

# WASHINGTON STATE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM

## ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW

An interpreter who passes the written examination and attends the mandatory Court Interpreter Orientation is eligible to take the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), an interview conducted by Language Testing International (LTI).

This is a 30-40 minute telephonic interview between a tester who is certified by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the interpreter. The interview measures how well the interpreter speaks the language in which he/she is attempting to become registered. Each interview is digitally recorded. The recordings are the property of ACTFL/LTI and will not be shared with any outside party for any reason.

The OPI takes the form of a carefully structured conversation between a trained and certified interviewer and the person whose speaking proficiency is being assessed. The interview is interactive and continuously adapts to the speaking ability of the individual being tested. There is no script or prescribed set of questions; the topics discussed during the interview are based on the interests and experiences of the interviewer.

Through a series of personalized questions, the interviewer elicits from the test candidate examples of his/her ability to handle the communication tasks specified for each level of proficiency in order to establish a clear "floor" and "ceiling" of consistent functional ability. Often candidates are asked to take part in a role-play to prove linguistic functions not easily elicited through the conversational format.

Since the OPI is an assessment of functional speaking ability independent of any specific curriculum, it is irrelevant when, where, why and under what conditions the candidate acquired his/her speaking ability in the language.

### Administration of OPI

For exam security purposes, the Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts in Olympia is the test site for all Oral Proficiency Interviews.

On your scheduled test date, be sure to arrive 15 minutes prior to the time of your appointment. You will need two forms of ID to show the "test proctor." ***No telephonic interview will be conducted unless you present two forms of ID, one of which must be a United States government-issued photo ID; i.e., passport or driver's license.***

You may **not** bring pens, paper, dictionaries, recording devices, notes, or any other type of language references or aides into the testing area.

### OPI Fees

Official/Certified ACTFL OPI	\$143*
Missed Appointment/No Show	\$55*

*\*Fees established by LTI and are subject to change.*

*Note: Payment is due at the time of your appointment. Acceptable forms of payment are a money order or personal check. Please make checks or money orders payable to LTI.*

## **OPI Results**

The digitally recorded interview is rated by two ACTFL certified testers. If there is a variance in scores, the interview is rated by an arbitrator. The final rating will be reported to the Washington State Court Interpreter Program within two weeks of the interview.

## **Rescheduled or Missed Appointments**

In the event that an appointment needs to be rescheduled, please contact Tina Williamson at (360) 705-5279 immediately. There is no charge for appointments that are rescheduled prior to one day before the scheduled appointment. For missed appointments, there is a \$55 fee.

## **Retest Policy**

The ACTFL/LTI retest policy requires a minimum of 90 days between a test and a retest.

## **Preparing for an OPI**

The Washington State Court Interpreter Program has set the minimum proficiency level at Superior (see enclosed ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for Speaking). This means that during the interview you must demonstrate the ability to:

- Speak the standard form of the language without using English or slang.
- Speak the language formally, as well as informally, from both concrete and abstract perspectives.
- Speak the language with a high level of accuracy and no pattern of error.
- State and support a point of view in extended discourse on topics of personal and general interest.
- Speculate and hypothesize about possible causes, outcomes, and/or occurrences in extended discourse.

## **Test Tips**

When taking the OPI, listen carefully to the questions asked by the interviewer before answering. When answering, give as detailed a response as possible. Saying little to avoid making mistakes will not improve your rating. Remember that the Tester's questions are not arbitrary; they are carefully framed to elicit the above communication tasks and functions. Therefore, if the Tester asks you your opinion on a topic, you should state and support that opinion. If you are asked to elaborate about a hypothetical situation, be sure to do so in hypothetical and not concrete terms. The Tester will **NOT** be evaluating the correctness of the content of your answers, opinions, statements or conclusions, but will only be assessing how well you express yourself in the target language.

## **Unavailability of OPI Exams in a Given Language**

In rare circumstances, Language Testing International discontinues administration of OPI exams in certain languages due to unavailability of qualified raters. These changes may be temporary or permanent, and are outside the control of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). If this occurs for candidates who have passed the written exam, AOC staff will work to secure a foreign language speaking/comprehension exam from another accredited testing company so that the candidate(s) can complete the process of attaining the Registered credential.