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CAPACITY BUILDING IN DIPLOMAT TRAINING AND RETRAINING: CURRENT CHALLENGES AND MODERNISATION STRATEGIES

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Abstract

The study aimed to identify best practices among US institutions in diplomatic staff development based on publicly available institutional materials from 2017-2026 and to formulate recommendations for improving this area in Uzbekistan. Research methods included content analysis of the George Washington University – Elliott School of International Affairs, US Department of State, American Foreign Service Association, The American Academy of Diplomacy, Council of American Ambassadors, Foreign Service Institute, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University. The results of the study identified several key institutions in the United States of America that train and retrain diplomatic personnel. Among them is the Department of State, which has published guidelines for the evaluation of foreign service professionals, entry into diplomatic service and professional advancement. This document can be used as a model for the implementation of similar regulations and best practices in the Central Asian region. In addition, the State Department's website offers a trial online test for a foreign service officer, which can be used to assess preliminary knowledge. Based on the systematisation of national experience, the authors noted that improving the training and retraining of diplomatic personnel requires the transformation of the legal framework of Uzbekistan. The results of the study can be used to formulate recommendations for improving existing training programmes for diplomats and other civil servants in Uzbekistan and other countries.

Keywords

Diplomatic service, Diplomat training, Retraining, Institutional capacity, Uzbekistan.

Resumo

O estudo teve como objetivo identificar as melhores práticas entre as instituições dos EUA no desenvolvimento do pessoal diplomático, com base em materiais institucionais disponíveis ao público entre 2017 e 2026, e formular recomendações para melhorar esta área no Uzbequistão. Os métodos de investigação incluíram a análise de conteúdo da Universidade George Washington – Escola Elliott de Relações Internacionais, do Departamento de Estado dos EUA, da Associação Americana do Serviço Diplomático, da Academia Americana de Diplomacia, do Conselho de Embaixadores Americanos, do Instituto do Serviço Diplomático e do Instituto para o Estudo da Diplomacia da Universidade de Georgetown. Os resultados do estudo identificaram várias instituições-chave nos Estados Unidos da América que formam e reciclam pessoal diplomático. Entre elas está o Departamento de Estado, que publicou diretrizes para a avaliação de profissionais do serviço diplomático, o ingresso no serviço diplomático e a progressão na carreira. Este documento pode ser utilizado como modelo para a implementação de regulamentos e melhores práticas semelhantes na região da Ásia Central.

Além disso, o site do Departamento de Estado disponibiliza um teste online de avaliação para um funcionário do serviço diplomático, que pode ser utilizado para avaliar os conhecimentos preliminares. Com base na sistematização da experiência nacional, os autores observaram que a melhoria da formação e reciclagem do pessoal diplomático requer a transformação do quadro jurídico do Uzbequistão. Os resultados do estudo podem ser utilizados para formular recomendações destinadas a melhorar os programas de formação existentes para diplomatas e outros funcionários públicos no Uzbequistão e noutros países.

Palavras-chave

Serviço diplomático, Formação de diplomatas, Reciclagem profissional, Capacidade institucional, Uzbequistão.

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Introduction

Diplomacy in the modern world is crucial for international security, the development of economic and mutually beneficial relations, and the promotion of intercultural dialogue to address global challenges. The effectiveness of diplomatic services depends on their capacity to respond to dynamic geopolitical changes, especially in the era of globalisation, the rapid development of information and communication technologies and other new types and forms of communication. The study of diplomatic training and retraining is also highly relevant due to growing geopolitical tensions and the need to develop adequate responses to modern challenges and threats.

In this study, diplomacy is considered as a peaceful instrument of foreign policy that enables states to protect national interests through negotiation, representation, communication and institutional coordination rather than coercive means.

The 21st century has fundamentally changed the global political arena, creating new professional demands for diplomacy as an established field of state practice (Karaman et al., 2026). The number and level of international conflicts, including direct clashes involving the use of armed forces, have increased. The emphasis on the distribution of power between global and regional actors in international relations has changed, as evidenced, for example, by the rapid economic rise of the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) (World Economic Forum, 2024). The role of public diplomacy has also increased significantly. At the same time, the line between public diplomacy as a way to achieve mutually beneficial cooperation and a form of disinformation as part of information warfare has been partly blurred (Krusch, 2024). Therefore, there is an urgent need to update and modernise approaches to the training of future diplomatic personnel. This is related to the fact that traditional methods of education with the study of international law, culture, diplomatic protocol and etiquette are no longer sufficient on their own to provide the knowledge and competencies required of highly qualified diplomats in the realities of interstate relations (Kobroń-Gąsiorowska, 2026; Zelenin, 2026).

The rise of multiculturalism and internationalisation in the modern world is another significant aspect of the current study. Effective diplomatic engagement is primarily a

matter of the specifics of different cultures and the ability to establish an optimal intercultural dialogue (Porkodi et al., 2025). Accordingly, training approaches should be designed to develop intercultural communication. Otherwise, without proper training in the aspects of global cultural processes, there is a risk of weakening a state's national interests. Based on the above, the issue of training and retraining of diplomats is one of the key aspects that can have an impact on the international positioning of national governments and the ability to respond most effectively to certain global challenges and threats. Therefore, the research and development of strategies for modernising the training and retraining of international relations specialists is not only a step towards enhancing the role and image of the state in the international arena but also a strong argument in favour of effective and secure development in the long term.

One of the most relevant aspects of the training of diplomatic personnel is the study of a foreign language. Rasuleva (2023) studied this issue in his research. The author addressed the Japanese language, as bilateral relations between the governments of Uzbekistan and Japan have been actively developing in recent years. In this regard, the author emphasised the importance of the study of the peculiarities of the business style of the Japanese language, a special style of speech construction, a certain simplicity of Japanese grammar, the presence of several types of writing and the specificity of the historical development of syntax as important elements in its study. The study also noted that language learning is an important aspect of building mutually beneficial and friendly relations. In the context of the above-mentioned Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-5117 "On measures to Raise to a Qualitatively New Level the Activities to Popularize the Study of Foreign Languages in the Republic of Uzbekistan" (2021), training of civil servants in foreign languages has been established. Given the regional peculiarities, negotiations on certain issues with the "Afghan side" are relevant. Chebotarev (2024) noted that with the Taliban coming to power in Afghanistan, many external actors in international relations, including the government of Uzbekistan, began to look for diplomatic options for cooperation or for establishing contacts. Diplomacy is also an important component in enhancing a state's international image. This issue was also explored by Mavlanov (2023). The author noted that the successful economic diplomacy of the Uzbek government can help attract global brands to the state's markets, supported by the professional potential of Uzbek diplomats.

Faizullaev (2022) also noted the importance of developing skills related to intercultural adaptability. This is relevant because social interaction along with analytical work can help an individual to develop their personal qualities and moral and cognitive abilities. Qurbonov (2024), studying the stages of development of public service in Uzbekistan noted that in 1990 the government of Uzbekistan used the experience and achievements of foreign countries in the course of creation of the system of training of leading personnel of the state. Knight (2022) noted that the traditional role of higher education, research and innovation is increasingly understood as participation in scholarship programmes, academic mobility, and bilateral research projects, but from the point of view of capacity building, the development of educational centres, joint international universities or thematic research networks should also be considered as cooperation between different institutions. Burns (2019) also highlighted the importance of correct training in all the subtleties of the diplomatic service.

The experience of the US government in conflict prevention through diplomacy was noted by Izzatullayev (2023). In particular, US digital diplomacy is prominent in preventing terrorist attacks and extremist threats in the Central Asian region, through which the sources of danger in the region are combated through mass media, the Internet and other information channels. The art of diplomatic service also involves a wide range of skills.

Based on the above, the study aimed to examine the experience of US government agencies and higher educational institutions in training diplomatic personnel and to identify elements that may be adapted to the system of diplomatic training and retraining in Uzbekistan. The objectives of the study were to examine diplomatic retraining activities in Uzbekistan and to systematise domestic experience in the field of diplomatic retraining.

Methodology

Information from the official web page of the National Museum of American Diplomacy was used to define the concept of diplomacy. The peculiarities of diplomatic training in the USA were investigated in the document of the US Department of State Foreign Service Specialist Assessment Information Guide and the publication Reasonable Accommodation Policy on test-taking assistance for candidates with disabilities. The online practice test for the Foreign Service Officer position and a list of recommended reading for completing the test from the US Department of State were also reviewed. In addition, aspects of the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), The American Academy of Diplomacy, the Council of American Ambassadors, the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at the Georgetown University, and the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training were examined. Special attention was paid to the CAA Annenberg Summer Fellowship Programme and the Public Diplomacy Fellowship. The Fulbright US Student Programme was also examined (National Museum of American Diplomacy, 2022; U.S. Department of State, 2023; 2026b; 2026d; The American Foreign Service Association, 2026; The American Academy of Diplomacy, 2026; Council of American Ambassadors, 2026a; 2026b; 2026c; Georgetown University, 2026c; Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, 2026; Institute of International Education, 2026).

The main analytical time frame of the study was 2017-2026, while earlier historical references were used only to contextualise the institutional development of diplomatic training. Additionally, the history of the founding of the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) in the United States was explored. Aspects of the structural units within FSI such as the School of Professional and Area Studies (SPAS), the School of Applied Information Technology and the Leadership and Management School were explored. The features of the Transition Center and language programmes within FSI were also investigated in detail. The Elliott School of International Affairs, educational programmes, study abroad opportunities, scholarship programmes, employment opportunities and the faculty of the Elliott School of International Affairs were investigated in the study of the experience of higher education institutions in the US in training diplomatic personnel (U.S. Department of State, 2017; 2021; 2025; 2026a; 2026c; 2026e; Elliott School of International Affairs, 2026a; 2026b; 2026c; External Scholarships, 2026).

The Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-330 "On Measures for systemic reform of the activities of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy" was addressed in an analysis of training and retraining of diplomatic staff in Uzbekistan. One of the diplomatic training courses was also studied. In addition to the above, the training programmes for civil servants within the Diplomatic Academy of Uzbekistan were examined (Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-330, 2021; Diplomatic Academy at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, 2026a; 2026b).

The analysis was conducted through a comparative review of institutional documents, training programmes, assessment guidelines and publicly available information on diplomatic education in the United States and Uzbekistan. The selected materials were examined according to the following criteria: institutional role, target audience, training content, assessment procedures, professional development mechanisms and relevance for the modernisation of diplomatic staff training. For structural clarity, the findings were grouped into four analytical blocks: historical mapping, the state of the art in diplomatic training, the framework of diplomacy as a peaceful foreign policy instrument, and lines of continuity and change in diplomatic practice as an established profession facing new challenges. This procedure made it possible to identify transferable practices and formulate recommendations for improving the training and retraining of diplomatic personnel in Uzbekistan.

Results

Historical mapping of diplomatic training and retraining

The historical mapping of diplomatic training shows that diplomacy has remained a long-established profession, but its institutional forms have changed in response to new geopolitical, technological and educational demands. In the United States, this continuity is reflected in the long-term development of professional diplomatic education, including FSI, AFSA and other institutions, where institutional experience demonstrates how traditional diplomatic functions have been adapted to contemporary professional requirements.

One of the most prestigious institutions in the United States that prepares students for a career in the Foreign Service is the George Washington University – Elliott School of International Affairs. The major advantage of this institution, besides many highly qualified and experienced faculty members, is its location, as Washington is home to many American, international and non-governmental organisations, which allows students to interact with international leaders who visit the university. Another advantage is the large number of degree programmes in international relations. These can be Asian Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, Latin American Studies, and general International Relations degrees (Elliott School of International Affairs, 2026a; 2026c).

The Elliott School of International Affairs also operates an online study abroad application system. Exchange programmes promote a better academic experience by enrolling students in 1 of 40 partner institutions of higher education around the world. This is particularly important for future diplomats in the context of learning the subtle cultural characteristics of other nations. With the right commitment, students can also receive

scholarships to study abroad. For instance, the Boren Scholarships provide USD 20,000 to US students to study in regions of the world that are critical to US interests, namely Africa, Asia, Eurasia, Latin America and the Middle East. Scholarship applicants themselves must motivate how their future academic or career goals abroad will contribute to US national security. Applicants and graduates can also consult the School's website for a guide to international affairs jobs. These can range from jobs within Washington DC, namely jobs with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Human Rights Watch (HRW), the World Bank Group, the US Department of Defence, the US Department of State, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Congressional Research Service. In terms of international employers, applicants and students may have the opportunity to work for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations (UN), Amnesty International, Habitat for Humanity and other international and non-governmental organisations (Elliott School of International Affairs, 2026a; 2026b; External Scholarships, 2026).

The School's faculty, comprising more than 350 highly qualified professors, lecturers, PhDs and even former diplomats, is also noteworthy. For instance, Professor Y.C. Bennett (2024), is a professorial lecturer at GWU Elliott School of International Affairs, and Deputy Chair of Global Issues at the FSI, who made a major contribution to the deeper understanding of this study by introducing the subject of Law and Diplomacy. Y.C. Bennett is a distinguished expert in international relations and East Asian studies. The professor's professional experience includes managing programmes at Princeton University's Paul and Marcia Wythes Center on Contemporary China. This expertise has contributed to cross-cultural understanding and to the analysis of U.S.-China relations in global governance and security. Professor Diego Abente Brun was formerly an assistant professor of political science in Ohio, and when Paraguay began its transition to democracy, Diego Abente Brun became a senator for two terms, and afterwards Minister of Justice and Ambassador. After returning to the US, Professor Diego Abente Brun was deputy to the International Forum for Democratic Studies at the National Endowment for Democracy and has also held several other high-ranking positions. Gordon Gray, Professor of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Affairs, was Deputy Commandant of the National War College, US Ambassador to Tunisia from 2009 to 2012, and served in Iraq as Senior Counsellor to the Ambassador. Adjunct Professor Alexander B. Hammer and Professor Shoko Hamano teach analyses of market conditions and economic developments in China and other emerging economies, as well as Japanese language courses, respectively. Benjamin D. Hopkins, senior associate dean of academic affairs, oversees the Elliott School's Academic Programms, Graduate Admissions, International Exchanges, and Student Services. Benjamin D. Hopkins is a historian of modern South Asia, specializing in the history of Afghanistan and British imperialism on the Indian subcontinent. An accomplished author and scholar, Hopkins's work, including Ruling the Savage Periphery, explores the legacies of frontier governance and the evolution of state systems with global historical impact. As a result, the faculty of the Elliott School of International Affairs includes numerous education professionals and former government officials with extensive experience both in the US and abroad (Elliott School of International Affairs, 2026a).

State of the art in diplomatic training and retraining

In August 2023, the U.S. Department of State published the Foreign Service Specialist Assessment Information Guide, one of the most important documents in the field of diplomatic competency assessment methods (U.S. Department of State, 2023). The purpose of the guide is to help candidates learn the selection process for the Foreign Service. The study can also help to identify aspects that need to be implemented at the national level to improve the performance of diplomatic personnel. There are a total of 8 possible career paths for Foreign Service professionals in the United States:

- administration;
- construction design;
- facility management;
- information technology;
- international information and English language programmes;
- medicine and healthcare;
- office management;
- law enforcement and security.

Based on this, different elements of the Foreign Service Professional Evaluation are used for each professional category. The assessment process is conducted in an online format that involves assessors from Washington, DC as well as subject matter experts from around the world. Before taking the test, a standard selection of rules is provided to assist in successful completion, namely: rest before the test, as tired candidates can be less attentive and focused; check internet connection speed, camera, sound and lighting; ensure quietness in the room; and prepare paper, a pen and photo ID in advance. Punctuality is also necessary, as this is an interview for an important position where employees wear business attire, and therefore proper appearance and manners are required (Kobroń-Gąsiorowska, 2021). In addition to the above, the Department of State has developed separate provisions to facilitate testing for candidates with disabilities, which is also an important part of the government's approach to ensuring a level playing field in selection for the civil service (U.S. Department of State, 2026d).

Beyond the procedural description, the guide identifies characteristics that reflect the skills, abilities and personal qualities of candidates applying for Foreign Service positions (U.S. Department of State, 2023). These include critical thinking, which consists of assessing what is appropriate, practical, and realistic in a given situation, weighing merits and demerits, making recommendations, formulating alternatives, and having an innovative and flexible mindset. Cultural adaptation – engaging and communicating with representatives of other cultures, value systems, and beliefs. Experience and motivation – having knowledge, experience and skills from previous jobs (and other activities) related to the Foreign Service, and motivation in joining the Foreign Service. Negotiation – recognising the advantages and disadvantages of agreements, contracts and other types of documents, a candidate's position or convincing others of the validity of this

position, using facts rather than emotions. Presentation skills – presenting information succinctly, adapting to changing situations, accurately conveying the meaning of messages, and using a communication style that is appropriate to the audience/culture of the negotiating partners (Bondarenko et al., 2022; Orlovskyi et al., 2023). Other important qualities are written communication, teamwork, planning and organisation, objectivity and honesty. The score obtained in the test is not presented as the result of direct competition between candidates, as candidates are notified. Candidates are evaluated on professional skills and abilities rather than competing with other applicants. Thus, the guide is relevant not only as a description of the selection procedure but also as a competency-based model for assessing diplomatic readiness.

For the modernisation of diplomatic qualification and retraining, the Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) (U.S. Department of State, 2026b) from the US Department of State can be used as a practical benchmarking tool. The practice test mimics the real exam in terms of questions, scoring, test duration, and administration, and the scores can indicate an approximate result that may be achieved in the official FSOT. The practice test includes sections on job knowledge, the ability to express yourself in English, and situational judgment. The only difference from the real FSOT test is the lack of an essay, as essay assessment is not financially feasible. Given that the test aims to select candidates specifically for the United States, its questions are entirely focused on US foreign and domestic policy and legislation. Accordingly, at the national level, the Republic of Uzbekistan may develop domestic tests based on internal policies and other national peculiarities.

In addition to the above, a reading list attributed to the US Department of State is available through the Path to Foreign Service platform and may be useful for candidates preparing for careers in the Foreign Service (Department of State Suggested FSOT Reading List, 2026). The reading materials on the site are useful for improving English language use, covering the history of the Foreign Service, foreign policy, US society and culture, world history and geography, economics, mathematics and statistics, management and leadership, and communication. One of the most valuable resources is the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST) (Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, 2026), which has collected more than 2,500 transcripts of interviews with former diplomats from the post-World War II era. The creation of such a resource at the national level or within the framework of regional cooperation in Central Asia could be a significant aspect of building diplomatic expertise in the region. Another resource is the book by S. Dorman (2011) dedicated to US diplomatic missions around the world, describing the intricacies of the diplomatic profession, real-life duty days, and the extraordinary challenges encountered, whether it be a natural disaster or a coup d'état.

FSI is another actor in the field of training and retraining of Foreign Service employees. It was established in 1947 as a professional development institute for employees of the US Department of State. FSI prioritises language learning, as it is mandatory for diplomats to take a language course in the country before appointment to the next mission abroad. SPAS emphasises regional studies to enable US diplomats to better promote US national interests abroad. It also trains professionals in consular, economic, commercial, management and several other programmes. Another area of retraining is

applied information technology training provided by the School of Applied Information Technology. The basis of this training is to ensure that all foreign affairs officers have the up-to-date knowledge and skills necessary to maintain complex computer programmes that are used both within the US and abroad. The Leadership and Management School provides leadership and critical incident management training. This is advanced and highly interactive training leading to future higher positions in the US Department of State. LMS also has customised crisis management training programmes for over 250 US diplomatic posts overseas. FSI also operates the School of Language Studies (SLS), which provides language training to US government employees. There are a total of five language training units to cover as many regions of the world as possible. These include East Asian, Pacific, European and African, Middle Eastern, Romance, Slavic, Eurasian, Central and South Asian languages. In total, more than 60 languages are offered (U.S. Department of State, 2021; 2025; 2026a; 2026c; 2026e).

Several other units within FSI provide services consisting of courses and programmes, seminars and briefings to meet the personal needs of US government employees and their families. There are also services related to counselling for diplomatic staff and their families to ensure high performance even under stress and threats. The provision of materials for researching the destination country, logistical information for a successful relocation and materials for the best cultural adaptation in the new environment are widespread. The Career Transition Centre, which organises retirement planning and job search activities, is also noteworthy (U.S. Department of State, 2017).

Based on the aforementioned, the training of diplomatic personnel is a complex process that requires strong institutional expertise, qualified teaching staff and sustained motivation among future diplomats. The challenges in diplomatic training were most succinctly described by retired Ambassador B.K. Bodine is now a Distinguished Professor in the Practice of Diplomacy and Director of the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University (America's Diplomats speaker…, 2019). The professor noted that the challenge is the sheer diversity of issues in the modern world. Climate change, populism and nativism, undemocratic governments, the role of gender, understanding the nature of corruption and kleptocracy are all relevant. Considering the range of problems that existed in the past, it seems that the problems and threats of today are many times more difficult to comprehend and no student will be well-versed in absolutely everything. The key is to develop the intellectual skills to make the connection between undemocratic populism and corruption, climate change and food shortages (Kravchenko et al., 2025).

In summary, it is also necessary to recognise which behaviours are acceptable and which are not. If a diplomat does something inappropriate, the risks that may follow must be assessed. When advising on policy changes, it is necessary to analyse how to do it most effectively and how to present it. In this context, the cultural policies of the host country and their meaning to own nation are also substantial. The core skill of a successful diplomat should be listening, while the main professional task is to understand the interlocutor’s position and persuasively defend national interests. That is, it is not so much the fact of listening to the interlocutor that is the most important aspect, but the fact of understanding the psychology of the person or the negotiating team opposite (Andrisano-Ruggieri et al., 2016; Efremov, 2026). Based on this it is also necessary to

concisely state the thoughts, as if every sentence can be the last, and therefore should carry the greatest informational value.

Another actor in diplomatic training in the US is the AFSA (American Foreign Service Association, 2026), whose founding date is 1924. Its membership, as a platform and trade union for American diplomats, offers many benefits to its members. For instance, one can get individual labour counselling, advice for people of retirement age, subscriptions or discounts on various academic journals and periodicals, and legal services. The comprehensive set of benefits, as well as the overall focus of AFSA's work to improve the US Foreign Service, reflects the US government's approach to providing the greatest benefits to those individuals who seek to strengthen the US position in the international arena.

The American Academy of Diplomacy, founded in 1983 to promote high standards of US diplomacy, is also dedicated to strengthening US diplomacy. The organisation hosts annual conferences with experts on various issues. In 2019, the Michigan Ambassadors Forum was established with the first topic being a discussion on the security situation in the Persian Gulf, and the last in 2023 on challenges in the Caribbean. The Nebraska Ambassadors Forum programme focused on the Arab Spring as early as 2013, and by 2024 there were discussions on US diplomacy in Southeast Asia. Likewise, the Texas Tech Ambassadors Forum moved from discussions of US interests in the Middle East and the US role in international affairs to coronavirus issues in 2021 and the overall future of global diplomacy in 2022. In addition to the above, a speaker ambassador programme was created in 2018 to educate students on the importance of the Foreign Service. As a result, the organisation aims to highlight the most important aspects of American diplomacy around the world and share the experience of practising diplomats with students who may become the new diplomatic generation of the United States in the future (The American Academy of Diplomacy, 2023; 2024; 2025a; 2025b).

The Council of American Ambassadors is also central to the development of American diplomacy. It is a non-profit and non-partisan organisation of non-career ambassadors from the United States, with more than 200 members. The foundation of the organisation is the support of US government agencies, sponsoring scholarships to train future diplomats, and hosting conferences on current issues in international relations. The organisation's website offers podcasts of leading foreign policy experts and scholars from New York and Washington, DC. For instance, as of autumn 2024, the most recently published discussion was on Iran, and the speakers were J. Logan – Director of Defence and Foreign Policy Studies at the Cato Institute, F. Nadimi – Senior Fellow at the Washington Institute and B.B. Talebu, a member of the staff of the Foundation for the Defence of Democracies. In terms of fellowship programmes, the CAA Annenberg Summer Fellowship Programme allows undergraduate students to come to Washington and participate in a mentoring program with former US Ambassadors and internships at the State Department. The Public Diplomacy Fellowship is rarer, as it is awarded to just two diplomats who have demonstrated the proper skills to commit to the ideals of public diplomacy. Selected diplomats receive training at the Centre for Public Diplomacy at the University of Southern California, attend sessions of the Council of American Ambassadors, and publish an article in The American Ambassadors Review (Council of American Ambassadors, 2026a; 2026b; 2026c).

In addition, Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy operates in the US. The institute combines theoretical and practical fields of study to provide quality teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In addition, the institution organises policy dialogues between experts in international relations on various global issues. Within the University there are members of the State Department and the US Armed Forces who are actively involved in research activities and teach undergraduate and graduate students. It also has a podcast named "Diplomatic Immunity", which features conversations with experts on the issues that diplomats and other US government officials face in the course of their duties as they make decisions to preserve US national interests and security around the world (Georgetown University, 2026a; 2026b; 2026c).

Among the popular organisations in the US that are dedicated to the comprehensive development of students is the Fulbright US Program. The Fulbright US Student Programme (Institute of International Education, 2026) promotes intercultural dialogue through academic and professional development. When receiving a grant, participants can collaborate, communicate and learn from people from the host country, which qualitatively promotes cultural exchange, and appreciation of other peoples' way of thinking.

Furthermore, in the context of the study of global experience in diplomatic training, the European Union's (EU) experience in establishing a European Diplomatic Academy in 2022 (EEAS Press Team, 2023) could be an example. Approximately 80% of the lecturers at the Academy are practitioners (including officials from the European External Action Service) and the remaining 20% are academics. Even though the young diplomats have already received relevant training and internships in European national agencies, the Academy aims to narrow the existing gap in knowledge about the EU, to understand the complex decision-making mechanisms and policies in the EU and develop other skills needed to best represent and defend the EU's interests in the world.

Diplomacy as a peaceful instrument of foreign policy and diplomatic capacity-building

Theoretically, diplomacy functions as a peaceful instrument of foreign policy because it enables states to manage disagreements through negotiation, mediation, dialogue and institutional communication rather than through coercion or military escalation. In this sense, diplomatic training is not only a professional preparation process but also a mechanism for strengthening the state's capacity to prevent conflicts, maintain international cooperation and protect national interests through peaceful means.

Identifying the role of diplomats at different ranks, the National Museum of American Diplomacy website states that regardless of the type of activity, diplomats have the same mission – to represent the interests and policies of the sending state (National Museum of American Diplomacy, 2022). Depending on the diplomatic rank, diplomats must coordinate ministries, manage, negotiate, and inform on political events. In addition, diplomats may be responsible for organising cultural, sporting and educational events, and consular officers may be responsible for assisting citizens abroad.

Based on domestic experience in the field of training and retraining of diplomatic personnel in Uzbekistan, diplomacy is crucial in establishing long-term and mutually beneficial relations with foreign partners. It is worth noting that the level of training of diplomats in the country requires further modernisation to respond more effectively to the current challenges of international politics. This is particularly true of the need to improve training programmes covering both basic diplomatic skills and specialised courses aimed at deepening knowledge of global political processes. In the context of Uzbekistan's integration into the global community, it is necessary to revise training methods based on relevant international experience, including American and European practices, where diplomatic training programmes actively support continuous and ongoing professional development. Emphasis should be devoted to the teaching of foreign languages, as this is one of the most important aspects of the diplomatic service. Lack of language skills significantly limits the ability to effectively negotiate and build international relations. Additionally, it is necessary to improve the regulatory framework governing the diplomatic services. Currently, there is a lack of legislative initiatives supporting modern requirements for diplomatic skills and competencies. The introduction of new standards and regulations would be a significant step in improving the quality of training and retraining of diplomatic personnel in Uzbekistan.

Lines of continuity and change in diplomatic training and retraining

In contrast to the historically established US model, Uzbekistan's diplomatic retraining framework is presented here as a more recent reform trajectory aimed at institutionalising professional preparation, retraining and transferable international practices.

Regarding the level of diplomatic training of professional staff in Uzbekistan, the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-330 (2022) was published only recently. It aims to improve the system of selection, training, retraining and further training to create a pool of diplomatic personnel. However, the introduction of successful international practices, in particular in America, should be emphasised. As an example, it is necessary to organise regular conferences in the form of podcasts with leading experts in the field of international relations, as is done within the framework of the American Academy of Diplomacy. This would allow for a more practical approach to diplomatic training, as well as provide students with access to best practices in international negotiations. The introduction of similar practices along the lines of AFSA will demonstrate the Uzbek government's commitment to maximising support for diplomatic personnel in terms of legal services, advice and other benefits, given that diplomats are the foundation for the development of comprehensive and long-term bilateral and multilateral partnerships. The establishment of the Diplomatic Academy envisaged several training directions. These included training top-level diplomats, selecting candidates and forming a reserve of managerial personnel. The Academy also planned master's-level training for employees with at least three years of work experience, retraining for senior regional and local officials, and short-term courses for staff going abroad. It was also planned to introduce joint educational programmes with leading foreign educational institutions, modern pedagogical information and communication technologies and other tools for improving the quality of diplomatic

education. Training and retraining programmes for diplomatic staff have a similar structure to similar programmes in the USA (Table 1).

Table 1. Programmes of the Diplomatic Academy of Uzbekistan

Scope	Objects of study	Duration
Foreign policy and foreign economic activity of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Civil servants	1 academic year
Fundamentals of foreign policy and foreign economic activity of Uzbekistan	Employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2 weeks
Fundamentals of foreign policy and foreign economic activity of Uzbekistan	Senior diplomats	2 weeks
Features of humanitarian cooperation between Uzbekistan and foreign countries at the stage of	Heads of international departments of higher education institutions	2 weeks
Business protocol and etiquette	Employees of the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Uzbekistan	18 hours
Preparation for diplomatic missions of Uzbekistan	The administrative and technical staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs going on a long-term business trip abroad	1 week
Main tasks of Uzbekistan's renewed foreign policy and foreign economic activity	Employees of the public administration and local authorities	2 weeks
Diplomatic protocol and etiquette. Negotiation process: organisational performance and efficiency	Representatives of business structures	2 weeks
Fundamentals of Uzbekistan's foreign policy Diplomatic protocol, etiquette and the negotiation process	Employees of the Ministry of Defence	2 weeks
Fundamentals of foreign policy and foreign economic activity of Uzbekistan	Rectors of higher education institutions of the Republic	2 weeks
Diplomatic protocol and etiquette. The negotiation process: organisational performance and efficiency	Bank employees	2 weeks

Source: compiled by the author based on Diplomatic Academy at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (2026b).

For instance, the Course "Preparation for Work in diplomatic missions of the Republic of Uzbekistan" (Diplomatic Academy at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, 2026a) for administrative and technical employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs going on a long-term business trip abroad introduces diplomatic staff and their family members to the specifics, basics of diplomatic protocol and etiquette of the host country, rules of residence in the country of destination and methods of dialogue with the local population. Similar training programmes also exist in the United States, as discussed earlier (U.S. Department of State, 2017).

Given the aforementioned, membership of organisations such as the Association of International Educators (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2026) and the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA) (2026) is essential to

raising the profile and visibility of the University of World Economics and Diplomacy on the world stage. Membership in NAFSA could provide access to a base of thousands of international educators around the world who are committed to improving education and academic exchange, as well as building the knowledge and skills required to succeed in today's modern, globalised world. Membership allows access to those resources needed to improve educational programs and develop specific skills to achieve the goals set in learning. Similarly, participation in APSIA can enable the University of World Economy and Diplomacy to become closer to global discussions, trainings and projects that shape contemporary understanding of international politics and diplomacy and thus raise its profile.

Discussion

The discussion below synthesises these four analytical lines and shows how diplomatic training preserves long-standing diplomatic functions while adapting to geopolitical, technological and institutional change. The study demonstrated that the art of diplomacy consists of representing the interests of one's state on the world stage through negotiation, communication, institutional coordination and the protection of citizens abroad. The importance of diplomacy was also highlighted by Hart and Siniver (2020), who analysed the growing problems of negotiation as the basis of diplomacy. It can also include the organisation of sporting, cultural and other types of events, and helping citizens abroad. Abdurahmanli (2021) mentioned other aspects of diplomacy, namely solving international problems without racial, religious or linguistic discrimination, while Qin (2020) added that diplomacy is primarily a relational practice. In addition, diplomatic management emphasises the importance of cultural sensitivity and building an effective communication model (Chukwu et al., 2023).

Within the US Department of State, there are individual regulations and guidelines for Foreign Service specialist evaluations, which aim to acquaint candidates with the job test before attempting to enter the service. The US government's experience in appointing candidates to the civil service is a landmark example of how government selection should work. However, the selection process must be transparent, otherwise it creates opportunities for favouritism and nepotism (Azzahara et al., 2024). On the contrary, Thakur (2021) highlighted the inappropriateness of India's civil service appointment policy, as bureaucrats of relatively low-quality end up in the most problematic regions. The US Department of State also provides an online FSOT test, which is identical to the one taken during interviews, except for the absence of an essay. Kopp and Naland (2021) noted that this testing has changed. In particular, the written test followed by the oral portion was modified because minority candidates failed the exams at a higher rate than whites in the United States. An important aspect of candidate selection is also that, despite political considerations, the most competent individuals should be involved in the selection process (Colonnelli et al., 2020; Konateh et al., 2023).

Another subject of diplomatic retraining in the United States is FSI. Its tasks include high-quality language training before a diplomat goes abroad, regional studies to promote national interests and information technology training. However, despite the abundance of subjects for retraining, Zeya and Finer (2020) noted that, given the budget of this

institution, which is mainly focused on language training, it is necessary to carefully allocate training resources. For instance, FSI trains seven times as many people in Spanish as there are positions requiring Spanish. The US State Department has more Portuguese speakers than Arabic and Chinese combined. FSI was established in 1947, although Rosenbaum (2023) noted that the history of diplomatic retraining in the United States dates to 1925 with the founding of FSI's predecessor, the Foreign Service School. The Elliott School of International Affairs also plays a significant role in training future diplomats. This advantage of the educational institution was also noted. The School's educational programmes consist not only of the theoretical foundations of the Foreign Service, but also focus on highly specialised studies in Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America – regions in which it is necessary to further protect US national interests. This institutional model demonstrates the importance of combining general diplomatic education with region-specific training. There is also an online application system for studying abroad within the school. The benefit of reducing bureaucracy when attempting to study abroad was noted by Wang et al. (2023), as in the 21st, the number of students studying abroad has largely increased. Raising awareness of the importance of diplomacy and strengthening diplomatic relations in Uzbekistan can be built through educational exchanges, the experience of which was studied by Khan et al. (2020).

In Uzbekistan, one of the main institutions of higher education that specialises in international relations is the University of World Economy and Diplomacy. The leadership of the institution already has experience in establishing international relations, as back in 2013, the first "Chinese Pavilion" in the region was established based on the University, as noted by Chunyan (2024).

A specialised institution in Uzbekistan that aims to retrain existing civil service personnel is the Diplomatic Academy at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, established in 2022. Training programmes include short or long-term courses, ranging from a few weeks to a year, and teach Uzbekistan's foreign policy and foreign economic activities, explain diplomatic protocol and etiquette, and the intricacies of the negotiation process. Additionally, Hasmin et al. (2020) noted the importance of developing leadership skills in civil servants. As a result, the training process at the Diplomatic Academy of Uzbekistan is similar to the way diplomatic personnel are trained at diplomatic institutions in the United States. Świderska-Włodarczyk (2022) highlighted the peculiarities of training diplomats in Poland, which corresponds to the experience of training diplomatic personnel in the United States. Decisions within the EU in improving approaches to the retraining of diplomatic staff are also noticeable in the 2020s, which is related to the foundation of the European Diplomatic Academy in 2022. Wessel and Szép (2023) added that the establishment of the European Diplomatic Academy did not happen in a vacuum, as in the last couple of years before its establishment, steps had been taken to address trust issues and understand the main threats to EU security. In the context of diplomatic system development in Uzbekistan, the full range of internal and external challenges and threats similarly need to be considered (Blank, 2020). However, unsuccessful attempts over the past two decades to develop quality legislation on the diplomatic service do not allow for the full integration of international best practices and the development of diplomatic service regulations that meet modern requirements and standards. Improved training and retraining of diplomats should also rely on combating bias and incomplete data in training, exploring cause and effect, inductive and deductive reasoning, pitting

genuine science against pseudoscience, and using reliable sources (Mauduit et al., 2020). Ideally, diplomatic graduates should be well-educated, and analytical, adhere to diplomatic protocol, be adept at writing, and have good negotiation and relationship-building skills (Pike and Kinsey, 2021).

As a result, the diversity of research on diplomatic training contributed to the findings of the study. Evidence of imbalanced budget allocation in language training at FSI (Zeya and Finer, 2020), an important aspect of the effective performance of diplomats in the international arena, was particularly beneficial to the study. Considering this, such challenges should be prioritised in countries that seek to improve the quality of their diplomatic activities. The comparison between Uzbekistan and the United States also showed that diplomatic retraining should combine institutional regulation, applied training, language preparation, professional mentoring and exposure to real diplomatic practice. It is also important that the emphasised EU experience in training diplomats can be considered as an additional reference point for strengthening the diplomatic corps in the Central Asian region.

Conclusions

The study determined that the US government has a long history of training and retraining diplomatic personnel. Thus, diplomacy is presented not as a newly emerging profession, but as an established field of state practice that now requires additional digital, intercultural, analytical and crisis-management competencies. This is attributed to the development of professional education for civil servants since at least the 1920s, and to this day, such institutions as FSI, structures within the Department of State, and the Elliott School of International Affairs continue to operate. These institutions provide comprehensive and professional education, which contributes to strengthening the role and status of the state's diplomatic corps and significantly increases its competence. To summarise, the formation and modernisation of the diplomatic training system in the US is an example of successful practice for other governments. The results of the study also demonstrated that the process of training and retraining of diplomats in the United States also involves such organisations and educational institutions as AFSA, American Academy of Diplomacy, Council of American Ambassadors and others, each of which provides a unique approach to training through training, scholarship programmes, and assistance in organising the work process. Participants in training programmes and initiatives gain not only knowledge but also practical skills to help participants navigate today's complex geopolitical environment. The exchange of experience, in turn, creates a solid foundation for the successful work of future diplomats. In addition, US institutions provide insight into how different governments can resolve conflicts and interact with each other.

The study also determined that in recent years Uzbekistan has continued the process of creating a quality system of training of professional staff for the civil service, according to Decree No. 330. Based on the experience, the study noted that the improvement of this area implies greater responsibility in line with the current challenges and threats of international politics. It is necessary to expand training programmes and include specialised diplomatic skills courses alongside traditional methods of training.

To improve the system of training and retraining of diplomats in Uzbekistan, it is necessary to introduce selected effective practices of the educational process, which are used in US institutions such as FSI, AFSA, the American Academy of Diplomacy, the Council of American Ambassadors, Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy and others. This requires the introduction of a full range of counselling, legal assistance and other benefits for diplomatic workers, considering the national peculiarities of Uzbekistan. It is also necessary to systematise experience in organising conferences with prominent diplomats from the Central Asian region, as well as inviting American colleagues. This will help in actualising knowledge on promoting Uzbek diplomacy on the world stage. The existing imbalance in the lack of legislative initiatives harms the effectiveness of the work of Uzbekistan's diplomatic missions, so based on the experience of institutions and the US government, the laws concerning the sphere of diplomatic service in Uzbekistan should be further developed and aligned with contemporary professional standards.

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