

# Assessing Regional Proficiency

Tool to track service members' language and cultural abilities

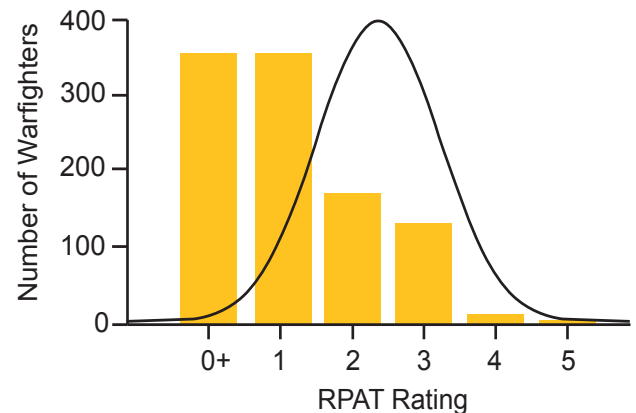
## Objective

To develop a standardized mathematical tool that enhances the ability of the Department of Defense (DoD) to determine and track the regional proficiency of its personnel, both active duty and reserve.

## Definition

RPAT

The **Regional Proficiency Assessment Tool (RPAT)** will measure a service member's experiences and abilities according to regional proficiency levels. Established and required by DoD Instruction 5160.70, these levels "represent an individual's awareness and understanding of the historical, political, cultural (including linguistic and religious), sociological (including demographic), economic, and geographic factors of a foreign country or specific global region."



The bar graph shows the hypothesized distribution of RPAT ratings for 1,000 warfighters, whereas the black curve shows an expected normal distribution.

## Expected Findings

We hypothesize that the RPAT will determine that relatively few warfighters have high levels of regional proficiency and many warfighters with low levels of regional proficiency. Therefore, we expect that the ratings in a military population will not be normally distributed. Individual warfighters may arrive at a given proficiency level through a wide range of assessed knowledge, skills, and abilities.

## Relevance

The DoD needs a more accurate and complete understanding of its capabilities in bringing regional expertise to existing and emerging operational and surge missions. The RPAT will provide the information necessary to that understanding, thus, enabling the DoD to meet current and future staff requirements. A baseline assessment of active and reserve personnel will enable the DoD to not only make timely and well-informed deployment decisions depending on the needs of a particular mission but also identify related personnel deficiencies. As a result, the DoD can work to build and maintain necessary regional proficiency capacity.

## Reports & Products

- *Preliminary Technical Report on the Development of the Regional Proficiency Assessment Tool* (September 2011)
- *RPAT poster presented at the Human Social Culture Behavior Focus Conference 2011* (February 2011)
- *RPAT paper presented at the 2011 Society for Cross Cultural Research Annual Meeting* (February 2011)

## For More Information

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