats and opportunities emerge, and U.S. foreign policy priorities are redefined, strong intra-departmental and interagency channels of communication and collaboration will ensure that FSI is poised to respond rapidly and effectively with relevant training. This objective supports Joint Strategic Plan Objective 4.1 – Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.
- **Bureau Objective 2.1 Risk Considerations:** FSI maintains robust internal subject matter expertise and training expertise. However, FSI needs to stay up to date on policies being developed and implemented across the Department and the U.S. Government. This will require sufficient staff and resources to build and maintain ongoing collaboration. The ideal time to consider training implications is before new policy priorities are implemented. This is possible only with regular, structured engagement between FSI and functional and regional bureaus, as well as between FSI and the interagency. If courses lag behind policy priorities, FSI training is at risk of being outdated and less relevant, and other bureaus and agencies may try to fill the gap, perhaps inexpertly. Our workforce will be poorly equipped to execute our mission efficiently and effectively. FSI will mitigate this risk by prioritizing mechanisms of regular intra-department and interagency collaboration on emerging policy issues. FSI will further mitigate this risk by regularly seeking external feedback from key stakeholders on relevant relationships and processes.

**Bureau Objective 2.2:** Increase the responsiveness of FSI programs to Department priorities, including DEIA and on-the-job demands, to increase effectiveness, relevance, reach, and impact of FSI training.

- **Bureau Objective 2.2 Justification and Linkages:** In order to achieve the five JSP Goals, FSI programs, including training curricula and testing, must be timely and relevant to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for executing the Department's mission. To meet the job-specific needs of Department employees, content must be regularly updated to reflect current best practices in training, policy priorities, and realities (political, economic, and social contexts), as well as lessons learned from the past. To advance FSI's reach, FSI must also increase the number of programs/courses that are easily consumable, accessible, and ready for immediate use on-the-job. FSI curricula should also reflect the diversity of the American people and the Department's workforce to maximize its effectiveness.

To prepare individuals to serve the best interests of our country, the Department's training programs must continue to meet four broad criteria:

- **Effectiveness:** FSI training must support the foreign affairs community in achieving the knowledge, skills, and attitudes and workforce competencies it truly needs.
- **Relevance:** Training must be geared to the challenges faced by the foreign affairs workforce in the world today and tomorrow. The complexity of our world requires expertise across a broad range of issues, regions, and sectors. FSI training must be both broad and deep, with specific knowledge conveyed within a broader context, enabling employees to operate in a multidimensional and interdisciplinary fashion. Constant renewal of our content and methodology is essential.
- **Reach:** With a globally deployed Department workforce, FSI must deliver training when and where it is needed.



- **Impact:** Training should be structured so that it results in deep, nuanced understanding, and dramatically improved performance in the execution of U.S. foreign policy.

This objective supports Joint Strategic Plan objective 4.1 - Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.

- **Bureau Objective 2.2 Risk Considerations:** Lack of responsiveness will result in the risk of disconnect between training and the growing needs of Department employees at home and overseas. A related risk is that FSI could have timely, relevant training but deliver it in ways that leave Department employees unable to access it when they need it. An inability to reach the globally deployed workforce when and where it needs it may also cause over-reliance on commercially available generic and lower quality training, decrease training effectiveness and FSI training attendance, and negatively affect preparedness to serve the best interests of our country. To mitigate these risks, FSI shall prioritize new resources for curricular and assessment modernization; strengthen coordination with policy bureaus on training requirements; and develop new formats (e.g., just-in time, micro-training, etc.) to ensure training is accessible and attainable.

**Bureau Objective 2.3:** Increase Department capacity to manage change, address risk, respond to crises, and integrate historical and real-world perspectives to navigate complex and emerging challenges more effectively.

- **Bureau Objective 2.3 Justification and Linkages:** FSI will strengthen the workforce's capacity to manage change, address risks, and respond to crises by incorporating historical and real-world perspectives into training. An informed understanding of the past provides critical perspective on emerging challenges. Timely and relevant lessons-learned analysis transformed into immersive training modules not only provides employees with grounding in the factors that may influence and impact how emerging threats unfold but it also moves us from lessons noted to lessons learned, a refrain of many COVID-19 and Afghanistan after-action reviews. Creating training that is grounded in historical truth and geared towards real-world complexities and emerging threats will enable employees to address U.S interests in a multidimensional and interdisciplinary fashion. This addresses the JSP goals of renewing U.S. leadership to address global challenges and revitalizing the diplomatic and development workforce, and the objective of National Security Memo 3 to revitalize national security and foreign policy institutions.
- **Bureau Objective 2.3 Risk Considerations:** Potential lack of interagency and intra-departmental buy-in presents the biggest risk. Another potential impediment is Department employees not having the time or the interest in further training in these areas. Additionally, collecting, analyzing, and integrating these perspectives in coursework and training resources, on this scale, is a new activity and will require resources to achieve across the institute. FSI will mitigate these risks by increasing stakeholder collaboration and engagement, prioritizing new resources in this area, and marketing FSI's training and resources, particularly in forums that target influencers.

#### 4. Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Goal

**Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Goal 3:** Leverage new technology, workforce systems, and practices to strengthen learning opportunities, historical transparency, and FSI's effectiveness.

- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Goal 3 Description:** For FSI to fulfill the goals of this FBS, the supporting infrastructure must continue to evolve and improve. FSI will continue its efforts to use state-of-the-art technology in support of our instructors, students, and staff that enables our training. This technology should further FSI's capability to offer a variety of training that is always available to a global workforce. To meet existing and new requirements, FSI will hire and retain experts with broad, practical knowledge of how the Department works as well as deep subject matter expertise in foreign affairs, history, instructional design and delivery, and information technology. The adoption of a series of industry-standard training support systems and the enhancement of FSI Educational Policies and Standards will offer opportunities over the next few years. FSI will use these systems to their fullest capability to improve our service offerings, improve our curriculum, automate common processes, and ultimately provide better customer service. To the extent possible, FSI will reconsider existing practices and processes and ensure that they support FSI's goals.

**Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.1:** Broaden access to training, expertise, and historical publications, such as the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) series.

- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.1 Justification and Linkages:** To equip the Department's workforce to meet evolving global challenges, FSI must broaden access to training when and where needed, to experts across a range of specialties, and to historical publications, such as FRUS, that provide critical historical context. FSI training must be both broad and deep, enabling employees to operate in a multidimensional and interdisciplinary fashion. The complexity of our world requires that employees have ready access to experts with specialties across a wide range of policy issues and technical knowledge. FSI's programs for accomplishing these objectives align with the Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) goals to revitalize the diplomatic and development workforce and to renew U.S. leadership and mobilize coalitions to address the global challenges that have the greatest impact on Americans' security and well-being. This objective supports Joint Strategic Plan Objective 4.2 – Modernize IT and leverage data to inform decision-making and support mission delivery.
- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.1 Risk Considerations:** The risks associated with this objective include the inability to deliver instruction effectively due to loss of access to technology platforms and/or outdated IT systems and infrastructure. Interagency declassification challenges threaten FSI's ability to publish the FRUS series. Insufficient resources and swings in budget allocation impede change and development of programs responsive to Administration priorities as well as achievement of the Department's long-term training and historical transparency objectives. To mitigate these risks, FSI will apply lessons learned from the pandemic and leverage new training technologies to innovate training, expand reach and accessibility of experts and utilize resources strategically. FSI will leverage new technology and work with interagency stakeholders and the Department's Historical Advisory Committee to streamline declassification procedures.

**Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.2:** Build and equip a dynamic (FSI) workforce to meet the Department's current and emerging needs.

- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.2 Justification and Linkages:** Our globally deployed workforce expects continuous learning while remaining on the front lines of diplomacy. The demand for training continues to increase at a dramatic pace while resources remain static or decrease and the accelerating pace of global change is placing a premium on flexible and agile responses. Our Department must have the ability to respond quickly and effectively to evolving U.S. government priorities as well as to unexpected and unprecedented external events. FSI, therefore, needs to be able to respond as rapidly (or faster) to the ever-evolving priorities by speeding up hiring, rapidly identifying and implementing innovative solutions to facilitate effective training. To that end, this objective falls within the Joint Strategic Plan Objective 4.1 – Build and equip a diverse, inclusive, resilient, and dynamic workforce.
- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.2 Risk Considerations:** Not achieving this objective will result in reduced access to FSI training, including fewer course offerings and services, and decreased capacity to respond to ever-changing Department requirements. Without the tools, support, and opportunities required to succeed, expert staff will leave FSI for more promising jobs elsewhere. To mitigate, FSI will work with stakeholders to prioritize when and how to respond to new requirements and manage expectations accordingly. We will continue aligning use of existing positions strategically and use existing full-time employment (FTE) positions to address only the most pressing needs.

**Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.3:** Modernize and align business processes and systems across FSI components.

- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.3 Justification and Linkages:** Our ability to respond quickly and effectively to U.S. government priorities as well as to unexpected and unprecedented external events relies on technologies, business processes and systems. Having acquired and/or implemented state of the art IT systems, FSI must fully exploit these systems. Also, FSI must modernize and align FSI business processes across components to reduce siloing. FSI must retain and manage knowledge across the Institute. FSI intends to increase responsiveness, reduce redundancy, harmonize data practices, and increase FSI's ability to make data-driven decisions. This objective supports Joint Strategic Plan objective 4.2 – Modernize IT and leverage data to inform decision making and support mission delivery.
- **Bureau Cross-Cutting Management Objective 3.3 Risk Considerations:** Inability to modernize and align processes and systems across FSI components will hinder FSI from maximizing on its modernized IT investment, slow down response time, lead to inefficiencies, wasted time and money, and stymied staff and students. FSI will pursue an organizational commitment to communication, collaboration, change management and sharing of best practices. This involves preparing the organization for change, crafting a shared vision, developing a plan for the changes, embedding changes within FSI, and evaluating regularly.