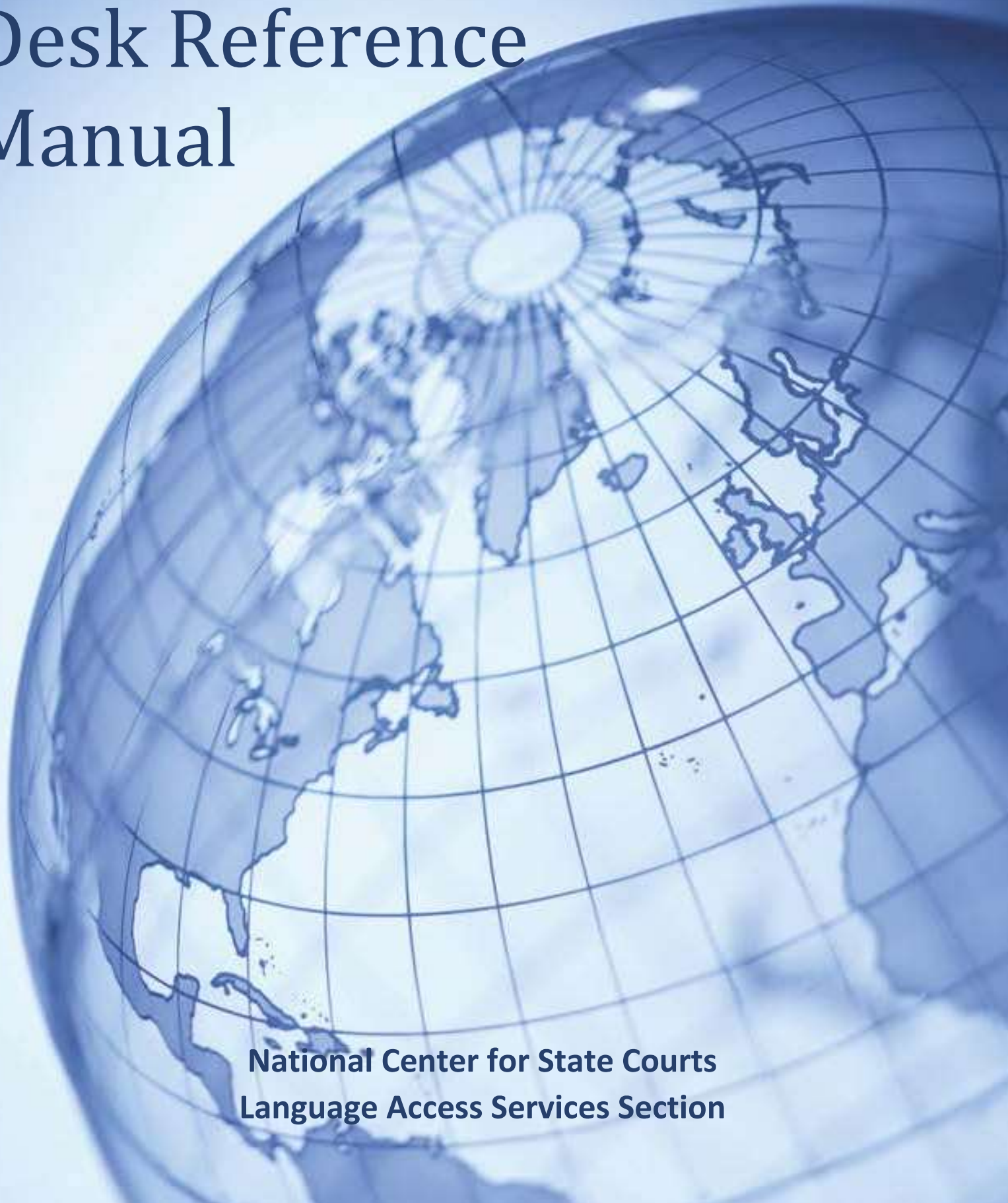*National Center for State Courts*

State Court Interpreter Testing

Desk Reference Manual

National Center for State Courts
Language Access Services Section

For additional information, please contact:

Language Access Services Section
National Center for State Courts
300 Newport Avenue
Williamsburg, VA 23185

This document is also available on: http://www.ncsc.org/Services-and-Experts/Areas-of-expertise/Language-access/Resources-for-Program-Managers.aspx

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National Center for State Courts

State Court Interpreter Testing

Desk Reference Manual

ATTENTION PROGRAM MANAGERS AND
TEST ADMINISTRATOR SUPERVISORS

The instructions provided in this manual should be followed very closely. All test Proctors who administer National Center for State Courts (NCSC) interpreter examinations must be thoroughly trained prior to administration of examinations. The program manager/test administrator supervisor is responsible for providing training opportunities and for ensuring that test administration does not deviate from the instructions contained herein. If the test administration deviates from these instructions, the test may be invalidated, especially if such administration procedure affects the validity and reliability of the test or the test experience.

National Center for State Courts
State Court Interpreter Testing
Desk Reference Manual

Contents

Purpose of this Manual

The Language Access Services Section (LASS) of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) provides state courts with resources to overcome language barriers and to ensure that individuals with limited English proficiency have access to core court functions. One of the fundamental roles of LASS is to regulate the development, administration and modification of court interpreting exams. These exams, written and oral, are made available to all NCSC members, and provide the building blocks for credentialing court interpreters. Each exam represents a significant investment in time and resources. (See Appendix A, Policy for the Development and Modification of Test Inventory.) Therefore, all state court systems must adhere to standardized policies and practices to ensure fairness in administration, and security of the testing instruments.

Most policies and standards in this Desk Reference Manual were originally written by the Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification's Technical Committee (later renamed the Consortium for Language Access in the Courts). The Technical Committee concerned itself with matters related to test development, test administration, test overview and rating, and statistical and psychometric analyses. It also considered, drafted, and recommended modifications to several operational and administrative manuals to educate and support language access Program Managers who test and credential court interpreters for the state courts. The former Technical Committee members are credited with much of the content and effectiveness of this manual.

In January of 2013, the Consortium for Language Access in the Courts transitioned to a new organizational structure. The Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) created the Language Access Advisory Committee (LAAC) which is a subcommittee of the COSCA/CCJ Access, Fairness, Public Trust and Confidence Committee. The former members of the Consortium (a representative from each state designated by the state court administrator to handle language access issues in the state) formed a Council of Language Access Coordinators (CLAC). Council members are tasked with providing a forum to exchange knowledge and information, enhance communication among language access program coordinators for state courts, and sponsor educational programs; promote professional development of its members; provide technical expertise to LAAC and NCSC/LASS; and assist LAAC in developing policy and procedural recommendations.

This Manual frames the responsibilities, tasks, and information that state court language access Program Managers (Program Managers) need to manage credentialing programs, handle confidential NCSC test materials, administer NCSC oral and written examinations, contract with Raters of oral examinations, and report scores and status to interpreter test candidates.

When instructions are given in this Manual that refer to policies that were adopted by Consortium members and are essential to the effectiveness of a testing program, the words "shall" and "must" are used (these refer most often to the handling of confidential materials, administering, and scoring written and oral examinations). When language access Program Managers have options to adopt recommended practices included in this Manual, the words "should" and "may" are used and the language in that section will clearly indicate that Program Managers may choose to adopt a recommended practice or not.

This Manual may include references to other documents and resources that are available on the web or have been provided to Program Managers, and with which Program Managers should be familiar, without going into the level of detail included in those other documents and resources, including, but not limited to:

- **Resources for developing, rating, and maintaining NCSC oral examinations:** It is important that Program Managers have a solid understanding of how the NCSC oral examinations are developed, the meaning and intent of scoring units, and the standards that Raters must follow in scoring oral exams, and therefore they are encouraged to read:

  o **Test Construction Manual** (available from LASS staff)

  o **The Test Writing Handbook** (available from LASS staff)

  o **Test Rating Manual** (available from LASS staff)

  o **Rater Results Forms** (available from LASS staff)

- **Resources for interpreter exam candidates:** The NCSC maintains documents designed to provide exam candidates with basic information about the NCSC exams, which can be customized for each state court program:

  o **Oral Exam Overview** (http://www.ncsc.org/Services-and-Experts/Areas-of-expertise/Language-access/Written-and-Oral-Exam-Resources.aspx)

  o **Written Exam Overview** (http://www.ncsc.org/Services-and-Experts/Areas-of-expertise/Language-access/Written-and-Oral-Exam-Resources.aspx)

Approved Lead Rater: An Approved Rater can earn the classification of Approved Lead Rater upon the completion of the following minimum requirements: (1) The Approved Rater has rated at least fifteen oral exams and has at least three years of experience as a Rater; (2) The Approved Rater has attended the face-to-face training within the past five years; and (3) The Approved Rater has submitted at least three recommendations, including:

- One recommendation from a Rating Supervisor with which he/she has directly worked;
- One recommendation from another Rater with which he/she has directly worked; and
- One recommendation from a state Program Manager or staff at the National Center for State Courts Language Access Services Section.[1]

Approved Rater: Raters who satisfactorily complete the application process, demonstrate reliable, timely and professional performance of rating (and, if applicable, test writing) duties, and complete training and continuing education requirements.

Candidate: A person that is seeking to become a credentialed court interpreter and is participating in a state court's interpreter testing program.

Credentialing: The process of designating court interpreters as qualified, certified, licensed, approved, registered, or otherwise proficient and capable through training and testing programs.

Language Access Program: A program created to increase access to the courts, its services, and activities by eliminating language barriers and increasing education, including, but not limited to, the following activities:

- Credentialing of court interpreters;
- Developing Language Assistance Plans (LAP) as defined by the Department of Justice;
- Providing interpreters for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing;
- Translating signage, forms, and vital documents;
- Assisting local courts with appropriate means to identify language needs;
- Developing and distributing judicial bench books and/or bench cards;
- Providing professional development training for interpreters, as well as training on language access for the judiciary, the Bar, and court personnel.

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[1] Policies for Rater Classification approved by the Language Access Advisory Committee (LAAC) in September 2013.

Language Service Providers: Those individuals and/or entities who provide competent court interpreting services, bilingual assistance, and translation services to LEP court users.

LASS: The Language Access Services Section of the National Center for State Courts.

LEP: Limited English Proficiency.

NCSC: National Center for State Courts.

Program Manager: The designated person(s) for a state court interpreting program that is (are) responsible for coordinating and organizing all court interpreter testing and credentialing.

Rating: Scoring of a candidate's performance on an oral exam.

Provisional Rater: Individuals who served on the test writing team for a test in a new language. They serve as Provisional Raters until such time as they are eligible to be classified as Approved Raters.

Rating Supervisor: Individuals who have extensive experience with the rating process from the following groups: Approved Lead Raters, LASS staff with extensive rating or rater supervision experience, and current or former Program Managers who have extensive rating or rater supervision experience.

Oral Exam/Test: The NCSC oral exam tests the minimal level of competency needed for court interpreting. The full exam includes sight translation (two portions), consecutive interpreting, and simultaneous interpreting. The abbreviated exam includes simultaneous interpreting and a test of English speaking skills.

Stimuli: Term used to refer to the official recordings of exam scripts that the candidates listen to and interpret when taking the oral exam. This should not be confused with the candidates' recordings, which are recordings of the candidates' interpretation of the test stimuli.

Test Administration Supervisor*:* This individual is responsible for oversight of the entire test administration process as outlined in these standards, including any required troubleshooting. Generally this will be NCSC LASS (Language Access Services Section) staff or the state court interpreter Program Manager (or his/her designee) in the state where the test is being administered. It is the responsibility of the Test Administration Supervisor to ensure that test security standards are maintained and that the tests are administered in accordance with the standards in this Manual.

Test Proctor*:* The person who will administer the oral exam. The Proctor has been trained to administer the test in the same fashion to all candidates. The Proctor will also escort the candidates to and from the testing room.

Test Registration Clerk: The person to whom candidates report when they appear for the test. The clerk secures identification, registers the candidate, provides them with necessary pre-test information, and maintains security in the waiting area.

Written Exam/Test: The NCSC written exam is used as a screening tool for interpreting candidates, and is designed to measure basic knowledge of English language, legal terminology, and application of professional interpreting standards.

Chapter 1	GENERAL PROGRAM PRINCIPLES

Section 1.1.   Standards of Practice for Language Access Programs

The following standards of practice illustrate ten key behavioral and professional aspirations that every state court language access program should strive to emulate:

A. **Clear Purpose:** Promote access to justice in courts and tribunals by eliminating language barriers for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP).

B. **Leadership:** Receive active support from top judicial and court administration leaders for the mission and goals of the language access program.

C. **Maintain Confidentiality:** Strictly adhere to the security, confidentiality, and test administration and rating standards articulated in this Manual.

D. **Credentialing of Language Service Providers:** Adopt clear standards and procedures for credentialing language service providers through the use of exams and accompanying policies and protocols as described in this Manual.

E. **Appointment of Credentialed Language Service Providers:** Adopt appropriate, legally binding rules, policies, and procedures to require the use of credentialed language service providers for all court proceedings, the translation of court documents, and the translation/transcription of audio and video recordings.

F. **Standards of Professional Conduct for Language Service Providers:** Adopt and enforce a Code of Professional Conduct for language service providers.

G. **Program Administration:** Employ highly competent professional individuals who efficiently and effectively oversee the delivery of language access services in accordance with established rules, policies, and procedures. Effective administration includes, but is not limited to: (1) administration of written and oral testing; (2) managing program budget and staff; (3) recruiting, hiring, and monitoring the performance of qualified language service providers; (4) collecting, analyzing and disseminating program data and information to court leaders and stakeholders; and (5) actively seeking alternative funding, including grants, to enhance program operations and services.

H. **Communication:** Maintain effective ongoing communication with: (1) judicial and court administration leaders regarding the needs and performance of the language access program; (2) stakeholders regarding the nature and performance of the program; and (3) Council of Language Access Coordinators through participation in its annual meeting, listserv discussions, and requests for information.

I. **Education of Language Services Users:** Educate judicial partners such as judges, mediators, arbitrators, court staff, attorneys and others about: (1) the need for and role

of language service providers in court proceedings; (2) the knowledge, skills, and abilities of a competent language service provider; (3) the policies, procedures, and rules for the appointment and use of credentialed language service providers in the courts; and (4) the techniques for effectively delivering services to persons facing language barriers in the courts. Educate persons with limited English proficiency about the availability, role, and use of language service providers in the courts.

J. **Professional Development for Language Service Providers:** Encourage professional development and support training programs for language service providers including, but not limited to, the development and maintenance of formal programs at institutions of higher education and collaboration with professional associations.

Section 1.2.   General Principles of Testing Programs

1.2.A. Standardization of Testing: When oral examinations are developed for use by the state courts, the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (developed jointly by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education) are used as a guide for test construction, evaluation, and documentation.

Educational and psychological testing and assessment are among the most important contributions of behavioral science to our society, providing fundamental and significant improvements over previous practices. There is extensive evidence documenting the effectiveness of well-constructed tests for uses supported by validity evidence. The proper use of tests can result in wiser decisions about individuals and programs than would be the case without their use and also can provide a route to broader and more equitable access to education and employment.[2]

According to the *Standards,* the usefulness and interpretability of test scores require that a test be administered and scored according to the developer's instructions. Only when directions to candidates, testing conditions, and scoring procedures follow the same detailed procedures can the test be said to be standardized. Without standardization, the accuracy and comparability of score interpretations would be reduced. Every candidate should have the same opportunity to demonstrate his/her competencies and no one should be given an unfair advantage.

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[2] *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing,* by American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education (American Educational Research Association) 1999.

For that reason, the instructions contained in this manual, as they pertain to the administration and scoring of tests and the security of test materials, <u>must</u> be carefully adhered to by any Program Manager.

1.2.B. General Oral Exam Testing Responsibilities: Program Managers are responsible for:

1.   Disseminating information to prospective court interpreters about the language access program, testing procedures, credentialing process, and testing schedules.
2.   Registering candidates for an examination and advising candidates of the date, time, and place of the examination well in advance of the test date.
3.   Handling all logistical arrangements, whether directly or indirectly through a contractor, for test locations, testing rooms, and testing conditions.
4.   Handling Proctor error and making decisions about significant error in the administration of the examination.
5.   Handling complaints from candidates about testing conditions or Proctor error.
6.   Adhering to the required standards for rating exam performances.[3]
7.   Handling feedback from Raters about administration problems.
8.   Auditing each examination script and making corrections to math and other errors.
9.   Deciding whether a rescore is appropriate, and processing the rescore.
10. Sending test results to candidates.

Section 1.3. Fixed Testing Elements That May Not Be Changed

There are certain elements of testing that are fixed in nature and may not be changed by a language access Program Manager. These elements include:

- **The content of any test** (including words or phrases);
- **The NCSC identification number of test candidates**[4];
- **The NCSC identification number of test Raters**;
- **The structure and sequence of any test form**:
  - **The written test**: This test consists of 135 items and must be administered in its entirety. While there are three sections of the test, no section may be administered by itself or viewed to be a self-sufficient test by itself.

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[3] Full requirements outlined in Chapter 7 of this Manual.
[4] Program managers may use an internal number for their internal processes, but the official ID number of the candidate is the number issued by the NCSC's Language Access Services Section.

o **The Oral Test**: Any of the following options are acceptable:
   ▪ **Full Test**: Administration of all three test sections at one time.
   ▪ **Two-Phase Test**: Administration of the simultaneous section as Phase One and, for candidates who qualify to move on, sight translation and consecutive as Phase Two.

o **Abbreviated Oral Test**: Any of the following options are acceptable, but are listed in the order of the former Technical Committee's recommendations:
   ▪ Administer an oral proficiency exam to measure English proficiency as Phase One and, for candidates who are eligible to continue, simultaneous as Phase Two.
   ▪ Administer the simultaneous interpreting exam as Phase One and, for candidates who are eligible to continue, an oral proficiency exam to measure English proficiency as Phase Two.
   ▪ Any oral proficiency exam to measure English proficiency that has been approved by the former Technical Committee may be used (see Table 1 below). State courts may ask NCSC to consider other tests, but the final determination will be based on the equivalency of the cut scores and will be made by NCSC.[5]

Table 1: Approved English Proficiency Tests

Name of English Proficiency Test	Proficiency Level Required
Versant English Test (VET)	49
Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) iBT Speaking Score	19
TOEFL Speaking Range	17-21
International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Spoken Total Score	5.4
IELTS Spoken Total Band	5
ALTA Language Services	8
Language Testing International (LTI)	Advanced Mid Level (ACTFL Scale)

• **Minimum Scores Required for Passing Tests**: No Program Manager may adopt any policy or practice that makes a test easier or lowers the minimum standards or cut scores.

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[5] In response to a court request, two additional vendors for English proficiency tests, ALTA Language Services and Language Testing International (LTI), were added in 2015. Both vendors provided equivalent cut scores for their individual English proficiency tests.

- o **Written Test**: The cut score is 80% over the three sections (i.e., total number of questions divided by total number of correctly-answered questions).
- o **Three-Section Oral Test**: The cut score is 70% on the simultaneous and consecutive sections of the oral test. The cut score on the sight translation section is also 70%, averaged between the two sight translation portions. A candidate may score no lower than 65% on either of the two sight translation portions.
- o **Abbreviated Oral Test**: The cut score is 70% on the simultaneous exam. The score on the English oral proficiency exam is reflected in Table 1 above, for each proficiency exam that has been approved to date.

- **Criteria for Reciprocity on the Oral Examination Score**: Every candidate who has met the following criteria is eligible for reciprocity on his/her oral examination scores[6]:
  - o Completed the entire test (three sections) within one testing cycle;
  - o Scored at least 70% on all three sections, including both parts of the sight translation section;
  - o Completed the test within one state;
  - o Did not take the same version of the exam more than two times; and
  - o Did not take the same version of a test form more than once in a period of ten months.

- **Carrying Over Scores on Test Sections**: For jurisdictions that "carry over" scores on sections of the exam, allowing candidates to retake only the section(s) he/she failed previously, an expiration date must be placed on the partial exam scores, not to exceed two years, after which the candidate must be required to take the whole examination again.

- **Limits on Retesting**: Candidate attempts on the oral court interpreter examinations will be tracked on a national basis by NCSC. To prevent overexposure to oral examination content, retesting limitations will be applied to all oral examination candidates taking NCSC oral examinations. The following version assignment policies and retesting limitations will be implemented for *all candidates taking NCSC oral court interpreter examinations:*

  a) NCSC staff will assign oral examination versions[7] prior to each test administration.

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[6] The state may have additional requirements for credentialing interpreters, but must recognize the candidate's oral exam scores as "passing," and not require the candidate to retake the oral examination.

[7] Beginning in January 2020, NCSC began using a "Mix and Match" approach for the Spanish oral exams (rather than using static numbered versions). For Spanish oral exams only, NCSC will be purposefully assigning a combination of four separate exam parts which will be identified by letters of the alphabet, e.g., "BCAB." For the

b) Candidates must be assigned different oral examination versions each time they take a full oral examination in languages in which multiple versions exist. The different versions of an oral examination will be assigned in a manner so as to ensure that candidates take all available versions of a full oral examination in a language before being exposed to a version previously administered to that candidate.[8] Only after all available oral examination versions have been administered to a candidate may the candidate then be given oral examination versions he/she has previously taken.

c) Candidates must wait a minimum of six (6) months before retaking the same version of an oral examination in a language in any state or territory. (This applies to candidates retaking oral examinations in languages with multiple versions, as well as candidates retaking oral examinations in languages with only one version.)

d) Retesting limitations will be applied to candidates retaking oral examinations because they did not pass during previous attempts, as well as passing candidates retaking oral examinations in order to achieve higher passing scores.

State programs *may* choose to require retesting wait times for candidates in that state that exceed the six-month wait time outlined above. State programs may also adopt other appropriate mechanisms to limit the frequency with which candidates retake an oral examination in that state.

Included below are a number of strategies suggested by state programs to limit candidate retesting. Note: *These strategies are not considered NCSC requirements or NCSC best practices and they may not be appropriate for all state programs.*

- **Optional Strategies to Limit Retesting** (as suggested by some state programs):

  o Implement a policy to require or encourage candidates to complete an additional training program (possibly including college coursework, if available) or a professional development plan before retesting.

  o Offer the test at a lower cost the first and/or second time a candidate registers, but graduate the fee schedule for subsequent registrations.

  o Implement a policy which requires candidates to complete the certification process in the state in which they originally tested.

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purposes of retesting limitations, these individual exam parts should be considered "versions" for Spanish oral exams.

[8] With the exception of Spanish (see footnote 7), candidates taking an oral examination in phases will be provided the different sections of the same examination version until they have taken all sections of that examination version. As noted in footnote 7, individual Spanish oral exam parts, such as A, B, or C will be considered "versions" under "Mix and Match" administration. Therefore, candidates must wait at least six months after taking a specific exam part or version in a specific mode in Spanish, such as Simultaneous A, before retaking this same exam part again.

o Implement a policy requiring candidates to begin the entire testing process in that state again if the candidate has not passed the oral exam after a pre-determined number of attempts. This may include retaking the written examination and/or attending orientation again.

Section 1.4. Recommended Practices for Program Managers

1.4.A. Recommended Interpreter Credentialing Levels: Court interpreting is a demanding profession for which few standard educational paths exist to reach competency or earn a degree. Interpreters who desire to be credentialed must seek out the few educational opportunities that exist, practice on their own, and expand their vocabulary in both languages to include both high-level (such as legal and other technical terms) and low-level (such as street slang, colloquialisms, and profanity) registers. For this and other reasons, qualified, credentialed interpreters are a scarce resource for most court systems.

Many courts have so few interpreting resources that they have designed "levels" of qualification leading up to "certified" and beyond. It is recommended that court systems adopt the following testing requirements for the below-listed credentialing levels:

- **Master Level**: Candidates who pass the oral examination with a score of 80 percent or more in all three sections of the examination, as well as in each part of the sight translation section.
- **Certified**: Candidates who pass the full or abbreviated oral examinations with a score of 70 percent or more in simultaneous and (for the full exam) consecutive[9]. The combined score of the two sight translation portions must be 70 percent or more. A candidate may not score lower than 65 percent on either of the two sight translation portions.
- **Conditionally Approved**: Candidates who attain an overall score of 55 percent or more without reaching the Certified or Master level, with a score of 50 percent or higher on each part of the sight translation section of the exam.
- **Registered**: This category should apply only to candidates who wish to work in a language for which there is no oral examination available. Candidates should attain a score of 80 percent or more on the written exam, attend the available orientation seminar, and pass tests of oral proficiency in English and the other language.

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[9] In accordance with Section 1.3, candidates must also achieve a minimum score on an approved English proficiency exam in order to pass the abbreviated oral exam.

1.4.B. Reciprocity Standards with Neighboring States: Program Managers should collaborate with Program Managers in neighboring states to agree upon reciprocity standards. One of the advantages of having multiple court systems using the same testing instruments should include issues of reciprocity across jurisdictional borders. However, states have adopted differing requirements (in addition to passing the written and oral examinations) for interpreters in those states to attain "certification."

Some jurisdictions administer the complete oral examination in one sitting to every candidate. Other jurisdictions administer the exam in one sitting on the first attempt, but will "carry over" passing scores on test sections, allowing the candidate to return and test only on the sections he/she failed previously. Yet, other jurisdictions adopted a bifurcated process for test administration, which consists of administering the simultaneous section of the exam first, and only if the candidate passes it will he/she be invited back to take the sight and consecutive sections of the examination.

If a jurisdiction bestows a level of qualification for a candidate who has only passed portions of the oral examination[10], that level of qualification should clearly define what sections of the exam were passed.

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[10] In languages for which a full three-section exam exists.

Chapter 2   SECURE ONLINE TRANSFER OF TEST MATERIALS

Section 2.1.   Security of Test Materials

The continued security of all test materials and instruments is of extreme importance. The cost of developing oral interpreting examinations is high. **If test materials or instruments are compromised, it forces the NCSC to "retire" that test and develop a replacement test**. Items for which the highest level of security is required include:

- Test scripts
- Prerecorded test stimuli
- Test scoring dictionaries
- Recorded candidate performances

Every Program Manager and trained test administrator should be made aware of the security concerns as they relate to NCSC examinations.

Every Program Manager that takes possession of any NCSC test materials, written or oral, must agree that **no test content be released in any form to anyone**. Only authorized personnel may be in possession of test scripts, scoring dictionaries, or test recordings. No person or organization should keep test materials on site without specific permission to do so.

Program Managers have the responsibility to protect the security of tests. When tests are used for purposes of selection, licensure, or educational accountability, the need for rigorous protection of test security is obvious. Any person in possession of or exposed to test materials must be required to sign an oath form, promising to uphold these standards.

- No test materials (including references to specific scoring units or items) may be included in email correspondence.

- The preferred method for transferring and exchanging test materials is via the NCSC's secure folders on Box.com. Shipping should only occur if using secure folders on Box.com is not a viable option.

- Passwords to secure sites must not be shared and should be protected and changed on some periodic basis.

- No test materials (test scripts, recordings, scoring dictionaries, etc.) may be shipped from one location to another unless the shipment is traceable via a shipper's tracking number.
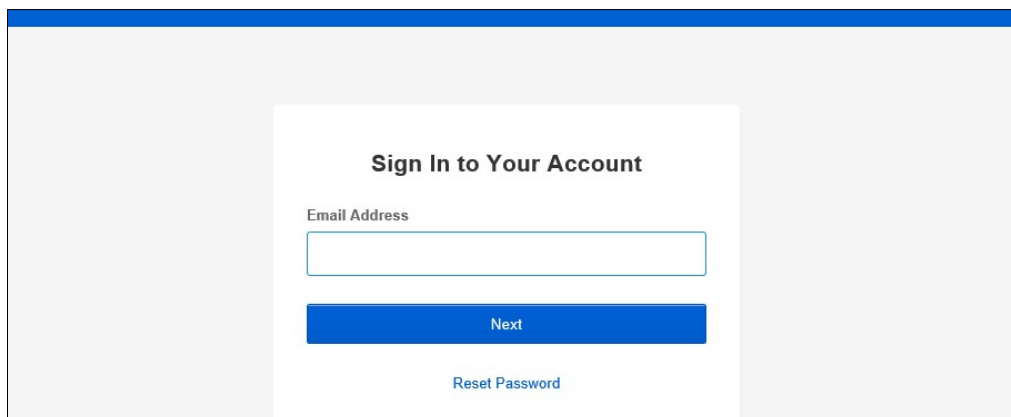
- Before shipping any test materials, the receiver of the materials must be contacted to ensure that the receiver's address is correct and that someone will be available to accept delivery of the shipment on the scheduled delivery day.

- Shipments should be timed so as not to be in a warehouse or mailroom over a weekend.

- Test content may never be released (orally or in writing) to candidates. After taking an exam, the only information that may be released to the candidates is their numeric scores.

If test materials are exposed or compromised, the Program Manager's state/territory may be liable for part or all of the cost of developing replacement materials.

Section 2.2   Purpose of the Secure NCSC Folders on Box.com

The NCSC provides access to secure folders on Box.com to ensure that Language Access Program Managers working with state courts have timely access to current testing materials needed for the administration of state court interpreter examinations. The NCSC's secure folders on Box.com will allow for the secure transfer of confidential testing materials and other candidate examination information with staff of the Language Access Services Section (LASS) of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) and with Raters of the oral examinations.

Sign In to Your Account

Email Address

[   ]

[Next]

Reset Password

Section 2.3.   Access to NCSC's Secure Folders on Box.com

Access to the NCSC's secure folders on Box.com will be limited to administrators (NCSC's IT and LASS staff), Program Managers (per state), Raters (by language), and identified subject matters experts (SMEs). The following illustrates specific access for each of the users:

Administrators: Administrators (NCSC's IT and LASS staff) have access to all NCSC folders on Box.com. Administrators serve as support to state Program Managers and Raters.

Program Manager: A Program Manager has access to the Program Manager's specific state folder and to the Members Only folder. Program Managers will also be provided with temporary access to designated rater folders while working with state court examination raters.

Rater: A Rater has access to his/her folder only and will be provided with temporary access to designated rating folders while rating exams for a state Program Manager.

SME: An SME has access to his/her folder or to a shared project folder only and will be provided with access to the designated folder(s) while working on an NCSC/LASS project.

Box.com Access: Access to the NCSC's secure folders on Box.com is provided via "invitations" that are initiated by LASS staff but emailed to you directly from Box.com. if you have never used Box.com before, your initial email invitation will ask you to set up a Box.com account in order to access the secure folder(s) to which you have been invited.

Once you have set up your Box.com account, you will be able to access your NCSC secure folder(s) on Box.com at any time by logging in at www.box.com with your email address and the password you created when you set up your Box.com account.

Section 2.4.   Agreements and Oaths

2.4.A. Box Oath: LASS staff will provide access to the NCSC's secure folders on Box.com once the **Box Oath for Program Managers and Court Staff** (Appendix B) has been signed and returned to LASS staff. Each state will have one state folder, and up to two Box.com accounts will be permitted per state. The first account will be for the Language Access Program Manager and the second account may be set up for a court interpreting staff person appointed by the Language Access Program Manager from that state.

2.4.B. Testing Materials Agreement and Oath: Before state Program Managers can access testing materials, they must sign and return to LASS staff a **Testing Materials Agreement and Oath** (Appendix H). In addition to state program managers, the Testing Materials Agreement and Oath must be signed by any state program coordinators or examination administrators (i.e., proctors) who will be exposed to test content.

2-Step Process:

To gain access to Box.com, sign and submit a **Box Oath for Program Managers and Court Staff**.

Next, to have access to test materials, sign and upload to SharePoint a **Testing Materials Agreement and Oath.**

Section 2.5.   Requesting Test Materials

2.5.A. Requesting Written Exam Materials: To obtain the written exam materials, the state Program Manager must make the request by e-mail to LASS staff. LASS will place the written exam testing materials in the state's secure folder on Box.com within two business days. Program Managers must have submitted both a Box Oath and a Testing Materials Agreement and Oath in order to access written exam materials.

2.5.B. Requesting Oral Exam Materials: To obtain the oral exam materials needed for court interpreter testing, a state Program Manager must send his/her candidate registration list via e-mail to identified LASS staff 21 business days prior to the test administration.[11] Upon receiving the test registration list, a test history will be performed using NCSC's database, and LASS staff will assign NCSC ID numbers and test versions to registered candidates. LASS staff will provide

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[11] It is recommended that Program Managers close exam registration at least 4 weeks prior to test administration, which will allow LASS the opportunity to assign candidate identification numbers and exam forms and to prepare necessary exam administration materials.

the Program Manager the candidates' records, including the NCSC ID numbers and test version assignments, via e-mail 72 hours after the registration list is received.

The uploading of test materials will occur at least 2 weeks prior to exam administration to allow Program Managers time to review the testing materials. Program Managers must have submitted both a Box Oath and a Testing Materials Agreement and Oath in order to access oral exam materials. Once the testing materials are uploaded into the state's folder on Box.com, the Program Manager will be notified via e-mail that the materials are available. Following notification, the state Program Manager will have a period of **48 hours** to access and download all materials. [12]

After the permitted 48 hours, the Program Manager will be notified that the materials have been removed from the folder by designated LASS staff.

**Table 3:   Timeframes for Oral Exam Candidate Check
and Posting of Test Materials on SharePoint**

Item	Program Managers send candidate list to NCSC	LASS assigns candidate ID numbers and test versions	LASS posts testing materials in state folder	LASS removes testing materials from state folder
Timeline	21 business days prior to test administration	72 hours upon receipt	2 weeks before test administration	48 hours after posting

Section 2.6.   Downloading Exam Materials

LASS Staff will provide Program Managers with the *Tip Sheet for Accessing NCSC's Secure Folders on Box.com.* This user's guide contains detailed, step-by-step instructions, as well as screen shots, to assist Program Managers in accessing the NCSC's secure folders on Box.com.

The state Program Manager will need to sign and submit the Testing Materials Agreement and Oath for Program Managers/Court Staff (Appendix H) **prior to being provided with any**

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[12] For first time users, a scheduled conference call will be set up with LASS staff to assist the Program Manager in obtaining the testing materials from the SharePoint site.

test materials in the state's assigned Box.com folder. The state will NOT have access to the testing materials until this agreement is signed and submitted to LASS staff.[13]

Please note that all test materials will need to be downloaded from the state's folder on Box.com prior to use. For the **written exam**, Program Managers will need to download only documents. For the **oral exam**, Program Managers will need to download both documents and audio files. The following options are available for downloading:

PDF Files:
- Store the materials on a USB drive or an isolated file on a computer

Audio/Electronic Files
- Store the audio materials on an MP3 player or an isolated file on a computer

To download the materials from their state folder on Box.com, Program Managers must assign a home folder on their computer, unless they chose the "downloads" folder to temporarily archive the materials. Wherever the Program Manager chooses to archive the materials, he/she must verify that the materials are removed completely from their computer and the secure site following test administration.[14]

Once the materials are downloaded and archived into a home folder on the Program Manager's computer, the Program Manager must copy the materials to MP3 players or to an isolated file on a computer, depending on their storage preparation method. The consecutive and simultaneous tracks must be downloaded into two separate folders on the MP3 player or two separate folders on a computer. It is advisable that the Program Managers have one MP3 player or one isolated file on a computer for consecutive and one MP3 player or an isolated file on a computer for simultaneous per testing room plus a back-up MP3 player or computer for each section.

The consecutive audio tracks will be labeled in order on the secure Box.com site. Depending on the Program Manager's computer software, the audio tracks may download in an order different than that on the secure Box.com site. It is highly advisable that the Program Manager verifies the numerical order of the consecutive tracks before performing the administration.

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[13] If any staff changes occur, the new state program manager or court staff member must complete another *Testing Materials Agreement and Oath for Program Manager/Court Staff* prior to accessing their folder.
[14] Please see instructions under the sections of Disposal of Testing Materials for the Written Exam, and for the Oral Exam.

Section 2.7.   Standard File Names

All users are required to use the standardized file names as shown in Table 4 when uploading documents to the SharePoint Site.

Table 4: Naming Conventions for Electronic Storage of Exam Materials

Written Exam	Naming Convention	Exam_Version_File Name
	Example	Written Exam _2_Questions
	Example	Written Exam _2_Answer Key
Oral Exam Script (not yet rated)	Naming Convention	Language_Version_File Name
	Example	Mandarin_2_Eng-FL Sight - Unmarked for Candidates
	Example	Vietnamese_3.1_Scoring Dictionary
Candidate Exam Recording (static exams, i.e. languages other than Spanish)	Naming Convention	Candidate ID_State_Language_Version_Examination Date
	Example (Full)	123_NA_Portuguese_1.1_Apr2019
	Example (Partial)	234_NA_Cantonese_2_Sim_Apr2019
Candidate Exam Recording (Spanish)	Naming Convention	Candidate ID_State_Language_Assigned Test Parts_Examination Date
	Example (Full)	123_NA_Spanish_BCAB_Jan2020
	Example (Partial)	234_NA_Spanish_StE_StS_Con_CAB_Jan2020
	Example (Partial)	345_NA_Spanish_Con_Sim_AB_Jan2020
Rated Oral Exam Script	Naming Convention	Candidate ID - Rater ID_State_Language_Version_File Name_ Examination Date
	Example	01234-1010_NA_Russian_2.1_Sim_Apr2019
	Example	23456-2020_NA_Korean 2.2_FL-Eng Sight_Apr2019

Chapter 3   PREPARING FOR THE WRITTEN EXAM

Section 3.1.   Introduction

These instructions apply to test administration of the multiple-choice written proficiency examination, which is comprised of 135 multiple-choice items, including general English language vocabulary and court-related items.

It is recommended that this examination be given to candidates in its entirety. Consistency in administration standards is important. If administered consistently, examination results can be reciprocal among state court interpreter credentialing programs, and can produce useful statistical information.

Section 3.2.   Staff Needed

At each testing site, there must be a **Test Administration Supervisor** who is responsible for oversight of the entire test administration process. Generally this will be a representative of the Administrative Office of the Courts in the state where the test is being administered. It is the responsibility of the Test Administration Supervisor to ensure that test security standards are maintained and that the tests are administered in accordance with these instructions and standards.

Depending upon the number of people being tested, a **Test Registration Clerk** might be present to assist the Test Administration Supervisor and the Proctor(s). The Test Registration Clerk is the person to whom candidates report when they appear for the test. The Clerk secures identification, registers the candidate and maintains security in the waiting area. The **Proctors** assist the Test Administration Supervisor in keeping order in the testing room, monitoring candidates to deter cheating, and collecting answer sheets, test parts, and envelopes. The Test Registration Clerk should maintain quiet among those who have completed the test and left the testing room, and ensure that they do not re-enter the testing room or talk among themselves about test content after the test is completed.

If more than ten candidates are participating in the test, it is strongly suggested that at least two individuals be present in the testing room: a Test Administration Supervisor to read the instructions and collect the test materials, and a Proctor or Proctors to help monitor the

candidates and guard against attempts at cheating and to assist the Test Administration Supervisor.

This section describes the preferred staffing levels for best practices. If the Program Manager cannot follow this recommendation exactly, then the *concepts* described herein should be understood and the best staffing levels possible should be developed. For example, if the Test Administration Supervisor must be alone in the testing room, an additional staff person should be readily available outside the testing room to assist with the activities described above.

Section 3.3.   Testing Materials

Staff at the Language Access Services Section (LASS) of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) will provide only the written examination materials and answer sheets to the state administering the examination upon request. The written exam and answer sheets will be provided via SharePoint unless otherwise specified. (See sections 2.5. and 2.6. for details on requesting and downloading written exam materials.)

Section 3.4.   Equipment and Supplies

Prior to the day of testing, **a packet of material should be compiled for each registered candidate**. The packet should include:
- The numbered written test, placed inside an identically numbered envelope and sealed.

- An Answer Sheet placed on top of the sealed envelope (Appendix D).

- An Agreement and Oath placed on top of the Answer Sheet (Appendix E).

Materials needed for the day of testing include the following:
- The **roster of candidates**, containing the name and identification number of each candidate registered to participate in the examination on this date.

- **Sealed envelopes containing the tests**. The tests and envelopes should be numbered sequentially and inventoried prior to and at the conclusion of the test to ensure that all copies of the test are accounted for when the testing is completed.

- An **Answer Sheet** for each candidate (Appendix D).

- **Agreement and Oath** forms for candidates (Appendix E).

- A minimum of two #2 **pencils** for each candidate.

- A **clock** for each testing room that can be seen by the candidates. If the test room does not have a wall clock, one should be brought in, if possible.

Section 3.5.   ADA and Other Special Accommodations

If a candidate has a disability recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or state law, the candidate may request special accommodation. The candidate should complete a Request for Special Accommodation form. (See sample form in Appendix G.) The disability must be described and the form should include a description of the type or kind of accommodation being requested. A statement from an appropriate professional, documenting the diagnosis or evaluation of the disability, should be attached to the form.

Please note that some states also elect to waive the written exam for visually - impaired individuals. It is recommended that Program Managers review all ADA documentation provided and consult with ADA coordinators at the Administrative Office of the Courts when making decisions about accommodations.

Chapter 4	ADMINISTERING THE WRITTEN EXAM

Section 4.1.   Test Security on Testing Day

Test Administrators and Proctors are required to safeguard all aspects of test security, to conduct the testing efficiently and quietly, to ensure that candidates are not disturbed, and to account for all test materials distributed. No one may view a test booklet at any time except for authorized test administration personnel, LASS staff, and the person taking the examination. Candidates may not review the test after the time has expired.

No one is permitted to take notes of any kind or copy or retain copies of the examination or any of its questions. All security rules are to be enforced without exception.

No dictionaries, reference books, briefcases, bags, totes, mobile devices, or other items should be taken into the testing room. (See list of prohibited items in Appendix F.) **The testing room must be supervised at all times.**

If a candidate asks to leave the testing room for any reason before the testing process is complete, all test materials must be accounted for and kept by the Test Administration Supervisor or a Proctor. If there is a Test Registration Clerk outside the testing room, the Registration Clerk should ensure that the candidate does not use the telephone or converse with other individuals before re-entering the testing room. Depending upon the location of the restrooms, the Registration Clerk might escort the candidate to the entry door of the restroom and then escort the candidate back to the entry door of the testing room. If no Registration Clerk or other personnel is readily available outside the testing room, then a Proctor should accompany the candidate outside the testing room. No more than one candidate should be permitted to leave the testing room at the same time. No extra time should be granted for anyone leaving the room, except when it is provided for under an approved ADA application. (See sample form in Appendix G.)

Every Test Administration Supervisor and Proctor is responsible for ensuring the security of the examination. All Proctors and Test Administrators should be alert and observant of any attempts to cheat during the examination and protect the security of the test material. Proctors may circulate throughout the room to monitor, but not disturb, the candidates. If Administrators and/or Proctors suspect that a candidate is cheating in any way, including giving or receiving assistance during the examination, communicating with others, retaining or copying examination questions, or using prohibited aids, then:

- If possible, two test personnel should witness the incident for verification purposes.

- Warn and/or move the candidate, advising the candidate that test irregularities will be reported to the state's interpreter Program Manager.

- Document incidents and descriptions of the incidents.

- If the candidate tries to copy or retain test examination material, confiscate the material and expel the candidate from the testing room.

If a candidate is disruptive, engages in clear or flagrant cheating, or attempts to copy questions or retain or record test materials, and is expelled from the testing room, the candidate should be advised that his or her examination will not be scored. Documentation of the expulsion and the reasons for it should be maintained for the state's official files.

Section 4.2.   Test Administration Instructions

After signing in with the Test Registration Clerk, candidates should proceed directly to the testing room. (Adjust this instruction, depending upon physical environment.) As candidates enter the testing room, the Test Administration Supervisor and/or Proctors should assign seats to the candidates.

Candidates should be seated in ways that discourage cheating. If the room is large enough, candidates should have an empty seat on each side and no one should be seated immediately behind or across from another candidate. Test Administration Supervisors and Proctors should randomly assign seats to individuals or remove chairs from the room in order to seat the candidates in the best fashion to avoid attempts at cheating. No eating, smoking, or drinking is permitted during the test process.
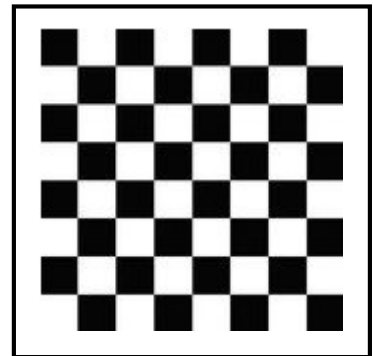
Once all the candidates are seated, the Test Administration Supervisor or Proctors should hand out one materials packet and two pencils to each candidate. An announcement should be made to the candidates, cautioning them not to open the envelope or begin filling in information on any of the documents. Once all of the packets have been distributed, the Test Administration Supervisor should note the number of packets distributed for inventory purposes.

At the scheduled time, the door should be closed. At that point, no late candidates should be admitted into the testing room. The Administrator should come to the front of the room and read verbatim:

Welcome to the written examination for court interpreters. My name is _____ _____, and I am the Test Administrator. I am reading these instructions so that each candidate receives the same instructions each time the examination is given. Please listen carefully.

On the top of your packet of materials is an Agreement and Oath Form. You should read that form now and sign and date the Oath. [pause, allowing time for candidates to perform that activity]

Once you have signed the Oath form, you may set that sheet aside.

Next, you will see the Answer Sheet. Please print your name and identification number on the lines provided for that information. Then, fill in today's date [state today's date] *and the Test Site* [state the city and state where the test is being administered]*. Please print clearly.   Do not make any extraneous marks on the Answer Sheets. Do you have any questions?*

While the candidates are filling in the information, the Supervisor and/or Proctors should walk around the room to monitor candidates and be available to answer questions. When all candidates are finished filling in the information, continue:

Now, please open the test envelope and remove the test. The directions for each section of the test are at the beginning of the section. You must read each set of directions carefully to be sure that you understand the instructions for that portion of the test. You will have two hours and fifteen minutes to complete the test.

The questions are multiple-choice. Read each question and decide which of the choices is the correct answer. Place a clear "X" on the letter that corresponds to your answer on the Answer Sheet. (For states that use scannable "bubble" sheets, adjust this instruction to read: *Completely fill in the bubble that corresponds to your answer. If the circle is not completely filled in, the scanner may not be able to read your response.*) *If you change your mind about an answer, be sure to erase the mark completely.*

No talking is allowed once the test begins and you may not look at another's Answer Sheet or test during the testing process. There are extra pencils if you find that you

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> *need one. Please raise your hand if you need an additional pencil and someone will bring it to you.*
>
> *If you finish the test before time is up, place the test, the Answer Sheet, and your signed Oath on top of the envelope, and quietly bring them to the front of the room. We will confirm that all materials have been turned in and will allow you to leave the room. Please proceed to the exit and leave the building as soon as you are released.*
>
> *If time is called before you finish the test, immediately place your test, Answer Sheet, and signed Oath on top of the envelope and bring the materials to the front of the room. Once I confirm that all materials have been turned in, you may leave the room. Please proceed to the exit and leave the building as soon as you are released.*
>
> *Do you have any questions?*
>
> *You have two hours and fifteen minutes. I will tell you when fifteen minutes remain. You may begin.* [Write down the time that you begin.]

Make note of the starting time and be sure that you know when two hours and fifteen minutes are up. At exactly two hours into the test, clearly and loudly announce:

> *You have fifteen minutes remaining.*

When the time has elapsed, if there are any candidates still working on the test, say:

> *Your time is up. Stop immediately. Please place the test, Answer Sheet, and Oath on top of the envelope, and bringing the materials with you, form a single file line. Once we confirm that all test materials have been turned in, you will be released to leave the testing room and exit the building.*

(If any candidate does not stop marking answers immediately, it is suggested that a Proctor or the Test Administrator Supervisor walk to the candidate's seat and take all test materials away.)

Make sure that the test, the Answer Sheet, the Oath form, and the envelope are collected from each candidate. All numbered envelopes and contents that were distributed must be accounted for. The materials should then be taken either to the test registration clerk or to another pre-determined location and secured. The Test Administration Supervisor (or appropriately designated personnel) must ensure that all test pages, Answer Sheets, Oaths and envelopes are accounted for and secured.

Section 4.3.   Grading the Tests

The Test Administration Supervisor (or appropriately designated personnel) should have the Answer Sheets corrected, either manually or by scanning the Answer Sheets. Please note that no grading or scoring services are offered by the NCSC for the written examination. The Answer Sheet provided is for manual scoring. State court interpreter Program Managers may elect to purchase scannable "bubble" score sheets, which can be electronically scanned. Others may elect to manually score the examinations. The cut score for passing is currently set at 80 percent. Therefore, if a candidate scores 108 or more of the items correctly, a passing score is achieved.

Section 4.4.   Managing Written Exam Test Results

The Test Administration Supervisor (or appropriately designated personnel) should formally advise candidates of the numeric results of their tests in writing. **The actual test content (questions and answers) must never be sent to the examinees.**

It is not necessary to send test results to the NCSC because LASS staff does not keep records of Written Examination results for state court interpreter programs. **Each state court interpreter Program Manager is responsible for keeping a record** of Written Examination candidates, whether candidates have taken the test previously, candidate scores, and any required follow up communication with candidates or reporting requirements within the state. If Program Managers track item-level data on candidates' performances on the exam, it is highly recommended to share such data with LASS staff.

Section 4.5.   Disposal of Written Exam Testing Materials

Following exam administration and grading, the Program Manager will have a period of **24 hours** to delete or destroy hard copies of the written exam materials that were provided by the LASS staff.

Paper and hard-copy records containing confidential information should be shredded and/or pulped, and disposed of properly.

Electronic, digital records and computer files containing confidential information should be permanently deleted. All contents of digital files must be deleted from secure shares and the desktop "trash" or "waste basket". Commercially available software applications may be needed to remove all data from records stored on a hard drive.

At the end of each year, NCSC will send the Program Manager a *Destruction of NCSC Test Materials Inventory and Oath* form to confirm that the state has disposed of test materials provided by NCSC for previous test administrations. Following the disposal of materials, the Program Manager must complete and sign the *Destruction of NCSC Test Materials Inventory and Oath* and *upload* this document to their state folder on SharePoint.

Chapter 5   PREPARING FOR THE ORAL EXAM

Section 5.1.   Introduction

The instructions contained in Chapters 5 and 6 apply to oral interpreting exam administration. Oral interpreting exams fall under two categories: three-part (full) oral tests, and abbreviated tests. **Three-part oral tests contain** the following components:

1. **Sight translation** of a document from English into the non-English language, and of a document in the non-English language into English;
2. **Consecutive interpreting** from English into the non-English language, and from the non-English language into English; *and*
3. **Simultaneous interpreting** from English into the non-English language.

The three-part oral test **may be administered** in any of the following manners:

1. **Full test**: Administration of all three test sections at one time.
2. **Two-phase test**: Administration of the simultaneous section as Phase One and, for candidates who qualify to move on, sight translation and consecutive as Phase Two.

The **abbreviated oral test** includes administration of an English proficiency exam, and administration of a **simultaneous interpreting** oral test from English into the non-English language. The abbreviated oral test does not include sight translation or consecutive interpreting.

When a state administers the oral examinations, the **state must also prepare for the rating** of the exams. Two approved Raters are required to score an oral examination, at least one of whom must be a Lead Rater. If no Lead Rater is available, the two Raters must work with a Rater Supervisor. **Program Managers shall only use the Raters on the list provided by NCSC and maintained in the Members' Only folder on SharePoint.** The primary roles and responsibilities of each group are outlined below:

1. Provide test materials.
2. After administering exam, send tests to be rated.

NCSC LASS → STATE PROGRAM MANAGERS → RATERS

4. After auditing exams, return results and test materials.
3. Return tests with candidates' results.
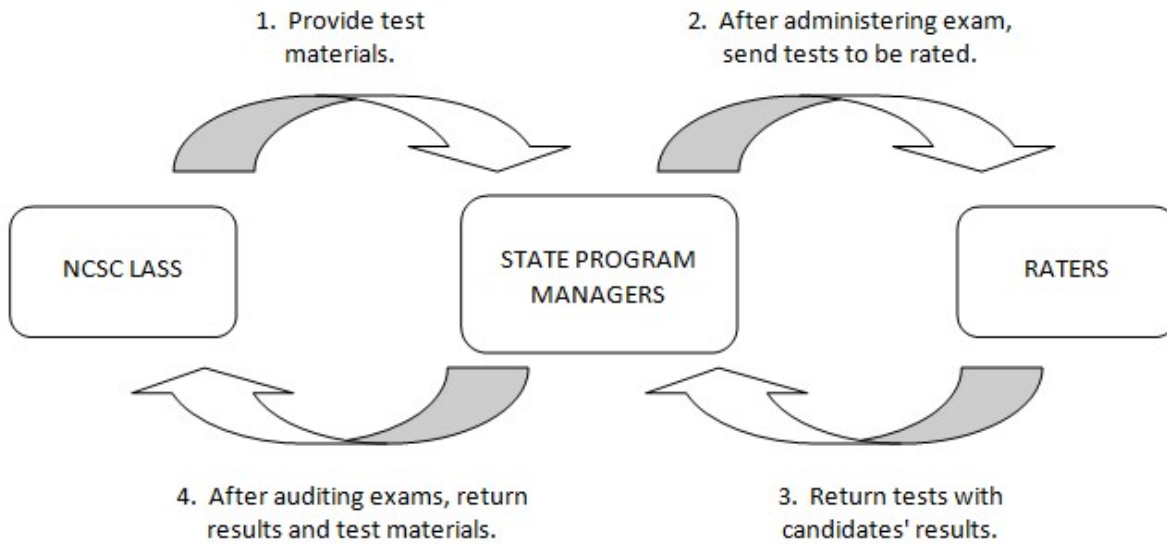
Section 5.2.   Formally Trained Testing Staff

Program Managers must ensure that any person who is going to administer oral examinations undergoes formal Proctor training. In each state there must be at least one person who has attended formal, in-person Proctor training (provided by staff at the NCSC or a designee[15]) on the standards for oral exam administration. That person is responsible for the supervision of the test administration processes and may train others within the state to administer examinations and is responsible for ensuring that all administration standards are strictly adhered to. However, if that person leaves his/her employment, then formal Proctor training must take place again before oral examinations may be administered.

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[15]In January 2020, NCSC issued a supplemental mandatory PowerPoint training for proctors of Spanish oral exams called "Administering New Spanish Court Interpreter Oral Exams – for Proctors." This supplemental training for Spanish oral exam administration does not replace the requirement for all Proctors to attend formal, in-person Proctor training (provided by staff at the NCSC or a designee) prior to administering NCSC oral examinations in any language.

Section 5.3.   Making Arrangements for Rating

Each state that administers NCSC oral exams is responsible for overseeing the rating of those exams, strictly pursuant to NCSC standards and policies. Although rating occurs *after* an exam has been administered, many steps must be taken in advance to ensure that tests are rated in a timely and efficient manner.

5.3.A. Assure Availability of Raters for Languages Tested*:* Consult the NCSC list of Approved Raters, as these are the only individuals who may rate oral exams. Two Raters must evaluate each candidate's performance, and one of the two Raters must be designated by the NCSC as an "Approved Lead" Rater. When contacting potential Raters, verification of their fees and availability during specific testing timelines is a must.

For several languages of the oral exams, there are few trained, Approved Raters. And from time to time, there can be fewer than two approved Raters available to assist with rating an oral exam. NCSC staff will announce when an insufficient number of Raters are available, asking Program Managers to postpone administration of that examination until additional Raters can be recruited and trained. However, it is important to **check** the NCSC's list of Approved Raters, available in the Members' Only folder on Box.com (see below) **to ensure that there is a sufficient number of Raters who are actively involved with rating exams prior to advertising the administration of the examination in that language.**

Raters are most commonly classified as "Approved Lead Raters" or "Approved Raters." In languages for which there is at least one lead rater, **the rating team must be comprised of at least one Lead Rater.** In languages for which there are only Approved Raters, the two Approved Raters must work under the guidance of a **Rating Supervisor** who may not speak the language of the two approved raters. Upon request, the NCSC staff will provide Program

Managers with current information on which languages require Rating Supervisors, and who meets the requirements of Rating Supervisor. (A Rating Supervisor is specifically trained to oversee the consensus process of oral exam rating. Program Managers may not serve in this capacity unless they have been specifically trained and authorized to do so.)

> **Rating teams must be comprised of either:**
>
> One lead rater and one approved rater (or two lead raters);
>
> - or -
>
> Two approved raters and one rating supervisor.

5.3.B. Develop Contracts/Agreements for Rating: Program Managers should work with their legal or contracts departments to develop contracts or agreements with Raters and get them out to Raters at least six weeks before exam administration. It is recommended that every contract include the deadline by which the program expects rating to be completed.

It is important to identify in advance what legal requirements a state may have for such agreements, so that any unique requirements can be discussed with the Raters well in advance of the exam administration. For example, some states require that the Rater officially register as a vendor with the state, which requires paying a separate vendor fee, and some states require a Rater to possess errors and omissions insurance. To avoid surprises and delays, it is advisable to know these details well in advance of exam administration and selection of Raters.

5.3.C. Standards for Security and Rating: While Approved Raters are trained on protocols and standards for exam security and rating, it is advisable to include such references in your contracts or agreements with Raters. Contracts or agreements must include assurances that the contents of the oral exam shall not be revealed to any unauthorized person through any means whatsoever, including but not limited to:

a. Disclosing the contents of an oral exam to an unauthorized person;

b. Retaining any documentation or recordings relating to the oral exam after completion of rating;

c. Sending or discussing exam materials via e-mail; or

d. Recording any portion of the oral exam.

Beginning in 2019, NCSC required raters to have a current signed copy of the NCSC's Non-Disclosure and Oath Agreement (Appendix I) on file with the NCSC in order to be listed on the NCSC's Rater Expert List to rate exams. However, consider including this security information in the Rater contract, and/or obtaining an additional signed copy of the NCSC's Non-Disclosure and Oath Agreement prior to the Rater receiving the exam materials.

Below is sample agreement language which may be useful. In all circumstances, it is recommended to confer with agency legal staff or contract writers to devise the language most appropriate for your agency's needs:

> *The contractor shall abide by rating and exam security protocols and standards set forth in the NCSC's Non-Disclosure Agreement and Oath form, as well as the Rating Manual maintained by the National Center for State Courts' Language Access Division, found at* http://www.ncsc.org/Services-and-Experts/Areas-of-expertise/Language-access/Written-and-Oral-Exam-Resources.aspx
>
> *The contractor shall not discuss with or allow access to the contents of any exam materials to anyone other than authorized Raters, Program Managers, or NCSC staff. Upon completion of exam rating, the contractor shall return all exam related materials to the [PROGRAM NAME]. Contractor may not retain any copies, paper or electronic, of any exam-related content.*

5.3.D. Plan for Exchange of Test Materials: It is recommended that planning for the exchange of test materials with the NCSC and Raters occur at least six weeks prior to exam administration. Exchange of exam materials can become a rather unexpectedly complex issue that requires active management. **The Program Manager will be responsible for providing the Raters with audio recordings of candidate performances and corresponding documentation, and Raters will return the same to the Program Manager.**

Utilization of the NCSC's secure folders on Box.com is the preferred method for Program Managers to both send to and receive materials from Raters. Advantages of the secure folders on Box.com include:

- Secure exchange of test materials,
- Elimination of shipping fees, and
- Fast download and upload of testing materials.

The key questions to identify in advance is (1) whether the Raters are willing to receive and send materials using the NCSC's secure folders on Box.com, and, if any Raters cannot use Box.com, who is responsible for paying the shipping fees *from* the Rater to the Program Manager's interpreter program office, and how that will be arranged.

In some cases, the Program Manager can provide the Rater with a Fed Ex or UPS account number. In such cases, the Raters simply use this account number to return materials and the interpreter program absorbs the expense. Some offices instead prefer to pre-print a mailing

label for the shipment, and send that to the Rater to use when returning the materials back to the interpreter Program Manager.

However, some offices are not as liberal with sharing account numbers. In such cases, Program Managers may request Raters to absorb the shipping cost, and ask them to include such extra expense in their per-exam or hourly fees. Contracts or agreements with Raters should specify that per-exam or hourly fees include shipping expenses, and provide specific directions on shipment methods.

5.3.E. Secure Raters: Exam registration typically closes at least four weeks prior to administration, since that is the timeframe needed for staff to assign NCSC identification numbers and exam forms to candidates and prepare necessary exam administration materials. By this time Program Managers are aware of the number of registered candidates and languages, and can begin finalizing arrangements with Raters.

Section 5.4.   Equipment and Supplies

5.4.A. Digital Recording: Program Managers historically recorded oral examination performances using tape recorders and cassette tapes. These days, state court interpreter Program Managers have transitioned to digital recorders. This transition has not only reduced costs to the NCSC and state court administration offices, but it has also improved the sound quality of candidates' recordings, enhanced the security of exam materials, and led to easier evaluation of examination performances.

Careful consideration should be given to the selection of digital recorders and the identification and documentation of the steps for using them. Consideration must also be given to:
- Naming conventions for test recording files;
- File backup and short-term storage on your computer;
- File transfer to Raters and/or LASS staff; and
- Proctor training.

5.4.B. Digital Recorder Selection: Top priority for selecting a digital recorder is sound quality. The quality of the recording must be good enough for Raters to clearly hear exam performances without echoes, hissing, or other white noise interference. However, other features and functions should meet individual needs.

Digital recorders, whether table-top models or hand-held models, should create .mp3 files, have easy-to-use record, stop, pause, and playback features and buttons, an easy-to-read display, ample memory (for example, 20 hours of recording time), removable memory and/or computer I/O connection (USB port) for easy file transfer, and a microphone and headphone input. Digital recorders may include a voice activation feature but if so, the feature should be turned off since activation can lag slightly, resulting in incomplete recordings. In addition, Proctors are expected to record the entire administration experience, including periods of silence. Other criteria for consideration depend upon program priorities; for example, price, ease of use, size of function buttons, size of LCD screen, weight, etc.

In many cases, separate microphones are not needed for digital recording. This will depend, however, on the model used, the size of the examination room, and the proximity of the candidate to the digital recorder.

5.4.C.   Materials and Supplies for Testing Day: Materials and supplies required on test day that will be provided by the LASS staff include[16]:

- Two pre-recordings of the consecutive and simultaneous examinations for each test room in each language being tested.

- Unmarked test scripts of all test sections for the Proctor and a set of unmarked sight translation documents for the candidate.

- Candidate Information Sheet (Appendix J for the Full Exam or Phase II; Appendix K for the Simultaneous Exam as Phase I; and Appendix L for the Abbreviated Exam) and General Questions and Answers (Appendix M). These should be distributed to candidates on the day of testing.

- Agreement and oath for candidates (Appendix N). Each candidate must sign an oath form on the day of testing.

- Test Proctor incident reports (see Section 6.5) to record any happenings that are unusual (Appendix O).

- Tent cards (Appendix P) for managing repetitions (see Section 6.6.B.) during the consecutive portion of the test. The tent cards should be printed on card stock.

Materials and supplies required on test day that are provided by the state/entity include:

- A digital recorder for each testing room, plus a backup digital recorder. If external microphones are not used, be sure that the built-in microphones are sensitive enough

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[16] Materials will be posted to the state folder on Box.com to ensure secure transmission.

to make a good quality recording and that the recorder is placed directly in front of the candidate.

• Audio playing device for each testing room, i.e. laptop or MP3 player, plus <u>at least</u> one back-up audio playing device.

• External speakers for each audio playing device, plus <u>at least</u> one set of back-up external speakers.

• Headset for each audio playing device, plus <u>at least</u> one back-up headset

• Water.

• Note pad and pen or pencils.

• Box of tissues, if possible.

• Manila file folders or envelopes for storing candidates' notes. (Or, destroy candidates' notes when the candidate is finished and leaves the test room.)

• Stop watch or other timing device.

At the conclusion of the administration, the Proctor will ensure that the candidate has the opportunity to hear himself/herself on the recording and confirm that it is a recording of his/her performance. Experience has shown that unless candidates affirmatively confirm the recording is actually of his/her performance, some will later challenge the scores on the test, asserting that the recording the Raters listened to must have been someone else's.

If a digital recorder is being used to record the performance, Program Managers should plan in advance how to gain the candidate's affirmation that the recording is of his/her performance. After the Proctor presses "stop" on the digital recorder at the conclusion of the examination, he/she then simply presses "play" to hear a playback of the candidate's recording, from the beginning. The Proctor should let the recording play until the candidate hears him/herself state the ID number for the record. At that point, the candidate should be asked to initial *something*, confirming the recording is of his/her performance. For example, if Program Managers prepare separate envelopes for each test candidate, the candidate might be asked to initial a label on the outside of the envelope. If the Program Manager prepares a list of candidates in the order that they will be recorded on the digital recorder (so that the list matches the folder numbers on the recorder), the candidate might be asked to initial next to his/her name on the list.

Section 5.5.   Testing Rooms

It is important that the testing room(s) provide an environment suitable to the administration of a professional examination for interpreters. Testing rooms should meet the following criteria:

The testing room should be large enough to contain a table and seating for two/three people. Thought should be given to acoustics, odors, external sounds, and privacy.

The following furniture should be available and fit comfortably, with walking room around the furniture:

- a table large enough to seat the candidate and Proctor across from each other, and large enough to accommodate a playing device, a recorder, a box of tissues, pads and pencils/pens, water, and any external microphones that may be used.

- a comfortable chair for the candidate and for the Proctor.

- additional chairs should be moved away from the table, especially on the candidate's side of the table.

A grounded, three-prong electrical outlet should be available near the table to plug in the recorder and the playing device. Battery-operated equipment is not recommended. However, if any battery-operated equipment is used, be sure that new batteries are inserted, or that internal batteries are fully charged, before the start of each testing day. If extension cords are used, be aware of safety issues and position the cords accordingly.

Lighting in the room should be adequate for reading of materials by the Proctor and taking notes and reading sight translations by the candidate. Watch for flickering fluorescent bulbs; they are annoying and strain the eyes. Confirm that the lighting is not installed as motion-detector lighting.

Curtains or blinds at the windows should be drawn to avoid distraction during the test. If that is impossible, seat the candidate with his/her back to the window. If artwork or decorative items are present in the room that may be distracting to the candidate, remove them or place them in an area that is out of sight or arrange the room so that the candidate is not facing those items when seated.

The temperature in the room should be comfortable and hot or cold air should not blow directly on the candidate or the Proctor. (Material provided to the candidate prior to the test date should have included a "tip" for the candidate to dress appropriately in case the air conditioning makes the room too cold.)

The testing room should be quiet and free from external distractions. If there are any telephones present in the testing room, the ringers should be turned to the "off" position or they should be unplugged. The Proctor must turn off any cell phones or other devices prior to administering any examinations. Signs should be posted on the doors, indicating "*Quiet please – testing in progress – do not disturb."* Avoid areas that have talking, laughing, or shouting

people outside the test room doors and check to be sure that no public announcement systems feed directly into the testing room except for emergency announcements (such as in the case of a fire or other life-threatening situation). Avoid testing in buildings that are located adjacent to railroad tracks, airports and flight paths, or construction sites.

Section 5.6.   Accessing and Reviewing Oral Exam Testing Materials

5.6.A.   Accessing and Downloading Test Materials: Program Managers shall follow sections 2.5 and 2.6 for accessing and downloading oral exam testing materials.

5.6.B.   Storage of Test Materials: While in possession of test documentation and pre-recorded test stimuli, the Program Manager must store physical copies and any devices containing stimuli or candidate recordings in a locked, secure location in the office. The items should not be kept in a briefcase or other easily transported container and should not be left in a vehicle.

5.6.C.   Careful Review of Test Materials: Well in advance of the testing date, Proctors should listen to the prerecorded consecutive and simultaneous stimuli, including backup recordings, all the way through, and compare them against the provided scripts.

5.6.D.   Practice Test Administration: Read all of Chapter 6 carefully and practice administering the test, especially the consecutive portion of the test, using the equipment that will be used during actual administration. This requires each Proctor to be knowledgeable about the equipment being used well in advance of testing.

Section 5.7.   English Proficiency Tests for the Abbreviated Exam

Abbreviated Exam Only

It is recommended that the English Proficiency Examination be administered first, followed by the simultaneous interpreting test.

The Versant English Test (VET) is available from Pearson at a cost of $39.95 (subject to change) at www.versanttest.com/products/english.jsp. The instructions for the administration of the VET are not repeated in this manual, since comprehensive instructions are included every time a state court interpreter program purchases a VET. The instructions include information about how to retrieve the score achieved by the candidate from an online site within hours of administering the proficiency exam.

Other English proficiency exams can be considered functionally equivalent to the Versant English Test and are listed below:

Name of English Proficiency Test	Proficiency Level Required
Versant English Test (VET)	49
Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) iBT Speaking Score	19
TOEFL Speaking Range	17-21
International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Spoken Total Score	5.4
IELTS Spoken Total Band	5
ALTA Language Services	8
Language Testing International (LTI)	Advanced Mid Level (ACTFL Scale)

If a state court interpreter Program Manager wishes to administer an alternate English proficiency examination which is included in the listing, the Program Manager must contact the vendor and make the arrangements for administration of that examination. The Program Manager should provide a results form, together with the raters' results form from the scoring of the simultaneous interpreting examination, so that the information can be captured in the NCSC's court interpreter testing database.

Any state court interpreter Program Manager who wishes to use an alternate English proficiency exam not included in the list should contact the NCSC's Language Access Services Section (LASS) to determine whether it is an equivalent exam and what the exam's cut score

would be. If the LASS staff cannot establish an appropriate cut score and advises the state that the test cannot yet be added to the list, the state may take steps to conduct independent research using accepted psychometric test equivalency analyses and submit the results of that research to the LASS. LASS staff will then evaluate the research and reach a determination. If they determine that an appropriate cut score has been substantiated, then that test and the corresponding cut score will be added to the list of acceptable examinations.[17] Otherwise the test cannot be used as part of the abbreviated model.

Once the candidate has participated in an English proficiency test and completed the simultaneous interpreting test, he/she has completed the Abbreviated Examination.

Section 5.8. ADA and Other Special Accommodations

If a candidate has a disability recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or state law, the candidate may request a special accommodation. The candidate should complete a Request for Special Accommodation form. (See sample form in Appendix Q.) The disability must be described and the form should include a description of the type or kind of accommodation being requested. A statement from an appropriate professional, documenting the diagnosis or evaluation of the disability, should be attached to the form.

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[17] In response to a court request, two additional vendors for English proficiency tests, ALTA Language Services and Language Testing International (LTI), were added in 2015. Both vendors provided equivalent cut scores for their individual English proficiency tests.

Chapter 6	ADMINISTERING THE ORAL EXAM

Section 6.1.   Introduction

The oral interpreting exams fall under two categories: full tests, and abbreviated tests. **Full tests** can either be administered in their entirety, or administered in-part. Full tests given in their entirety must be administered in the following order:

1.A.   **Sight translation** of a document from English into the non-English language;

1.B.   **Sight translation** of a document from the non-English language into English;

2.   **Consecutive interpreting** from English into the non-English language, and from the non-English language into English; *and*

3.   **Simultaneous interpreting** from English into the non-English language.

When only certain parts of the oral exam are administered, those parts must be delivered in the same order as shown above.

The **abbreviated oral test** includes administration of an English proficiency exam, and administration of a simultaneous interpreting oral test from English into the non-English language.

Section 6.2.   Preparing the Exam Room and Testing Equipment

These preparations must be completed at least 30 minutes before the first scheduled test of the day <u>and</u> before each candidate takes the oral test.

1. Ensure water is available. Make sure a note pad and pencils/pens are on the table in front of where the candidate will sit.

2. Check the equipment to make sure it is plugged in. Plug the headphones into the audio playing device. Put on the headphones and perform a sound quality check. Unplug headphones and perform a volume check on the audio playing device.

3. Perform a sound check on the digital recorder to make certain the recording level is properly set. If an external microphone is to be used, be sure that it is connected to the

digital recorder and is turned on and tested. Also make sure that the microphone is positioned to ensure that the candidate's voice will best be recorded -- for internal microphones, this may mean positioning the recorder between the Proctor and the candidate.

4.   For Consecutive only - position the tent cards on the table so that the top one faces the candidate.

Section 6.3.   Security on Testing Day

When candidates arrive for an examination, they should not be allowed to take briefcases, gym bags, coats, and other personal belongings into the testing room. (See list of prohibited items in Appendix F.) All candidates should be advised prior to the testing date not to bring any personal belongings with them. If the Administrator must leave the testing room empty (during a break or over the lunch hour), the room should be kept locked. Be aware of how many other individuals in the area have a key to the room and be sure they understand the importance of allowing no one to enter the testing room except for pre-approved personnel. If the administrator is uncomfortable with easy access to the testing room or does not have control over access to the room, he/she should take test scripts and stimuli with him/her.

The Test Administration Supervisor should account for all test materials at the end of each day of testing and remove them from the testing room(s). If administrators are staying in a hotel, the test materials should be kept in the Test Administration Supervisor's room in a secure location.

Section 6.4.   Test Administration Instructions

6.4.A. Overview: As described in Section 5.1., the NCSC oral test components may be administered in different combinations. Program Managers should select the appropriate instruction portions from this section to match their testing method. Please note that this section provides basic instructions for administering the exam. However, **all Proctors must carefully review and prepare for oral exam administration, as described in Sections 6.5. (Proctor Incident Reports), 6.6. (Special Proctor Instructions for the Consecutive Test) and 6.7. (Troubleshooting for Test Proctors) of this manual. In addition, proctors administering**

Spanish oral exams after January 1, 2020 must have completed the NCSC's supplemental training video on "Administering New Spanish Court Interpreter Oral Exams."

WARNING
Each Test Administrator Supervisor should review and edit this script with test Proctors to make it fit with the language and the test procedures being followed and equipment being used.

6.4.B. Instructions for Initiating the Testing Session (Applies to All Oral Tests):

1. Page the candidate in the waiting area, for example:

We are ready for Mr./Ms._____.

2. Introduce yourself by saying, for example:

My name is _____. I am the test Proctor and will escort you to the testing area. If you are ready, will you come with me please?

3. Show the candidate the list of prohibited items (Appendix F). Have the candidate place any personal belongings in a predetermined place as far as possible from where the test will take place. NOTE: The point here is to make sure that no prohibited items are taken into the testing room so that no secret audio or video recordings can be made (or photographs taken). Be alert to the possibility that the person may have a recording device or other prohibited item in his or her pocket. For example, a special request by a candidate to keep a jacket or coat is a signal to politely say "Yes, that will be ok, so long as we can check the pockets." Escort the candidate into the testing room.

4. Take the candidate to the testing area, indicate where the candidate should sit and ask the candidate to make her- or himself comfortable.

5. Do the following things:

- Immediately turn on the digital recorder so that everything said in the room is recorded.

- Check the sound-level indicators or lighted display on the digital recorder (if any) as you are reading to verify that the machine is recording.

- Ascertain that the "voice activation" feature, if any, is OFF.

6. The Proctor should read verbatim all of the "**bolded**" text which follows:

Welcome to the oral examination for [NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE] interpreters. I assume you're as ready as you can be, so let's begin! The test is being recorded, so please state your ID number for the record.

We have provided water for you. Please help yourself to more whenever you'd like. We have also provided you with a pad and pencils and pens to take notes if you like. Please feel free to use them at any time during the test.

The instructions I am reading to you are from a written script that is read word-for-word to each candidate. This ensures that every test candidate has the examination administered in the same way as every other candidate.

Please remember that your interpretation should be complete, accurate, and faithful to the language level, style, tone, and intent of the speaker. When you interpret, you must not edit, summarize, delete or add anything. If you give us synonyms of words or two versions of phrases, only the last thing you say will be counted.

Use appropriate grammar, vocabulary, and idioms. Do not mumble your words; if the Raters cannot understand what is being said, it will be counted against you. You may use words generally accepted in countries of the [NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE] -speaking world, as long as the usage can be found in a standard reference resource.

Do you have any questions about these instructions?

6.4.C. Sight Translation:

> *Administrator: We will begin with the sight translations. The first document is from English into [NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE].[18]*
>
> *You will have six minutes to both review and sight translate the entire page. You will be able to look at the text as you interpret. Please do not fold or write on the document, but you may make notes on the pad if you wish. You may start whenever you like. But, if you have not begun interpreting after two minutes, I will ask you to start. Do you have any questions?*

Hand candidate the English document.

> *You have six minutes, and I am starting the time now.*

Start the stop watch. If the candidate has not begun interpreting after two minutes, say:

> *You should begin now.*

Stop the candidate if he/she has not finished after six minutes. Take the document back from the candidate. Stop the stop watch.

> *This time you will go the other way, from [NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE] into English.[19] Again, please begin as soon as you like. I will tell you to begin if you do not start after two minutes.*

Hand candidate the **[NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE]** document.

Special Instructions for administration of CANTONESE/MANDARIN SIGHT TEST *[There are two types of characters in Cantonese and Mandarin, simplified and traditional, therefore:]*

> Read the following to Cantonese/Mandarin candidates: **We have the same text written in simplified characters and in traditional characters. Which would you prefer?**
>
> If the candidate seems confused, say: **You will have time to review the document before you begin translating. Would you like to see both versions**

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[18] Proctors administering the Arabic 1.1 (Egyptian) or Arabic 1.1 (Levantine) oral exam should also read the supplemental instructions for the Sight English-to-MSA section, as provided in the "Instructions for Arabic Tests 11-7-16" file included with the test materials.

[19] Proctors administering the Arabic 1.1 (Egyptian) or Arabic 1.1 (Levantine) oral exam should also read the supplemental instructions for the Sight MSA-to-English section, as provided in the "Instructions for Arabic Tests 11-7-16" file included with the test materials.

before you decide which you will use? If the candidate says "yes," hand him/her both documents for a few seconds and then ask for one of them to be handed back. Then continue as follows:

You have six minutes, and I am starting the time now.

Start the stop watch. If the candidate has not begun interpreting after two minutes, say:

You should begin now.

Stop the candidate if he/she has not finished after six minutes. Take the document back from the candidate. Stop the stop watch.

6.4.D. Consecutive Portion:

We will now go on to the consecutive portion of the exam. The consecutive portion is pre-recorded. I will begin the test by playing the first segment, which is a question or statement in English. Then I will pause the recording for you to interpret. When you have finished interpreting, I will play the next segment, which may be in [NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE] or in English. Then I will pause the recording for you to interpret. This will continue throughout the test, with you acting as the interpreter.[20]

There are many segments consisting of more than one sentence. Begin your interpretation when the speaker has finished speaking. You may not stop the speaker, or ask for clarification. You may ask for two repetitions. That is two repetitions during the entire consecutive portion of the exam, not two for each passage. These tent cards will give you a visual reminder of how many repetitions you have left.

From this list, confirm how many minutes are provided for the consecutive section of the exam:

Language	Minutes	Language	Minutes
Arabic 1.1 (Egyptian)	25	Laotian 1	22
Arabic 1.1 (Levantine)	25	Mandarin 1	25

[20] Proctors administering the Arabic 1.1 (Egyptian) or Arabic 1.1 (Levantine) oral exam should also read the supplemental instructions for the Consecutive section, as provided in the "Instructions for Arabic Tests 11-7-16" file included with the test materials.

Cantonese 1	22	Mandarin 2	23
Cantonese 2	23	Polish 1	22
Filipino (Tagalog) 1.1[21]	24	Polish 2	23
French 1.1	22	Portuguese 1.1	22
Haitian Creole 1	27	Russian 1.1	22
Haitian Creole 2	22	Russian 2.1	22
Haitian Creole 3	22	Spanish A[22]	22
Hmong 1	22	Spanish B	22
Ilocano 1	27	Spanish C	22
Khmer 1	25	Vietnamese 2.2	22
Korean 2.2	27	Vietnamese 3.1	22
Korean 3	24		

Say:

> *You have [___] minutes to complete this portion of the exam, so it's in your best interest to maintain the pace. You have a pad and pencils to take notes if you like. Please feel free to use them.*
>
> *Remember that you are interpreting from English into [NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE] and from [NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE] into English. The test begins immediately when I push the "play" button. The first thing you will hear is a statement or question in English. Begin interpreting as soon as the speaker has finished speaking.*
>
> *Do you have any questions?*
>
> *Then let's begin.*

Start the stop watch. Note that it is difficult to start playing the pre-recorded stimuli and start the stopwatch at *exactly* the same time. Proctors should feel comfortable pressing "play" for the pre-recorded stimuli first and starting the stopwatch immediately thereafter.

1. No consecutive test should be administered without several practice sessions to familiarize the test Proctor with the operation of the playing device, the recorder, and stop watch or other timing device.

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[21] The Filipino (Tagalog) 1.1 oral exam was released in July 2017 and replaced the Tagalog 1 oral exam.
[22] Beginning in January 2020, NCSC began using a "Mix and Match" approach for the Spanish oral exams (rather than using static numbered versions). As of January 2020, candidates will be assigned one of three Spanish Consecutive oral exam parts, i.e. A, B, or C.

2. Pay close attention by following the test script so that the .MP3 player is paused at exactly the right moment. *The test Proctor must be familiar with the English and [NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE] portions of the script even if he or she does not speak [NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE] if possible* .

3. The sections of the consecutive script are numbered in the left margin to match the audio tracks.

4. The proctor should press "play" and play each entire track; at the end of each track the proctor then should press "pause."

5. Please see the additional instructions in section 6.6. (Special Proctor Instructions for the Consecutive Test).

When time is up (or after the candidate has interpreted the last utterance), proctors should stop playing the pre-recorded stimuli. Note: If the candidate is in the middle of his/her interpretation when time is up, the proctor should allow the candidate to complete his/her interpretation and then say, "Time is up."

If the candidate has not run out of time, wait until the candidate has interpreted the last utterance and say:

> ***That's the end of the consecutive portion.***

Stop the stop watch.

> If Phase 2 (**sight and consecutive tests only**) is being administered, proceed past the simultaneous instructions. Begin reading with the words "**That's it!**"

> If the **full test** is being administered, proceed with these instructions for administering the simultaneous test:

6.4.E. Simultaneous:

> *I will now administer the simultaneous interpreting test. As you know, in simultaneous interpreting, you will interpret only from English into [NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE].[23]*
>
> *The test has been pre-recorded and you will listen to it through headphones while interpreting aloud so that your interpretation is recorded on the [digital/tape] recorder. Once the test begins, we are not permitted to stop the test. If you ask to have the test stopped, I will encourage you to continue. If you repeat your request to stop the test, I will stop the player and the remainder of the examination will be counted as incorrect.*
>
> *There is about one minute of introduction and instructions at the beginning of the recording to allow you to adjust the headphones and volume.*
>
> *Are you ready? (<u>Wait for an answer</u>)*

Point to the volume control and say:

> *Here is the volume control, please adjust it as necessary. You may do so at any time or as many times as you wish.*

Hand candidate the headphones and plug them into the media device. Wait for the candidate to adjust the headphones comfortably.

Play the recording.

After the simultaneous recording is over, stop the player, but leaving the recorder on. If he/she hasn't already done so, invite the candidate to remove the headphones and lay them on the table.

> *That's it! The test results should be ready by [DATE]. [STATE THE NAME OF THE APPROPRIATE PERSON] will mail a results report to you.*
>
> *Please leave any notes you have taken on the table in front of you.*
>
> *If you have any feedback about your test experience, we welcome your comments. Please send them to [NAME AND ADDRESS].*

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[23] Proctors administering the Arabic 1.1 (Egyptian) or Arabic 1.1 (Levantine) oral exam should also read the supplemental instructions for the Simultaneous section, as provided in the "Instructions for Arabic Tests 11-7-16" file included with the test materials.

Stop the recorder**.**

1. If you are using a **digital recorder**, press the "play" button. It will begin to play the last folder recorded, from the beginning. Play back the recording until you hear the candidate state his/her ID number. Have the candidate initial in the appropriate place (determined by the Program Manager prior to testing).

2. Have the candidate retrieve her or his belongings, ensure that the candidate left his/her notes on the table, and escort the candidate to the outside exit door.

3. Return to the test room, record any unusual happenings on the Test Proctor's Incident Report. (For example, if outside noises were loud enough to distract the candidate, or if there is any mishap with operating the equipment during the test, write the circumstances on the report form and turn it in to the Test Administrator Supervisor.)

4. Repeat *Room Preparation* Instructions.

5. Collect the candidate's notes and put them in the folder for later destruction or destroy them immediately.

6. Greet the next candidate.

> IF **DIGITAL RECORDERS** ARE BEING USED, BE CERTAIN THAT THE FOLDER OR AUDIO FILE NUMBER ON THE **DIGITAL RECORDER** IS MATCHED ACCURATELY TO THE CANDIDATE'S IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

Section 6.5.   Proctor Incident Reports

If an error is made by Proctors during the oral exam administration process which changes the testing experience for the candidate from what is proscribed in this Manual, (for example, playing the incorrect utterance or accidentally stopping a recording), or if some unforeseen disturbance occurs (for example, losing power or a disruption to the testing room) a Test Proctor's Incident Report must be completed. (See Appendix O.) In the majority of such situations, the issue can be remedied on the spot and the testing can continue. Nevertheless, the Proctor Incident Reports serve to inform the Raters of such irregularities in the test administration so that they are aware of the conditions of the testing experience. In the rare event of a *significant* irregularity in exam administration, the Test Administration Supervisor

must then decide whether the proctor error changed a candidate's testing experience enough so that it can no longer be considered parallel with and equal to all other candidates' experiences. In the case of such significant irregularities, it *may* be determined that the candidate is entitled to a retest at no additional charge.[24]

Section 6.6.   Special Proctor Instructions for the Consecutive Test

6.6.A. Preparing to Administer the Consecutive Section: The test administrator should practice the following techniques before the day of the test administration:

1.   Practice starting and stopping the player between individual sections of the consecutive text.

2.   If it hasn't already been done for you, number each section of the consecutive script in the left margin.

3.   Read through the script several times to establish familiarity with the text, both English and foreign language, if possible. Even if the administrator is not fluent in the foreign language, he/she might be able to follow the text well enough to be able to recognize the end of the sections, depending upon the language being tested.

4.   Listen to the recording while following the script, pausing the player as soon as the speaker has completed the section. Then start the player again.

5.   REPETITIONS REQUESTED BY THE CANDIDATE: If the candidate requests a repeat of a passage, you can make that happen easily:

Using a Laptop Computer:

- Click on the track number you want to replay. If the requested track is still open on the screen, press "replay."

Using an MP3 Player:

- Press the "back" button until you reach the track number you want to replay;

- Press "play."

You will want to watch the audio track numbers carefully, and be careful to replay the correct track. Whether you are using a laptop or MP3 player, candidate requests for repetitions require you to have dexterity and familiarity with the operation of the machine you are using. Not all audio players operate in exactly the same manner. You must experiment with replaying

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[24] An ADA accommodation might change a candidate's testing experience and the special accommodation should be documented for the records, but would not trigger a retest.

the current track and also going back to a previous track and be comfortable that you understand your audio player controls before you begin testing. (Also, remember that the candidate is allowed only two repetitions of entire utterances during the consecutive portion.)

During the <u>actual test administration</u>, the following instructions should be observed:

Be careful not to cut off the last word(s) of an utterance of the test text (the audio stimulus). Be sure the utterance has been played through in its entirety before pausing the player. Practicing with the script well before testing will help you with this. Each recorded utterance has a few blank seconds at the end of the track so you can be sure the passage is complete before pausing the machine.

Be sure that the candidate has finished interpreting the entire utterance before starting the player again. If you realize the candidate is through interpreting but has failed to remember the complete utterance, do not show any reaction, just start the next utterance. The test Raters will deal with any omissions.

IMPORTANT CAUTION:

Consecutive Proctor Preparation

Most often, test proctors do not speak the language(s) of the exams that they administer. This presents a particularly great challenge in administering the consecutive version of the exam. Prepare accordingly:

1. **Practice playing** and **pausing** the consecutive utterances;
2. Number the utterances on the **written script** to match the tracks of the recording;
3. **Read** the scripts multiple times;
4. Identify the **sounds of the last words** in the non-English utterances so that you can recognize when to pause the recording without cutting off words;
5. Practice handling **repetitions**; and
6. During the exam, **focus on the candidates**. Recognize when they have completed a non-English utterance so that the recording captures all of their words.

When the player is playing the foreign language tracks of the script, you must pay close attention to avoid inadvertently pausing the machine in the middle of an utterance. If you do that, you may invalidate that portion of the test, because you have broken a longer utterance into two shorter ones. This gives that candidate an unfair advantage over others. If this does happen at any time, you should continue with the test as if there was no problem, but you MUST complete a Proctor Incident Report noting the occurrence, identifying the exact text where the problem occurred, and reporting the problem to the Test Administration Supervisor. It is possible that the problem will have no substantive impact on the candidate's final score (if the candidate is a clear "fail" or a clear "pass") but if the performance is borderline, it becomes important to make an allowance for the possible invalidation of that part of the test.

As you practice playing, pausing and backing up the player, remember that during <u>actual</u> testing, one half of the time you will be in "pause" mode while the candidate is speaking in the foreign language (while he or she interprets the previous English utterance.) When the interpreter is delivering the foreign language version of the previous English utterance, it may be difficult for you to tell for certain when he or she is through. You must take care not to take the player out of pause mode or move on to the next utterance until you are certain that the interpretation is complete. If you start the player before the interpretation is complete, you distract the candidate and possibly invalidate that portion of the test. If this does happen, again, make a note of the event and notify the Test Administration Supervisor. *If possible, include in your practice sessions some experience listening to a foreign language speaker who simulates interpreting the passage in the way a test candidate would. Become accustomed ahead of time to what is required for you to tell when the person has finished speaking.*

The consecutive section is timed. ***If the proctor makes an error and uses time that belongs to the candidate, the proctor should allow the candidate to exceed the designated time limit accordingly.***

6.6.B. Handling Repetitions in the Consecutive Section: Appendix P includes table tents that should be printed on separate tent cards (Avery #5309). Fold them so that the words on the tents are readable by the test candidate. At the beginning of the consecutive portion of the test, they should be placed on the table facing the candidate, stacked on top of one another with the 2-repeat card on top, the 1-repeat card in the middle, and the 0-repeat card on the bottom.

If an candidate requests a repeat, say "**This is your first repetition,"** replay the entire utterance on the player, and remove the top, 2-repeat, tent card (place the 2-repeat card aside or in your lap or some other place not visible to the candidate).

If a candidate requests a second repeat, say **"This is your last repetition,"** replay the entire utterance on the player, and remove the second, 1-repeat, tent card. The last card reads, "0 repeats remaining."

Repeat these instructions for each new candidate.

Section 6.7. Troubleshooting for Test Proctors

Administration of oral proficiency examinations should be administered in the same way to each and every candidate as far as possible. Any variation in administration technique can

affect the reliability and fairness of the test itself. For these reasons, training and close supervision of test Proctors is very important and regular refresher training is valuable.

That being said, Proctors might experience equipment problems, make unintentional errors, or face other challenges not addressed in the pre-scripted administration instructions. This section reviews some situations that may occur and offers some solutions. Proctors should be trained to overcome unanticipated occurrences.

> **The Proctor should reflect a calm and professional demeanor and not become flustered or disoriented when an unexpected situation occurs.**

The test Proctor should reflect a calm and professional demeanor and not become flustered or disoriented when an unexpected situation occurs. The testing process itself is stressful and the candidate should not be exposed to stress or dismay exhibited by the Proctor.

Test Proctors must follow the pre-scripted administration instructions carefully and exactly. Do not engage the candidate in conversation and do not attempt to answer questions about the examination. If the candidate asks questions and the answer is contained in the instructions, simply reread the appropriate portion of the instruction. If the candidate asks questions completely outside of the content of the instructions, the administrator should clearly state that he/she cannot answer the questions.

In general, there are three personality types that Proctors can be prepared for:

A hostile or defensive candidate. This candidate might attack the test, the ability of the examiners, the interpreting program, or the entire court system. It is important that the test proctor avoid an argumentative or defensive posture. A suggested response might be: "**At the conclusion of the examination, you will be given the name and contact information of the person you may contact with questions, comments, or complaints about your test experience**."

An extremely nervous candidate. Some candidates are so nervous they exhibit physical reactions, such as extreme perspiration, voice cracking, hyperventilation, or trembling. Some individuals experience a true test phobia. Proctors need to remember that stress can be contagious and be alert to maintain a calm and unruffled demeanor. Courtesy and a sincere smile are in order before the test begins. The Proctor can move slowly and deliberately through the pre-scripted instructions and offer to allow the candidate to sip water, take deep breaths, or if necessary, allow the candidate to stand and stretch for a moment or so before beginning the test. The candidate owns the problem, and the Proctor should not adopt it as

his/her own; on the other hand, a gentle and sympathetic attitude might help the candidate complete the examination.

The solicitous and the unprepared candidate. Proctors who administer many examinations will encounter over-solicitous candidates that may think that treating the Proctor in an especially nice way will gain them some advantage in the testing process. Proctors will also encounter the unprepared candidate, who has obviously not read the material provided to him/her, nor practiced for the examination. In both of these cases, the Proctor must simply treat these candidates as others are treated. The Proctor's attitude should remain stable and consistent from candidate to candidate – never become overly friendly with a candidate and never display disgust, exasperation, or defensiveness.

Occasionally, a candidate will be so nervous or unprepared to take the examination, he/she will ask that the test be discontinued. The Proctor should say, "Are you certain you wish to discontinue your examination?" If the candidate confirms, the Proctor should stop the test at that point and finish reading the administration instructions.

The Proctor should have listened **all the way through** the prerecorded stimuli prior to the start of the testing day. However, a candidate may experience a poor recording, with problems such as skipping, distortion, or other malfunction. If, during the simultaneous portion, the candidate states the problem the Proctor should make an announcement for the recording and listen to the audio file through the headphones. If the problem is confirmed, the Proctor should replace the player with the backup player. (Again, it is important that the Proctor listen to all prerecorded stimuli on the testing equipment prior to the start of the testing day.) Announce for the recording that the test will now continue and continue with the administration. It may be necessary for the Proctor to allow the candidate to begin the simultaneous section from the beginning.

Sometimes, regardless of precautions, a Proctor must deal with an unexpected external condition. Unexpected noises outside the testing room, someone knocking on the test-room door despite the *Do Not Disturb* signs, a train passing by, a fire alarm sounding, etc. The Proctor should use good judgment and avoid overreacting to these kinds of distractions. For guidance only, some examples might include:

- If someone knocks, the Proctor might be able to quietly get up and move to the door without interrupting the candidate's simultaneous rendition.

- No conversation should take place at the door. However, noises from outside the testing room (such as neighboring office workers laughing or joking) should be

considered in light of the level of interference. If the noises are loud enough to be picked up on the recording, they may present a problem that must be dealt with.

These are the types of occurrences that should be anticipated prior to the testing sessions (see *Testing Rooms* section of this administration manual); therefore, occurrences should be infrequent. However, should they happen, Proctors should be sensitive to the effect the malfunction or unusual occurrence is having on the candidate and take care to place the candidate at ease, even if that means starting a section of the exam over again from the beginning or allowing the candidate to take a short break before continuing. In addition, Proctors must complete Proctor Incident Reports as described in Section 6.5 to inform the Raters of such test administration irregularities.

Occasionally, a candidate is so nervous or unprepared to take the examination, he/she fails to begin interpreting. The candidate may simply sit and read the sight translations, or listen to the prerecorded stimuli and not begin interpreting. The Proctor should sit quietly and allow the test to continue to completion. End the session with the scripted instructions. If the candidate realizes that something is wrong and asks what to do – the Proctor may say "you should be interpreting," or something similar. **The Proctor should not prompt a candidate to begin interpreting.**

There are situations when it is appropriate to stop a test and offer to retest the candidate at a later date or time, or postpone the test until later in the day if a different version of the test is available. These might include

- complete malfunction of equipment (digital recorder, audio player, or headset);

- the assertion from a candidate that he or she cannot continue because of a physical condition (this may indicate that the candidate must formally request ADA accommodation and cannot participate in the examination on that day), or

- any challenge that renders the Proctor incapable of administering that examination *in the same way* that all other candidates received the examination. Deviation from the approved method of administration, except when an ADA accommodation has been approved, may jeopardize the validity of the administration.

In the scripted instructions, which are read to the candidate by the Proctor, it says "Once the test begins, we are not permitted to stop the test." But on the recording, there is about one minute of instructions, giving the candidate time to adjust the volume, get the headphones positioned comfortably, etc. A trained Proctor knows from practice and experience that if a candidate positions the headphones, begins listening to the prerecorded introduction to the simultaneous, and within one minute claims that there is something wrong with the recording

or equipment the test can be interrupted to deal with the problem. If more than a minute has expired, the Proctor knows that the introductions are complete and that the test has begun – it is from that time forward that the test should not be stopped.

The important point here is that the Proctor should not make independent decisions on a case-by-case basis. Procedure should be clearly defined in advance and the Proctors trained accordingly, prior to administering any examinations.

In the final analysis, all experienced test Proctors will agree that any number of challenges can arise during the course of administration of an oral examination. Structured training of test Proctors is essential and should include actual demonstrations of examination administration and practice in the handling of unusual or unexpected situations.

Chapter 7	STEPS AFTER ADMINISTERING THE ORAL EXAM

All test materials must be returned to the National Center for State Courts at the conclusion of the test session. It is recommended that Program Managers not keep even non-confidential materials in their offices, especially since manuals, overview documents, and other test-related materials undergo edits, updates, and changes periodically through the year. Materials kept by the Program Manager may be outdated or unrevised.

Section 7.1.	Test Identification and File Name Convention

The digital recorder will automatically create a numeric file name for each test recording. To ensure each test recording file is linked to the correct candidate, files should be renamed immediately after testing using a predetermined naming convention that includes the candidate ID, State, Language, Version and Examination Date.

> Example: 1212_ST_Vietnamese 3.1_Apr2019[25]

Section 7.2.	Backup/Renaming/Short-term Storage of Test Files

Test recording files should be backed up, renamed, and properly stored for short-term purposes immediately after testing.

Backup: Test recording files should be copied from the digital recorder onto a dedicated computer hard drive or other secure drive for short-term backup purposes only.

Renaming: Backup test recording files should be renamed, according to the naming convention described above, to ensure proper identification. The beginning of each recording should be listened to in order to confirm test language, test date, and accurate candidate identification. Files can then be placed onto a secure web site for access by LASS staff and/or Raters.

> **IMPORTANT**: Extreme caution must be exercised when renaming files. Optimally, files should be backed up and renamed immediately after each test to ensure the file is correctly renamed. However, if back up and renaming occurs, for example, at the end

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[25] As of January 2020, Spanish oral exams are administered under a mix and match test assembly process and the file names of candidate recordings should reflect the unique combination of test parts administered to each Spanish candidate, i.e. "Spanish BCAB." See Section 2.7 for additional guidance on file naming conventions.

of the testing day, then each file must be listened to in order to confirm the identity of the candidate and accurately rename the file.

Short-term Storage: Backup test recording files should be retained only while tests are being rated. Once test rating and processing is complete, backup files must be deleted. Test recording files in the digital recorder memory, typically SD cards, should be secured to protect confidentiality of test materials and must be deleted once the backup and renaming process is complete.

Section 7.3.   Providing Raters with Test Materials

Like Program Managers, Raters are not permitted to permanently retain oral exam materials. Such retention creates security concerns, but in addition, oral exams may be modified over time. It is essential that Raters use newly-provided materials to ensure that the scripts and scoring units match the exam administered to a state's candidates. Therefore, Program Managers must follow these steps to provide test materials to Raters.

7.3.A. Access to Raters' Box.com Folders: When a Program Manager coordinates rating directly with Raters,[26] the Program Manager must notify LASS staff of the names of the Raters. LASS staff will then give the Program Manager access to identified Raters' Box.com folders to upload/download testing materials. **Raters will have up to 6 weeks** to download candidate recordings and test materials, and to upload exam results. After the permitted time for rating, LASS staff will notify the Program Manager via e-mail that all materials in the rater folders will be deleted in 24 hours.[27]

7.3.B. Materials to Upload to Raters' Box.com Folders: When a Program Manager receives testing materials in its state folder on Box.com prior to testing, (see Section 2.5), included will be a folder labeled "Rating Materials" for each language/version that the state is testing.[28] Each Rating Materials folder will

> **Each Program Manager must provide the following to their Raters:**
>
> (1) A recording of each candidate's exam;
>
> (2) The "Rating Materials" folder; and
>
> (3) Any Proctor Incident Reports.

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[26] All raters will be provided with individual libraries in the SharePoint site, and each will only have access to his/her library.

[27] Please note that state program managers must use raters from the NCSC Approved Expert List. It is recommended that program managers coordinate rating activities at least six (6) weeks prior to exam administration. See Section 5.3 of this manual for further details.

[28] Beginning in January 2020, the folder of rating materials for all Spanish exam sections A-C will be labeled as "Spanish Oral Exam Materials – Raters."

contain all documents required for rating. It is the Program Manager's responsibility to upload the following item to each Rater's individual folder: (1) each candidate's audio performance; (2) the "Rating Materials" folder; and (3) any Proctor Incident Reports (if applicable).

The "Rating Materials" folder includes the following:

1. Rater results form[29];
2. The marked[30] English to Non-English sight translation script;
3. The marked Non-English to English sight translation script;
4. The marked consecutive script;
5. The marked simultaneous script;
6. The scoring dictionary for each section of the exam;
7. Rater checklist;
8. Non-Disclosure Agreement and Oath form for Raters and Subject Matter Experts;
9. Scoring unit suggestion forms; and
10. Test Rating Manual

Program Managers do not need to provide the Raters with the audio recordings of the testing stimuli. However, the Program Manager must provide each Rater a copy of the **candidates' recordings**, and any **Proctor Incident Reports**.

Electronic copies of the above materials should be provided to each Rater assigned to rate the exam(s). The Program Manager will need to place the electronic documents in the Rater's folders on Box.com and notify them that the materials are available. (NCSC staff will ensure that Raters have access to their Box.com folders. Staff will also assist Raters with the set-up and use of Box.com.)

7.3.C. Preparing Materials for Shipment to Raters: Although it is recommended that Program Managers transmit documents electronically to Raters via Box.com, there may be times when the shipment of materials is necessary. If materials are to be shipped, the Program Manager must prepare all of the same materials - documentation and audio recordings - as listed above for each Rater. The Program Manager must make as many copies of the exam scripts as there are candidates. (For example, if ten candidates take a Russian exam, the Program Manager must send test copies of each Russian exam script.) Each Rater needs only one copy of the scoring unit dictionary.

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[29] Tests developed in the 1990s and early 2000s contained 75 scoring units in the consecutive section and 200 scoring units across the whole exam. Now tests contain 90 scoring units in the consecutive section and 215 scoring units across the whole exam. At this writing, only two exams remain that contain 200 units – Hmong 1 and Vietnamese 1.
[30] "Marked" means that the scoring units are bolded and underlined.

7.3.D. Shipping Exam Materials to Raters: The oral exams and supporting materials are valuable assets to the NCSC and testing states, and security standards must always be followed. If an exam is compromised, it will likely be removed from use, all states will lose the opportunity to use the exam, and a replacement form will have to be developed. The shipping of exam materials creates the greatest opportunity for exam compromise, and therefore strict standards must be upheld by Program Managers.

Mailings shall be completed using expedited shipping methods that guarantee a one- or two-day delivery and assign a tracking number. The Program Manager and Rater should not delegate the process of mailing to "outside" clerical staff or a mailing service. The Program Manager and Rater must be sure the recipient is expecting the delivery and have a copy of a tracking number before the package leaves his/her custody. Shipping should be timed so as not to arrive at a place of business on the weekend, when receipt cannot be accepted. All shipments of exam materials shall include a detailed inventory list. The package may only be received by the intended recipient and delivery must be verified by the recipient's signature.

The Program Manager shall send the audio recordings and paper documents (scripts, scoring unit dictionaries, oaths, etc.) to the Rater in **one full shipment**. The Rater should provide confirmation to the Program Manager that the package and all contents arrived securely.

Section 7.4.   Raters' Return of Test Materials to Program Managers

7.4.A. Raters Using Box.com: The Rater has a period of six weeks to (1) download candidate recordings and test materials; (2) rate the exams; and (3) upload marked scripts and rater results forms. If the Rater requires an additional period of time, the Rater must contact the Program Manager to explain the situation, and the Program Manager shall make the request to LASS staff.

After completion of the rating, the Rater will upload to his/her designated Box.com rating folder the **marked scripts and results forms** for each candidate, along with a signed **NDA and Oath form** (if the NCSC does not have a current copy on file for that rater). The Program Manager must then download the rated exam materials from the Rater's Box.com rating folder. (Note: the Rater should have a separate folder set up in their Box.com folder for each state for which they are rating, so you should not see any files in the raters' Box.com folder for other states. However, if files for other states are inadvertently uploaded by the rater, be sure to only remove the materials pertaining to testing in your state.)

A **marked script** identifies how a candidate performed on each scoring unit.[31] Each Rater of a rating team must upload marked scripts. However, the scripts uploaded by the **Lead Rater** will be considered the official record of the candidate's performance (see section 5.3.A for further information on rating teams). The **results form** will contain the candidate's numeric score for each section of the exam that was tested. **Program Managers may only return results forms to the candidates. In no instance may a Program Manager ever release any contents of a marked (or unmarked) script to a candidate.**

7.4.B. Raters Not Using Box.com: All raters should be set up to use Box.com; however, in the event that Box.com is not an option, secure shipping will be required to return the rated test materials. When the Rater has completed rating, he/she shall return all exam materials in **two separate shipments**. The first shall contain only the marked scripts, scoring unit dictionary, incident reports, signed oaths, and any other documentation. The second shall contain the candidates' recordings. If all materials were shipped together, the loss of that shipment would result in the complete loss of the candidates' examination information. By separating the materials, loss of one shipment would retain the detailed candidates' results, either by the official marked scripts or the recorded performances.

The Rater must abide by the same secure shipping standards as described in Section 7.3.D.

Section 7.5.   Auditing Rated Exams

Upon downloading the rated exam materials from the Raters, it is the Program Manager's responsibility to review and audit (to the extent practicable) the exam materials to ensure there are no mathematical or other errors. The official scripts should be used for this purpose, because they reflect the official record of correct and incorrect scoring units. The following are some of the basic items a Program Manager should consider in auditing exams.

1. Each exam script must contain the candidate's NCSC identification number.
2. Raters must use the uniform marking system described in Section 13 of the **Test Rating Manual**.[32] A large "X" shall be written through the scoring units (bolded, underlined text) if it was rendered incorrectly.

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[31] For details on rating protocols, please review the Rating Manual available at http://www.ncsc.org/Services-and-Experts/Areas-of-expertise/Language-access/Written-and-Oral-Exam-Resources.aspx.

[32] Available at http://www.ncsc.org/Services-and-Experts/Areas-of-expertise/Language-access/Written-and-Oral-Exam-Resources.aspx

3. When a Rater initially marks a scoring unit as incorrect but later decides that it is correct, the Rater shall write a clear "OK" above the scoring unit and cross out the "X."

4. In the consecutive and simultaneous sections, Raters must follow prescribed standards for tallying the number of incorrect units, and Program Managers should review each script to ensure that calculations were completed correctly. Raters will count the number of incorrect scoring units on page one and record that number at the bottom of page one. They carry that number over to the bottom of page two, followed by a slash mark (/). They count the number of incorrect scoring units on page two and write that number to the right of the slash mark. Those two numbers are added together, and the sum is written at the bottom of page 3, followed by a slash mark. The same process continues until the end of the section. Program Managers must make sure that the number of incorrect scoring units on each page has been recorded accurately.

5. At the end of each exam section, the Rater must complete the scoring grid. The grid indicates the number of possible points, the number of incorrect points, and the total correct. Ensure that accurate numbers have been entered in the grid, calculations are correct, and are accurately reflected on the Rater Results Form.

If Multiple Mistakes are Encountered: After auditing the rated exam materials, if you encounter many mistakes, it is preferable that the Lead Rater review his/her work to ensure accuracy and completeness. Upload and return all exam materials to the Lead Rater's folder on Box.com with instructions to review the work and resubmit with all the necessary corrections (this work should be included in your contract/agreement language at no additional charge).

Section 7.6.   Re-Rating of Exams

In some situations, a candidate may come very close to passing and a rescore of the exam may be desirable *prior to sending the final results to the candidate*. Many state court interpreter programs have program policies to govern when a rescore is appropriate. In the event that a rescore is necessary, contact another Approved Rater who was not part of the original rating team. Using the same standards previously stated in this document (e.g. contracting, Box.com, shipping, etc.), work directly with that third Rater to review the rating completed by the original rating team. It is recommended that the rescore Rater be provided with the marked scripts of the original team so he/she can see and understand the decisions made by his/her peers. If the rescore results differ substantially from the original team's scores, it is recommended that the three Raters consult to come to an agreed-upon, final score for the candidate.

It is recommended that a rescore take place, *prior to the release of the candidate's final results*, when a candidate has passed two of the three sections of the test and has come within a percentage point of passing on the remaining section.

It is recommended that appeals received from candidates should not be considered on the basis of rater assessments and scores. Appeals should be considered on the basis of:

- Misinformation regarding testing arrangements (the test taker was given the wrong location or test time, etc.);
- Significant error in administration (unprofessional conduct, failure to follow test administration standards, etc.);
- Equipment malfunction (total equipment failure, inappropriate equipment, etc.);
- Environmental factors (air conditioning breakdown with temperature in test room exceeding 80 degrees or below 65 degrees, fire alarms or other loud distracting noises, power outages, etc.);
- Unavoidable catastrophic events (death of an immediate family member, doctor's verification of accident, serious illness, or hospitalization, etc.);
- Natural disaster (earthquake, fire, snowstorm, etc.).

Appeals received after 90 days from the administration of the test should not be reviewed or considered.[33]

Section 7.7.   Sending Test Results to Candidates

Upon completion of auditing the exam rating, Program Managers shall send the **numeric** test results forms to the candidates. Results of oral examinations must be reported to the NCSC on the form provided by the NCSC's Language Access Services Section. Results reported to candidates should include the following information:

- Candidate's full, legal name as used during registration
- NCSC identification number
- The date the test was administered
- The number of scoring units interpreted correctly in each section of the test, as well as each part of the sight translation section

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[33] Much of the wording in this recommendation was taken from the process adopted by the Registry for the Deaf (RID) and can be found at:
http://www.rid.org/UserFiles/File/pdfs/Certification_Documents/SCL_Candidate_Bulletin.pdf

- The percentage of scoring units interpreted correctly in each section of the test, as well as each part of the sight translation section
- Status (pass or fail)
- In jurisdictions with more options than "pass/fail," the level of outcome (e.g. Master, Certified, Conditionally Approved, or other level).

In no event may a Program Manager send excerpts of actual exam content to the candidates, nor may the Program Manager release the identity of the exam Raters. To provide test candidates with more information about the scoring of exams and areas where candidates often fall short, enclose a copy of Common Oral Interpreting Exam Performance Deficiencies with the exam results form ([Appendix R]).

Section 7.8.   Returning Exam Materials and Results to NCSC Staff

7.8.A. Notify LASS Staff that Testing is Complete: After the Program Manager has successfully completed the auditing of all rated examinations and reported all official scores to the candidates, the Program Manager must notify LASS staff that exam administration and rating is complete and upload all exam administration materials to the state's folder on Box.com for LASS, including the marked scripts, candidate recordings, Rater Results Forms, proctor incident reports, and any completed Scoring Unit Suggestion Forms.[34]

LASS staff will remove all test content and test results from the State folder, and archive test results per NCSC protocols. Shortly thereafter, the candidates' results will be uploaded to the members-only testing database.

7.8.B. Notify LASS Staff about Concerns or Issues with Raters: Program Managers should provide feedback to NCSC staff about Raters' performance (what are they doing well, what is done inconsistently, or improperly, etc.). This feedback is a helpful tool for LASS staff in planning Rater training, and a good opportunity for staff to clarify misunderstandings of exam rating standards.

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[34] Note that pursuant to the revised 2017 Memorandum of Understanding on State Court Interpreter Testing, candidate NDA and Oath forms are no longer required to be uploaded to the state Box.com folder. Following the administration of examinations, states must maintain the NDA and Oath forms signed by candidates in accordance with state record retention policies.

Section 7.9.   Disposal of Testing Materials

Following confirmation that LASS staff has successfully received and archived all exam administration materials, the Program Manager will have a period of **24 hours** to delete or destroy hardcopies of the written and oral examination administration materials that were provided by the LASS staff[35]. At the end of each year, NCSC will send the Program Manager a *Destruction of NCSC Test Materials Inventory and Oath* form to confirm that the state has disposed of test materials provided by NCSC for previous test administrations. Following the disposal of materials, the Program Manager must complete and sign the *Destruction of NCSC Test Materials Inventory and Oath* and *upload* this document to their state folder on Box.com.

The following instructions are to be followed to properly dispose of the testing materials:

Paper and hard-copy records containing confidential information should be shredded and/or pulped, and disposed of properly.

Electronic, digital records and computer files containing confidential information should be permanently deleted. All contents of digital files must be deleted from secure shares and the desktop "trash" or "waste basket". Commercially available software applications may be needed to remove all data from records stored on a hard drive.[36]

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[35] LASS Staff will be responsible for deleting materials on the secure site.
[36] The Program Managers can keep the candidates' digital test recordings until they have been securely transferred to NCSC.

Appendix A

Policy for the Development and Modification of Test Inventory

Background

The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) oral test program requires budget allocations for annual ongoing activities, as well as intermittent, recurring activities. The following expense areas are examples of costs associated with exam-related activities:

1. Oral Examinations – Development and Modification
2. Rater Calibration Training
3. Test Administration and Oversight
4. Test Development
5. Recording and CD Production
6. Test Proctor Training

Ongoing activities that support the administration of oral interpreting exams nationwide require yearly budget allocations. The ongoing activities include, but are not limited to Rater/Proctor training and maintenance and test administration and oversight (test history searches, preparation of testing materials for shipment, etc).

Intermittent, recurring activities may occur on an as-needed basis. These activities include, but are not limited to, the development and modification of written and oral exam inventory, including recording and CD production. (Some exam maintenance, such as updating scoring dictionaries, does occur on an ongoing basis, while major modifications to exam material occur on an as-needed, less frequent basis.)

The primary purpose of this Budget Justification Tool is to assist the NCSC Language Access Services Section (LASS) in making budgetary justifications regarding the ongoing, intermittent, and recurring activities of development and modification of NCSC oral exams. Budget allocations for these competing interests must be based on objective data, the needs of the state court administrative offices, and available funds. In determining budget allocations for developing and modifying exams, the LASS must consider the national needs for the following essential components:

1 Developing exams in new languages;
2 Developing new versions of exams in languages for which there is already one or more exam; and

3   Modifying existing exams based on feedback loops, psychometric assessments, and regular reviews.

Although this document does not specifically address the allocation of funds for ongoing activities, some mention of these activities are essential since they directly correspond to the intermittent costs associated with the development and modification of NCSC oral exams.

Developing Exams in New Languages

The NCSC utilizes two models for the development of oral exams:

1. The standard model, which includes three sections: sight translation (which has two parts, English to foreign language and foreign language to English), consecutive interpretation, and simultaneous interpretation; or
2. The abbreviated model, which includes a simultaneous section and a measure of conversational proficiency in English.

The standard model is the presumptive model for new test development when 25% or more of the state court administrative offices request it and when the NCSC has sufficient resources to develop a glossary, if one is necessary, as well as two versions of the test. In all other circumstances, the abbreviated model must be followed.[37]

Experience suggests the development of a standard model costs approximately $40,000 and the cost of developing a glossary ranges from $23,500 to $35,000. The range of costs for the abbreviated model is from $13,000 to $18,000.

To assist with budget allocations, the LASS will conduct an annual survey of state court administrative offices to document national interest and need for test development in new languages. The survey will require each state to provide documentation, to the extent possible, of need for each language by providing data such as the following:

1. Jurisdiction-wide statistics on:
    a. Volume of proceedings interpreted in that language;
    b. Number of persons in the general population who speak the language, e.g., Census data or school enrollment data;
    c. Estimated number of candidates in the jurisdiction who would take the test in the first year and for the four years thereafter;

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[37]   If a language has been selected for the development of an abbreviated exam, a state court administrative office, alone or jointly with another state, may pay the difference between the estimated cost of developing the abbreviated exam and the actual cost of developing a standard model exam.

  d. Identification of at least one Subject Matter Expert (SME) who would meet the qualifications required by the NCSC for test writing and rating (see §4 of the Test *Construction Manual*) *or* identification of professional associations or other resources for locating SMEs in the selected foreign language; and

  e. Any other information or data that would indicate the extent of the need for a test in the language (e.g., grants available to offset the cost, advocacy by community groups, new laws or policies).

Developing New Versions of Exams in Languages for Which an Exam Already Exists

Once the NCSC has begun testing in a given language, it may become necessary to add one or more versions in that language. The specific factors necessitating additional versions, whether individual or in combination, include the following:

1. There is significant national interest in a new version to allow for retesting of candidates;
2. There is evidence indicating national or regional overexposure of test content due to the number of times an individual test form has been administered; or
3. A version must be retired because it has been compromised, become outdated beyond repair, lacks relevance due to change in language or the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) needed for the job, or the version does not perform well according to accepted standards of validity or reliability.

Experience suggests the development of a standard model costs approximately $40,000 and the cost of developing a glossary ranges from $23,500 to $35,000. The range of costs for the abbreviated model is from $13,000 to $18,000.

Modifying Exams

1. Regular, ongoing maintenance of exams is essential. Maintenance can lead to major or minor modifications of test forms in the two following areas:
2. ***Test content* needs to be revised, which arises from several sources:**
  a. Trends in rating patterns indicate difficulties or challenges with rating specific scoring units or other parts of test texts;
  b. Psychometric research indicates particular test items do not perform well;
  c. Periodic audits, which should be performed at least every five years, indicate a need for change due to a lack of content relevance in terms of job duties or linguistic considerations, or content has become obsolete or outdated; or
  d. Revisions made to the *Test Construction Manual* require adjustments to exam content to ensure compliance with new provisions.
3. ***Scoring dictionaries* need to be revised:**

e. Scoring dictionaries are extremely dynamic, living documents that require regular editing and updating. New, acceptable renditions for scoring units are regularly introduced at each rating session. Furthermore, incorrect interpretations that have not been heard before and are not identified as unacceptable are introduced at rating sessions. Both need to be incorporated into scoring dictionaries as funding permits and in accordance with annual testing priorities approved by the Language Access Advisory Committee (LAAC) to ensure reliability for the rating process.[38]

Ordinarily test maintenance requires minor modifications in test texts. However, in some instances the number or nature of the revisions may necessitate replacing a section of the exam. Replacement of an exam section may also be necessary if there is an indication that the section has been compromised without the entire exam being compromised.

The estimated annual cost to modify test content per exam for minor modifications can be as little as $2,500, but can increase to approximately $25,600, if major modifications or the development of a new test part is necessary, and the estimated annual cost to maintain an exam's scoring dictionary is between $9,500 and $12,000.[39]

Donated Exams

In accordance with the policy approved by the LAAC in July 2016, the NCSC will not include in its repository of exam materials, or provide to states for administration, previously donated oral exams that do not conform to the standards of the Test Construction Manual. Any future donated oral exams will be subject to full testing audits conducted by NCSC staff to ensure that these exams meet the standard specifications of the Test Construction Manual, and only those exams that meet outlined standards will be accepted by the NCSC for inclusion in its testing inventory.

Retirement of Exams

Annual exam maintenance activities are based on the input of the Council for Language Access Coordinators (CLAC) and approved by the LAAC. The allocation of annual funds for test maintenance activities takes into account the national use and need of a particular exam language and/or version of the exam. In an effort to maintain currency of content for all exam

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[38]   This does not imply that every single rendition that does not appear in the scoring dictionary must be incorporated in the dictionary. The *Test Rating Manual* provides guidance to raters on when and how to submit proposed revisions to the scoring dictionary, which are then reviewed by a team of experts for that language and, if approved, incorporated.

[39]   The routine, ongoing maintenance and revising of exams is different from the major one-time effort undertaken in 2011 to revise exams that have not enjoyed the kind of ongoing review and revision that will be performed in the future.

versions available, NCSC may consider retiring an oral exam version that has not received maintenance in over ten years and that, due to very low national administration volume, would not likely be targeted for annual maintenance activities.

Ensuring an Adequate Pool of Qualified Raters

It is important to note that a sufficient supply of qualified, trained Raters is essential for maintaining the NCSC's exams. Lacking a sufficient number of Raters has required the discontinuance or postponement of exam administration in some languages at varying points in time. To maintain a valid and reliable exam process, Raters must be recruited, trained, and maintained. The cost associated with the training of qualified Raters varies from $4,000 to $6,500 per Rater, depending upon the venue of the training and the make-up of the training faculty.

Appendix B   Box.com Oath for Program Managers and Court Staff

**National Center for State Courts
(NCSC)
Language Access Services Section**

Oath for Program Managers and Court Staff
Regarding Access to the NCSC's Secure Folders on Box.com

I, _____, understand that I am being provided with access to the NCSC's secure folders on Box.com and that I will set up an individual account to access these secure folders using a password that I create. I hereby state that I will not share the password that I create to access the NCSC's secure folders on Box.com. If I believe that access to my Box.com account has been compromised, I will immediately notify the Language Access Services Section staff at the NCSC and create a new password for my Box.com account.

State Language Access Program Manager or Court Staff

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

State: _____

NCSC Language Access Services Section Staff

Received by: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C Box.com Oath for Subject Matter Experts (Exam Developers and Raters)

**National Center for State Courts
(NCSC)
Language Access Services Section**

Oath for Subject Matter Experts (Exam Developers and Raters) Regarding Access to the NCSC's Secure Folders on Box.com

I, _____, understand that I am being provided with access to the NCSC's secure folders on Box.com and that I will set up an individual Box.com account to access these secure folders using a password that I create. I hereby state that I will not share the password that I create to access the NCSC's secure folders on Box.com. If I believe that access to my Box.com account has been compromised, I will immediately notify the Language Access Services Section staff at the NCSC and create a new password for my Box.com account.

Subject Matter Expert (Exam Developer and/or Rater)

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

NCSC Language Access Services Section Staff

Received by: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D   Written Exam Answer Sheet

Name _____   **ID Number** _____

Date _____   **Test Site City/State)**_____

1.	A.	B.	C.	D.	24.	A.	B.	C.	D.	47.	A.	B.	C.	D.
2.	A.	B.	C.	D.	25.	A.	B.	C.	D.	48.	A.	B.	C.	D.
3.	A.	B.	C.	D.	26.	A.	B.	C.	D.	49.	A.	B.	C.	D.
4.	A.	B.	C.	D.	27.	A.	B.	C.	D.	50.	A.	B.	C.	D.
5.	A.	B.	C.	D.	28.	A.	B.	C.	D.	51.	A.	B.	C.	D.
6.	A.	B.	C.	D.	29.	A.	B.	C.	D.	52.	A.	B.	C.	D.
7.	A.	B.	C.	D.	30.	A.	B.	C.	D.	53.	A.	B.	C.	D.
8.	A.	B.	C.	D.	31.	A.	B.	C.	D.	54.	A.	B.	C.	D.
9.	A.	B.	C.	D.	32.	A.	B.	C.	D.	55.	A.	B.	C.	D.
10.	A.	B.	C.	D.	33.	A.	B.	C.	D.	56.	A.	B.	C.	D.
11.	A.	B.	C.	D.	34.	A.	B.	C.	D.	57.	A.	B.	C.	D.
12.	A.	B.	C.	D.	35.	A.	B.	C.	D.	58.	A.	B.	C.	D.
13.	A.	B.	C.	D.	36.	A.	B.	C.	D.	59.	A.	B.	C.	D.
14.	A.	B.	C.	D.	37.	A.	B.	C.	D.	60.	A.	B.	C.	D.
15.	A.	B.	C.	D.	38.	A.	B.	C.	D.	61.	A.	B.	C.	D.
16.	A.	B.	C.	D.	39.	A.	B.	C.	D.	62.	A.	B.	C.	D.
17.	A.	B.	C.	D.	40.	A.	B.	C.	D.	63.	A.	B.	C.	D.
18.	A.	B.	C.	D.	41.	A.	B.	C.	D.	64.	A.	B.	C.	D.
19.	A.	B.	C.	D.	42.	A.	B.	C.	D.	65.	A.	B.	C.	D.
20.	A.	B.	C.	D.	43.	A.	B.	C.	D.	66.	A.	B.	C.	D.
21.	A.	B.	C.	D.	44.	A.	B.	C.	D.	67.	A.	B.	C.	D.
22.	A.	B.	C.	D.	45.	A.	B.	C.	D.	68.	A.	B.	C.	D.
23.	A.	B.	C.	D.	46.	A.	B.	C.	D.	69.	A.	B.	C.	D.

70.	A.	B.	C.	D.	94.	A.	B.	C.	D.	118.	A.	B.	C.	D.
71.	A.	B.	C.	D.	95.	A.	B.	C.	D.	119.	A.	B.	C.	D.
72.	A.	B.	C.	D.	96.	A.	B.	C.	D.	120.	A.	B.	C.	D.
73.	A.	B.	C.	D.	97.	A.	B.	C.	D.	121.	A.	B.	C.	D.
74.	A.	B.	C.	D.	98.	A.	B.	C.	D.	122.	A.	B.	C.	D.
75.	A.	B.	C.	D.	99.	A.	B.	C.	D.	123.	A.	B.	C.	D.
76.	A.	B.	C.	D.	100.	A.	B.	C.	D.	124.	A.	B.	C.	D.
77.	A.	B.	C.	D.	101.	A.	B.	C.	D.	125.	A.	B.	C.	D.
78.	A.	B.	C.	D.	102.	A.	B.	C.	D.	126.	A.	B.	C.	D.
79.	A.	B.	C.	D.	103.	A.	B.	C.	D.	127.	A.	B.	C.	D.
80.	A.	B.	C.	D.	104.	A.	B.	C.	D.	128.	A.	B.	C.	D.
81.	A.	B.	C.	D.	105.	A.	B.	C.	D.	129.	A.	B.	C.	D.
82.	A.	B.	C.	D.	106.	A.	B.	C.	D.	130.	A.	B.	C.	D.
83.	A.	B.	C.	D.	107.	A.	B.	C.	D.	131.	A.	B.	C.	D.
84.	A.	B.	C.	D.	108.	A.	B.	C.	D.	132.	A.	B.	C.	D.
85.	A.	B.	C.	D.	109.	A.	B.	C.	D.	133.	A.	B.	C.	D.
86.	A.	B.	C.	D.	110.	A.	B.	C.	D.	134.	A.	B.	C.	D.
87.	A.	B.	C.	D.	111.	A.	B.	C.	D.	135.	A.	B.	C.	D.
88.	A.	B.	C.	D.	112.	A.	B.	C.	D.					
89.	A.	B.	C.	D.	113.	A.	B.	C.	D.					
90.	A.	B.	C.	D.	114.	A.	B.	C.	D.					
91.	A.	B.	C.	D.	115.	A.	B.	C.	D.					
92.	A.	B.	C.	D.	116.	A.	B.	C.	D.					
93.	A.	B.	C.	D.	117.	A.	B.	C.	D.					

Appendix E Written Exam Agreement and Oath for Test Candidates

NCSC Agreement and Oath for Test Candidates (Written Exam)

I certify or affirm that I will not copy, record, discuss, nor

in any way divulge the contents of the [**Name of State**]

court interpreter written examination, either during the

testing period or at any other time thereafter.

_____   _____

Signature   **Date**

_____

Print Name

_____

Testing ID Number

Appendix F   List of Prohibited Items

List of Prohibited Items

Test takers should be prohibited from bringing the following items into the examination room:

- *Cell phones, smart phones, text messaging devices, personal digital assistants, or other electronic communication devices*
- *E-readers, tablet computers, laptops, or any type of computer*
- *Cameras, scanners, audio or video recording devices, or picture-taking devices*
- *Media players or radios*
- *Headphones, headsets, or listening devices (belonging to the examinee)*
- *Language translators*
- *Calculators*
- *Watches or other timepieces, smartwatches, or physical activity trackers*
- *Key fobs*
- *Firearms or weapons*
- *Alarms, electronic timers of any kind*
- *Rulers*
- *Briefcases, handbags, or backpacks of any kind*
- *Earplugs or ear muffs*
- *Hats and/or hoods (except religious apparel) may not be worn on the head*
- *Food or beverages (unless pre-authorized for medical reasons)*

Appendix G   **Sample Written Exam Request for ADA Accommodation**

DOCUMENTATION OF ACCOMMODATION FOR THE COURT INTERPRETER WRITTEN EXAM

This document must be completed by an appropriate professional (doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist, or education professional) to certify that the applicant requires an exam accommodation.

If there is existing and current documentation of having the same or similar accommodation provided to the applicant in another test situation, it may be submitted instead of having this portion of the form completed.

Exam Description

The court interpreter written exam is designed to test a candidate's level of English vocabulary, familiarity with legal terminology, and application of interpreter professional standards. There are 135 multiple-choice questions on the exam. All questions and answers are in English. The questions are typed in 12-point Times New Roman font.   To record answers, candidates will be required to either fill in a "bubble sheet" or circle the correct answers on an answer key. Candidates are given two hours and fifteen minutes to complete the exam. Restroom breaks are permitted during the exam, but are controlled so that not too many candidates are outside the testing room at the same time.

For questions about exam content and conditions, please contact _____.

PROFESSIONAL'S DECLARATION

I HAVE KNOWN _____ SINCE _____
               (APPLICANT NAME)   (DATE)

AS A _____ . I HAVE DIAGNOSED OR EVALUATED THE
        (PATIENT OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP)

APPLICANT MYSELF AND I AM NOT RELYING UPON FACTS RELATED TO ME BY THE APPLICANT. MY

DIAGNOSIS IS _____.
               (DESCRIBED MEDICAL OR OTHER CONDITION)

THE APPLICANT'S FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS DUE TO THE DISABILITY THAT LEAD TO THE NEED FOR AN

ACCOMMODATION ARE: _____

_____

I HAVE REVIEWED THE EXAM DESCRIPTION. IT IS MY PROFESSIONAL OPINION THAT BECAUSE OF THE APPLICANT'S DISABILITY, HE/SHE SHOULD BE ACCOMMODATED BY PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING:

❒   Large print type (font size _____)
❒   An alternate testing area (describe: _____)
❒   Extra time (how much? _____)
❒   A reader
❒   Other accommodation (describe _____)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

SIGNATURE OF THE PROFESSIONAL: _____

TITLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL: _____

PRINTED NAME OF THE PROFESSIONAL: _____

DATE: _____   TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

Please return the original of this completed form, at your earliest convenience to:

[Insert name and contact information for state court interpreter Program Manager]

Appendix H — Testing Materials Agreement and Oath for Program Managers/Coordinators/Exam Administrators

NCSC Agreement and Oath for State Language

Access Program Managers/Program

Coordinators/Examination Administrators

I certify or affirm that I will not copy, record, discuss, nor in any way divulge the contents of the written or oral court interpreter examinations to anyone, other than staff of the National Center for State Courts, during any testing period, my period of employment as a program manager/program coordinator/examination administrator, or at any other time while the test is being developed, administered or utilized.

I recognize that the content of any test material is of a highly confidential nature and hereby certify or affirm that I will not disclose such information either during the period of my employment as a program manager/program coordinator/examination administrator or thereafter.

I also certify or affirm that I will uphold test administration protocols with regard to the security, confidentiality, and storage of examination materials, as outlined in the NCSC State Court Interpreter Testing Desk Reference Manual.

_____   _____

Signature   **Date**

_____   _____

Printed Name   **State or Agency**

Appendix I   NCSC Non-Disclosure Agreement and Oath for Subject Matter Experts (Exam Developers and Raters)

National Center for State Courts (NCSC)
Non-Disclosure Agreement and Oath for Subject Matter Experts (Exam Developers and Raters)

Non-Disclosure Agreement and Oath
for Subject Matter Experts (Exam Developers and Raters)

I. Copyrighted Information

All National Center for State Courts (NCSC) court interpreter exams ("Exams") are copyrighted materials, which contain proprietary NCSC content subject to copyright protection under federal, state, and international copyright law. Therefore, it is essential that you recognize the importance of safeguarding the security of all Exam content and be committed to the rigorous protection of all such content entrusted to you. Exam content includes the content and subject matter of Exam texts and their recordings, as well as the corresponding scoring dictionaries. It is also imperative that you understand that it is critical that you preserve the anonymity of your work as an Exam writer, reviewer, and/or rater.

II. Certifications

I hereby certify or affirm that I accept the guidelines set forth below and will abide by them during and after my professional relationship with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC):

- I will not discuss any Exam content with, nor divulge it to, any unauthorized person at any time.

- I will store all Exam content in only those locations and on only those platforms that are explicitly authorized by the NCSC or its agents supervising my work.

- I will transmit copies of Exam content only by means explicitly authorized by NCSC.

- I will not transmit Exam content by email, either by attaching Exam content to an email or by discussing any Exam content within the body of an email.

- When conducting terminological research, I will not communicate with external experts or consult other resources in a manner that might permit identification of Exam content.

- I will not make or retain Exam content, whether in hard copy, electronic format or other, except as explicitly authorized by officials of NCSC.

- While Exam materials are in my possession, I will keep them in a secure location.

- Should I work on any test writing or maintenance activities, I will destroy all paper copies and delete all electronic copies when such work is completed, except when otherwise directed by NCSC staff.

- If any unanticipated developments arise that I think might compromise the security of any Exam content, I will immediately notify the agent who is supervising my work.

- I will not disclose at any public or private gatherings where practicing interpreters or potential interpreters are or might be present that I am an Exam writer and/or rater for NCSC. I understand that I can include my rating work on my résumé only by using general language such as: "Rater for national credentialing program for interpreters." I will use my best judgment to ensure that my role as an Exam writer/rater remains as anonymous as possible.

- I will ensure the confidentiality of Exam results and Exam materials and will not have any communication with examinees about their Exams or Exam results.

- I will learn, follow, and abide by all of the standards and policies pertaining to Exam writing, Exam maintenance, and/or Exam rating established by NCSC that pertain to the professional services for which I have been retained.

These prohibitions on disclosure also apply to forwarding, re-posting, or other disclosure of NCSC Exam content. I understand that if I willfully obtain or seek to obtain NCSC Exam content disclosed by others, I will be acting in violation of this agreement and will be subject to sanctions under copyright and all applicable law. Where warranted, NCSC will pursue all legal remedies available to recover monetary damages caused by such conduct.

III. Acknowledgement

I, the undersigned, acknowledge the following:

- Determinations regarding disclosing NCSC Exam content shall be made in accordance with NCSC policies and procedures, which the NCSC may amend at its sole discretion.
- In the event of a determination by NCSC that I have violated this agreement, NCSC has the right to pursue all costs associated with replacing an Exam due to my divulging Exam details to anyone in any way.

I have read this Non-Disclosure Agreement and Oath and agree to abide by its terms.

_____   _____
Subject Matter Expert Signature   Date

_____
Subject Matter Expert Printed Name

Appendix J

Candidate Information Sheet: Entire Test or Phase Two (Consecutive and Sight)

Welcome to the [STATE NAME] Court Interpreter Certification Test. By appearing here today you demonstrate your commitment to professionalism in the field of court interpreting. We congratulate you.

This information sheet has been prepared to explain the procedure that will be followed today. **Please read it carefully**, because after your name is called for the test, there will not be time to repeat all of this information before the test begins.

Procedure:

1. You have completed your registration, and now need only to wait until your name is called by the test Proctor. The test Proctor will take you to the testing area and get you started.

2. Do not talk to the test Proctor or ask questions about the examination. The Proctor is not allowed to discuss the contents of the test nor to answer questions or make comments outside of the written instruction script provided to him/her. The Proctor's role today is simply to see that the test is smoothly administered in an identical fashion for all candidates.

3. This is <u>either</u> a complete administration of the interpreter performance examination or Phase 2 of a two-phase testing process.

   - A complete administration of the interpreter proficiency examination consists of consecutive interpreting, sight translations, and simultaneous interpreting.
   - Phase 2 consists of sight translations and consecutive interpreting.

4. Your interpretation must be accurate and complete. When you interpret, you must not edit, summarize, delete, or add. <u>If you use synonyms of words or two versions of phrases, only the last thing you say will be counted</u>.

   Your interpretation should be faithful to the language level, style, tone, and intent of the speaker. Use appropriate grammar, vocabulary and idioms. <u>Feel free to use the regional expressions with which you are familiar</u>.

   As you are interpreting, you should behave as though you were actually in a courtroom with a judge, lawyers, and a jury, except that you need to speak loudly enough to make sure we get a good recording.

Personal belongings   You are not allowed to have any personal belongings with you when you take the test. Notepads and pens will be provided for you. Any notes you take will remain in the testing room after you leave.

Candidate Information Sheet: Simultaneous Exam

Welcome to the [STATE NAME] Court Interpreter Certification Test. By appearing here today you demonstrate your commitment to professionalism in the field of court interpreting. We congratulate you.

This information sheet has been prepared to explain the procedure that will be followed today. **Please read it carefully**, because after your name is called for the test, there will not be time to repeat all of this information before the test begins.

Procedure:

1. You have completed your registration, and now need only to wait until your name is called by the test Proctor. The test Proctor will take you to the testing area and get you started.

2. Do not talk to the test proctor or ask questions about the examination. The Proctor is not allowed to discuss the contents of the test nor to answer questions or make comments outside of the written instruction script provided to him/her. The Proctor's role today is simply to see that the test is smoothly administered in an identical fashion for all candidates.

3. This is Phase 1 of a two-phase testing process. This first phase is a test of simultaneous interpreting. As you know, for the simultaneous portion of the exam, that means you will be listening to English language speech and simultaneously interpreting it into the target language.

4. Your interpretation must be accurate and complete. When you interpret, you must not edit, summarize, delete, or add. <u>If you use synonyms of words or two versions of phrases, only the last thing you say will be counted</u>.

    Your interpretation should be faithful to the language level, style, tone, and intent of the speaker. Use appropriate grammar, vocabulary and idioms. <u>Feel free to use the regional expressions with which you are familiar</u>.

    As you are interpreting, you should behave as though you were actually in a courtroom with a judge, lawyers, and a jury, except that you need to speak loudly enough to make sure we get a good recording.

5. For those candidates who qualify today to advance to the second phase of the test, the test dates will be [**DATE**].

Personal belongings   You are not allowed to have any personal belongings with you when you take the test. Notepads and pens will be provided for you. Any notes you take will remain in the testing room after you leave.

Appendix L   Candidate Information Sheet:
                                                        Abbreviated Exam

Welcome to the [STATE NAME] Court Interpreter Certification Test. By appearing here today you demonstrate your commitment to professionalism in the field of court interpreting. We congratulate you.

This information sheet has been prepared to explain the procedure that will be followed today. **Please read it carefully**, because after your name is called for the test, there will not be time to repeat all of this information before the test begins.

Procedure:

1. You have completed your registration, and now need only to wait until your name is called by the test Proctor. The test Proctor will take you to the testing area and get you started.

2. Do not talk to the test Proctor or ask questions about the examination. The Proctor is not allowed to discuss the contents of the test nor to answer questions or make comments outside of the written instruction script provided to him/her. The Proctor's role today is simply to see that the test is smoothly administered in an identical fashion for all candidates.

3. This is the Abbreviated Examination. This test includes simultaneous interpreting. As you know, for the simultaneous portion of the exam, that means you will be listening to English language speech and simultaneously interpreting it into the target language.

4. During the simultaneous exercise, your interpretation must be accurate and complete. When you interpret, you must not edit, summarize, delete, or add. <u>If you use synonyms of words or two versions of phrases, only the last thing you say will be counted</u>.

    Your interpretation should be faithful to the language level, style, tone, and intent of the speaker. Use appropriate grammar, vocabulary and idioms. <u>Feel free to use the regional expressions with which you are familiar</u>.

    As you are interpreting, you should behave as though you were actually in a courtroom with a judge, lawyers, and a jury, except that you need to speak loudly enough to make sure we get a good recording.

Personal belongings   You are not allowed to have any personal belongings with you when you take the test. Notepads and pens will be provided for you. Any notes you take will remain in the testing room after you leave.

Appendix M   General Questions & Answers

This page should be adapted to conform to any applicable state or local legal requirements.

Rate of speech: The prerecorded simultaneous portion of the test is recorded at approximately 120 words per minute. This is a comfortable pace, slower than most ordinary courtroom speech.

Stopping the test/repeats: The simultaneous portion of the test may not be stopped once it has begun. The test begins after one minute of introduction. If you don't know a word or phrase, it is to your advantage to do the best you can and continue on with the script. During the consecutive portion of the test, you may request two repeats; that's two repetitions for the entire consecutive portion, not two per passage.

Dictionaries or personal notes: These are not allowed during the test. After the test begins, you would not have time to refer to them and still keep up.

How is the test scored? Each exam will be assessed by the number of correct scoring units earned. Scoring units are particular words and phrases that are selected to represent various features of language that interpreters encounter in their work, and that they must render accurately and completely, without altering any of the meaning or style of speech.

Two Raters score the test, and in order for a scoring unit to be counted as incorrect, both Raters must agree that there was an error. The Raters are professional interpreters who are certified in the language being tested and who have extensive interpreting experience and training, or are linguistics experts that have been identified and trained. They will not know who you are.

Does the test take into account that there are different expressions (in both the non-English and English language) used in different parts of the country and in different non-English-speaking countries and regions? YES. The test is designed to be free of regionalisms in both the non-English and English language and has been reviewed carefully and pilot tested. Any acceptable regionalism may be used in your interpretation as long as it accurately conveys the meaning of the source language and remains faithful to the original style or register of speech.

When will I know the results? Your test results will be reported to you in approximately **[NUMBER OF DAYS/WEEKS]**.

Who will know my test scores? Only you and the **[STATE NAME]** Interpreter Manager will have access to your test scores after they are compiled by the National Center for State Courts. Detailed individual scores will be released, upon request, to any state court interpreter Manager. You may request that your test results be released to an entity or entities of your choice – you will be asked to sign a release form and a fee may be charged for the service.

Appendix N   Test Candidate Agreement for the Oral Exam

TEST CANDIDATE AGREEMENT
(Court Interpreter Oral Exam)

THIS TEST CANDIDATE AGREEMENT, dated as of the date written below ("Agreement"), is entered into by and between the NATIONAL CENTER FOR STATE COURTS, a not-for-profit corporation headquartered in Williamsburg, Virginia ("NCSC"), and the TEST CANDIDATE (referred to herein in the first person as "I", "me", and "my") whose information is filled-in below:

Printed name: _____

Residing at   _____ (Street No.)

                       _____ (City, State)

        WHEREAS, the NCSC engages in the development, preparation, monitoring, revision, provision, and recordkeeping of oral examinations to be taken by individuals wishing to be credentialed as court interpreters in the courts of the jurisdictions administering the examinations with respect to various foreign languages (each such examination, an "Exam" and, collectively, the "Exams"); and

        WHEREAS, I wish to be eligible to be credentialed as an interpreter in the State courts, and I intend to sit for one or more of the Exams;

        WHEREAS, the Exams contain proprietary NCSC content subject to copyright protection under federal, state, and international copyright law;

        NOW, THEREFORE, the parties hereto, intending to be legally bound, agree as follows:

        1. In consideration for my being permitted to sit for one or more Exams and to have my performance on each such Exam rated and the results tabulated and reported to the jurisdiction in which I wish to be eligible to serve as a court interpreter, I agree –

        (a)   that for each Exam I wish to take I shall pay such registration fees as the relevant jurisdiction or its agent may customarily charge for test candidates;
        (b)   that copying, recording in any medium (electronic or otherwise), transmitting, or disclosing any content (including without limitation any description of Exam script storylines or included terminology) from any Exam to any third party, or from any third party to me, constitutes cheating and is in violation of the NCSC's copyright; and
        (c)   that I shall not copy, record or transmit in any medium (electronic or otherwise, whether on paper or other notes in any form, or by use of any device (including without limitation any cell phone, camera, audio or video recording device, scanners, or other data recording equipment)), nor shall I divulge, disclose, reproduce, summarize, discuss, or otherwise communicate (whether from memory or otherwise) with any other person or entity (whether in person or via electronic communication, including without limitation blog posts, chat rooms, or

social media) any Exam content (including without limitation any description of Exam script storylines or included terminology) during the testing period or at any time thereafter.

2. In consideration of my undertakings in this Agreement, the jurisdiction in which I seek to be credentialed may allow me to sit for one or more Exams and will process and report my test results to the NCSC. I understand that obtaining the minimum required scores is a prerequisite to my being credentialed as a court interpreter in the jurisdiction that is administering a given Exam for which I decide to sit, and I am entering into this Agreement knowingly, intentionally, and voluntarily.

3. I understand, acknowledge, and agree that my failure to abide by this Agreement –

(a) will invalidate any and all Exam results;
(b) may be reported to the courts and law enforcement authorities;
(c) at the discretion of the credentialing jurisdiction, may result in suspension or revocation of any existing credential permitting me to serve as a court interpreter in the jurisdiction;
(d) may result in my being precluded from taking any NCSC Exam in any jurisdiction;
(e) may subject me to liability for monetary damages to compensate the NCSC for losses, costs, damages, liabilities, claims, expenses (including interest, court costs, reasonable fees and expenses of lawyers, accountants and other experts and professionals, or other reasonable fees and expenses of investigation or litigation or other proceedings) occurring due to my violation of NCSC copyrights;
(f) may subject me to civil liability or criminal prosecution for infringement of copyright, which, upon conviction, can result in criminal fines, imprisonment, or both.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement or caused it to be executed by their undersigned representatives as of the date written below.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR STATE COURTS

By: Daniel J. Hall
Vice President, Court Consulting Services

TEST CANDIDATE

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____, 20__

Page 2 of 2

TEST PROCTOR'S INCIDENT REPORT

State Name _____ Date of Testing _____

Test Language and Version _____ Proctor's Name _____

                                                          (please print)

Candidate ID _____ Test Part _____

Please specify problem(s), (e.g. with test script, with test recording, with test administration)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do not use this form for routine test administrations. This form is for reporting any unusual occurrence or deviation from the standards.

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2 REPEATS REMAINING

1 REPEAT REMAINING

0 REPEATS REMAINING

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DOCUMENTATION OF ACCOMMODATION FOR THE COURT INTERPRETER ORAL CERTIFICATION EXAM

This document must be completed by an appropriate professional (doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist, or education professional) to certify that the applicant's disabling condition requires an exam accommodation.

If there is existing and current documentation of having the same or similar accommodation provided to the applicant in another test situation, it may be submitted instead of having this portion of the form completed.

Exam Description

The court interpreter oral certification exam is designed to determine whether test-takers possess the minimum levels of language knowledge and fluency in both languages, and the ability to successfully render meaning from one language into another in each of the three modes of interpreting that are required of court interpreters. The three modes of interpreting are:

- Sight translation of documents;
- Consecutive interpreting; and
- Simultaneous interpreting.

Each portion of the exam is administered as follows:

Sight Translation: This part of the test simulates an interpreter reading (1) an English document aloud into the non-English language, and (2) a non-English document into English. Each of the two documents is approximately 225 words in length. After instructions are given, the candidate is allowed six minutes to complete the English document, and six minutes to complete the non-English document. The candidate's oral renditions are digitally recorded.

Consecutive Interpreting: This is the appropriate form of interpreting for non-English speaking witnesses, and other question-answer situations. During this portion of the test, the test taker listens to an audio recording at normal conversational pace, and interprets English language questions (segments) into the foreign language, and foreign language answers (segments) into English. The test taker may ask to have two of the segments repeated. Candidates are encouraged to take notes to assist their memory. The consecutive script is 850-950 words in length. The test taker is given approximately twenty minutes to complete this portion of the exam, but the precise time depends on the actual number of words in the test version. The test taker's oral renditions are digitally recorded.

Simultaneous Interpreting: Simultaneous interpreting occurs when a person interprets what someone is saying, at the same time they are saying it. This is the appropriate mode of interpreting for many situations interpreters encounter in the courtroom, for example, interpreting for defendants during

hearings and trials. This part of the exam consists of a CD recording of a simulated attorney's opening or closing statement to a judge or jury. It is approximately 800 to 850 words in length, is recorded at an approximate speed of 120 words per minute, and is approximately seven minutes long. The test taker listens to the prerecorded English passage through earphones and, while listening, interprets aloud into the non-English language. The test takers oral renditions are digitally recorded.

Standard Testing Conditions: The exam is given in its entirety, and typically takes less than one hour to complete. The exam is typically administered in a small classroom or meeting room, and the test taker will take the exam in the presence of only one Proctor.

For questions about exam content and conditions, please contact _____.

PROFESSIONAL'S DECLARATION

I HAVE KNOWN _____ SINCE _____
                          (APPLICANT NAME)   (DATE)

AS A _____ I HAVE DIAGNOSED OR EVALUATED THE
          (PATIENT OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP)

APPLICANT MYSELF AND I AM NOT RELYING UPON FACTS RELATED TO ME BY THE APPLICANT. MY

DIAGNOSIS IS _____.
                      (DESCRIBED MEDICAL OR OTHER CONDITION)

THE APPLICANT'S FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS DUE TO THE DISABILITY THAT LEAD TO THE NEED FOR AN

ACCOMMODATION ARE: _____

_____

I HAVE REVIEWED THE EXAM DESCRIPTION ON PAGES 1-2. IT IS MY PROFESSIONAL OPINION THAT BECAUSE OF THE APPLICANT'S DISABILITY, HE/SHE SHOULD BE ACCOMMODATED BY PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING:
- ❒ Large print type (font size _____)
- ❒ An alternate testing area (describe: _____)
- ❒ Extra time (how much? _____)
- ❒ A reader for the sight translation portion
- ❒ Other accommodation (describe _____)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

SIGNATURE OF THE PROFESSIONAL: _____

TITLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL: _____

PRINTED NAME OF THE PROFESSIONAL: _____

DATE: _____ TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

Please return the original of this completed form, at your earliest convenience to:

[Insert name and contact information for state court interpreter Program Manager]

The National Center for State Courts develops bilingual oral interpreting examinations for use by state court interpreter programs to ensure an objective, uniform, and nationwide performance standard for court interpreter candidates. The scoring process for these exams is based on objective scoring units which are specific linguistic phenomena that interpreters must be able to deliver for a complete and accurate interpretation. (For additional information on objective scoring units see the descriptions at the end of this document. For detailed information on the overall scoring process, see the **Test Construction Manual** and the **Test Rating Manual**: http://www.ncsc.org/Services-and-Experts/Areas-of-expertise/Language-access/Written-and-Oral-Exam-Resources.aspx**.**)

Following the oral interpreting examination, candidates receive a Results Report Form which indicates test results, including the number of objective scoring units rendered correctly. Although there are a number of factors that may impact a candidate's performance, the Results Report Form *does not* include a holistic assessment or a diagnostic evaluation of the candidate's performance. Therefore, the following examples were designed to assist candidates who want to know why they may have obtained scores lower than they anticipated. Below are **common interpreting deficiencies** that negatively impact performance:[40]

Common Oral Interpreting Exam Performance Deficiencies

Inaccuracies with Numbers	Candidates misinterpret numbers in any of a variety of ways, e.g., inverting some of the numbers (such as changing 2345 to 2354), omitting some of the numbers in a date or address (e.g., getting the month and year but omitting the number of the day in a date), or just getting them wrong (such as interpreting 86 as 56).
Language Interference	Candidates cannot keep the two languages separate from each other, allowing one language to affect how the candidate interprets into the other language. This often results in an interpretation that is awkward and confusing or even unintelligible to a native speaker of that language. One primary example of this is the use of false cognates, words that sound the same and/or are spelled the same but have completely different meanings in the two languages.
Literal Interpretation	Candidates tend to be bound too much by the source material, resulting in renditions that are too literal, stilted, or at times incomprehensible, and do not sound natural in the target language. Oftentimes, the renderings are "word for word" or driven by the mistaken assumption that the interpretation should be "literal." This is especially problematic for many interpreters during the sight translation section.

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[40] Deficiencies presented here are meant to be general, and are not specific to particular language pairs.

Omissions	Candidates completely leave out certain words, phrases, sentences and sometimes even entire paragraphs of source material.
Paraphrasing	Candidates render an approximate or condensed version of the original in his/her "own words" instead of preserving all the elements of the original message.

Primary Causes for Exam Performance Deficiencies

There are several fundamental reasons why an interpreter candidate may demonstrate some or all of the exam performance deficiencies listed above.

1. Many candidates **lack the high level of language proficiency** in one or both languages tested that is required for successful court interpretation. The primary features of this deficiency are:
   - Inadequate range of general vocabulary (including idioms, slang, adjectives, adverbs, verbs and nouns) as well as legal terminology.
   - Inability to construct sentences and use one or the other language appropriately (i.e. grammar).
   - Failure to preserve not just the meaning of the source material, but also its pragmatic use in discourse (issues of emphasis, nuances, and subtleties).
   - Difficulty maintaining the level of language (register) of the source material.

2. Some candidates **lack developed professional interpreting skills** and cannot successfully perform one or more of the three modes of court interpretation. In the sight translation section, many do not know how to analyze a written document and then deliver a smooth oral rendition of it into another language. In the consecutive mode, many candidates have not adequately developed their short-term memory and do not know how to take and use notes effectively to handle utterances that vary in complexity and length. During simultaneous interpretation, many candidates cannot keep up with the speed of the recorded test material, which causes them to fall behind.

3. Candidates also exhibit a **lack of preparation** for the exam. Before the exam, all candidates should prepare by carefully reading and studying test overview documents located at the following website: http://www.ncsc.org/Services-and-Experts/Areas-of-expertise/Language-access/~/media/Files/PDF/Services%20and%20Experts/Areas%20of%20expertise/Language%20Access/Written%20and%20Oral/Overview_of_the_Oral_Exam_REV7_31_2012.ashx. Candidates should also engage in sustained and frequent practice in each of the modes of interpretation, and be well rested on the day of the exam. Candidates who know exactly what to expect will be better prepared on test day.

4. Finally, candidates also often display a **lack of attention to detail** while taking the exam. During the exam, candidates should follow directions carefully, and pay close attention to every element of the source language material to be interpreted, being careful not to change, soften, harden, omit, or otherwise alter the meaning of the source material.

The field of court interpreting requires a superior command of two languages. Candidates must possess a mastery of both languages to be able to handle the widest range of language terms that may be presented in the courts—from specialized legal and technical terminology to street slang. Candidates must also possess professional interpreting skills. The wide base of knowledge and professional interpreting skills necessary can be acquired through taking college courses, reading widely in many fields of endeavor, observing many hours of court proceedings, internships, mentoring, studying reputable glossaries and dictionaries, and developing one's own glossary and comparing terminological research with colleagues. Additionally, attending workshops and training events at professional court interpreter conferences may assist with the development of other knowledge, skills, and abilities essential for court interpretation.

It is also imperative for candidates to acquire interpreting techniques through training and practice. It is highly recommended that candidates record themselves while interpreting in a controlled environment.

Practice state court interpreter examinations available from the National Center for State Courts can be ordered at the following links:

Spanish: https://apps.ncsc.org/PracticeExamKit/CIPEK-ORDER.aspx

Language Neutral: https://apps.ncsc.org/PracticeExamKit/CIPEK-ENGLISH-ORDER.aspx

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Additional Information on Scoring Units

Scoring units represent objective characteristics of language that the interpreter must understand and render appropriately during the interpretation. Each scoring unit is a word or phrase that captures a logically complete linguistic unit.[41]

Tests are scored on the basis of these scoring units. The following table lists the ten categories of scoring units and their corresponding testing goals:[42]

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[41] William E. Hewitt, *Court Interpretation: Model Guides for Policy and Practice in the State Courts,* (National Center for State Courts, 1995), 104.

[42] Information taken from the **Test Construction Manual**: http://www.ncsc.org/Services-and-Experts/Areas-of-expertise/Language-access/~/media/Files/PDF/Services%20and%20Experts/Areas%20of%20expertise/Language%20Access/Written%20and%20Oral/Test_Construction_Manual_rev_612.ashx

Scoring Unit Descriptions and Testing Goals

SCORING UNIT CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	TESTING GOAL(S)
A: Grammar	"Grammar is a system of principles that govern the way a language works. Grammar describes how words are related to each other, particularly how they function in sentences."[43]	Ensure that candidates recognize and, within the limits of the source and target languages, satisfactorily handle the interpretation of grammar, especially verbs.
B: Language Interference	Terms or phrases that may invite misinterpretation due to interference of one language on another (e.g., false cognates, awkward phrasing, terms or phrases susceptible to literal renditions resulting in loss of precise meaning).	1-Measure the ability to keep languages separate, speaking them as an educated native speaker would, with no interference from the other language, and 2-Measure the ability to avoid being constricted unnecessarily by the source language resulting in interpretations that are literal or verbatim.
C: General Vocabulary	Vocabulary that is widely used in ordinary parlance and could be spoken by native speakers appearing in any courtroom.	1-Measure the ability to preserve lexical content of general source language terms when interpreted into the target language, 2-Measure the depth and range of candidate's vocabulary, and 3-Measure the ability to tap into a deep reservoir of vocabulary without hesitating or stumbling.
D: Legal Terms and Phrases	Any word or phrase of a legal or technical nature, or which is not common in everyday speech, but is commonly used in legal settings.	Measure the candidate's range of knowledge and recognition of common legal terms and styles of language used in courtrooms and the ability to faithfully interpret them into the target language, going into both languages, but especially from English into the other language.
E: Idioms and Sayings	An *idiom* is a speech form or an expression of a given language that is peculiar to itself grammatically or cannot be understood from the individual meanings of its elements[44]. *Sayings* are short expressions such as aphorisms and proverbs that are often repeated and familiar setting forth wisdom and truth.	Determine the candidate's breadth of knowledge and understanding of a language's common idioms and sayings, and the ability to interpret the meaning or an equivalent idiom or saying in the target language.
F: Register	Style of language drawn upon in various social settings; a key element in expressing degrees of formality, including curses, profanity, and taboo words. Register shows, through a pattern of vocabulary and grammar, what a speaker or	Assess the candidate's ability to preserve the level of language so that others' impression of the speaker is not raised or lowered by the interpreter and assess the candidate's ability to interpret offensive terminology.

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[43] DiYanni, Robert, and Pat C. Hoy II. *The Scribner Handbook for Writers.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 199, p. 221.
[44] *The American Heritage College Dictionary*, Third Edition, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997, p. 674.

	writer is doing with language at a given moment.	
G: Numbers and Names	Any number, measurement, or proper name.	Measure the candidate's ability to be precise and accurate with all numbers, maintain weights and measures as stated in the source language without conversion, maintenance of names of businesses, streets, etc. without interpreting them (except that "Avenue, "Street," etc. may or may not be interpreted, but the actual name is not to be interpreted), and conservation of every letter of a spelled name in the proper order.
H: Markers, Intensifiers, Emphasis and Precision	Any word or phrase giving emphasis or precision to a description (e.g., adverbs, adjectives) or statement (e.g., can be grammatical in form), including time movement (e.g., the day after tomorrow, last night, next week).	Ensure that the various ways of marking speech are preserved so the same degree of impact and precision is conveyed to the listener of the interpretation.
I: Embeddings and Position	Words or phrases that may be omitted due to position (at the beginning or middle of a long sentence, second in a string of adjectives or adverbs) or function (tag questions).	Ensure that candidates preserve all elements of the source language, especially those that they may deem to be unimportant, or forget due to their location or function in the utterance.
J: Slang and Colloquialism	Slang and colloquialisms are informal, nonstandard words or phrases that are used in informal, ordinary conversation but not in formal speech or writing and are identified in standard dictionaries as "slang," "colloquialism," or "informal" or are listed in published dictionaries of slang and/or colloquialisms or in scholarly articles and books so identifying them. Slang items, which are coined by social groups, may be used in test texts only when they have passed into widespread usage across the United States.	Measure the candidate's range of knowledge of nonstandard, informal forms of speech and their ability to interpret the meaning of such words and phrases without being bound to preserve their low register.