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

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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 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:
  - **The Test Writing Handbook** (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:
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.

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.

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.
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.

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, must 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.
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.

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), but no other such exams may be used. 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.

### Table 1: Approved English Proficiency Tests

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of English Proficiency Test</th>
<th>Proficiency Level Required</th>
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<tr>
<td>Versant English Test (VET)</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) iBT Speaking Score</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL Speaking Range</td>
<td>17-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Spoken Total Score</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS Spoken Total Band</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
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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.

- **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).
- **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.

- **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:
  - Completed the entire test (three sections) within one testing cycle;
  - Scored at least 70% on all three sections, including both parts of the sight translation
    section;
  - Completed the test within one state;
  - Did not take the same version of the exam more than two times; and
  - Did not take the same version of a test form more than once in a period of ten
    months.

- **Limits on Retesting:** Member states should manage their testing programs in a manner
  consistent with the following guidelines for candidates that fail an oral examination:
  a) Candidates should be retested with different test forms;
  b) Only after all available test forms have been administered to a candidate may the
     candidate then be given forms previously taken; and
  c) Candidates ideally should wait 12 months, but never less than 6 months, before
     retaking the same form of an examination.

Each program is required to adopt as many mechanisms as appropriate to limit the frequency
with which candidates retake the oral exam and report those mechanisms to NCSC staff. The
goals are to prevent overexposure of test materials, reduce the number of incidents of “state
hopping,” prevent retesting that is of limited benefit to testing programs and candidates, and
help candidates be more prepared before being retested. Following is a list of known strategies
that have been deployed, but there may be additional ones:

**Table 2: Strategies to Prevent Exam Overexposure**

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5 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.

6 Information regarding limits on retesting has been extracted from Agreements (2011) of the former Consortium.
Policies included are subject to change and are dependent on the development of NCSC Testing Agreements.
A. Require candidates to complete an additional training program (possibly including college coursework, if available) or a professional development plan to become eligible to be retested.

B. Require candidates to wait a minimum period of time between test dates (ideally one year, but never less than six months).

C. Increase registration fees for out-of-state candidates in an effort to prevent “state hopping” in search of better test results.

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

E. Require candidates to complete the certification process in the state they originally tested in.

F. Require candidates to sit for the oral examination in the state in which they plan to work.

• 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.

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. 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.

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 examination⁷, that level of qualification should clearly define what sections of the exam were passed.

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⁷ 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 SharePoint secure website. Shipping should only occur if SharePoint 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 SharePoint Secure Site

A SharePoint site has been created 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. (See Appendix B for a list of SharePoint Frequently Asked Questions.) SharePoint 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.
Access to SharePoint will be limited to web developers (Web Teks), administrators (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:

**Web Developer:** A web developer has full access to the site and is able to change site functions. A web developer serves as support to the LASS staff.

**Administrator:** An administrator (LASS staff) has access to the full site, including all libraries, documents, and folders on SharePoint. An administrator serves as support to state Program Managers and Raters.

**Program Manager:** A Program Manager has access only to the Program Manager’s specific state folder. Program Managers will also have temporary access to needed rater libraries while working with state court examinations.

**Rater:** A Rater has access to his/her library only and will be able to access this library while rating exams for a state Program Manager.

**SME:** An SME has access to his/her library only and will be able to access this library while working on an NCSC/LASS project.

**Credentials:** All users will have a username and a password to access the SharePoint Site (https://extranet.ncsc.org/CICEP). All users’ credentials will be updated every six (6) months, in the months of January and July. Provided credentials are confidential and should not be shared. If a user believes that the provided credentials have been compromised, he/she must notify LASS staff immediately.
Section 2.4. Agreements and Oaths

2.4.A. Credentials Oath: LASS staff will provide SharePoint access credentials (a user name and password) to an approved user once the Credentials Oath (Appendix D) has been signed and returned to LASS. Each state will have one SharePoint State folder, and up to two accounts will be permitted per state. The first account will be assigned to the Language Access Program Manager and the second account may be assigned to a court interpreting staff 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 material, they must sign and upload to SharePoint a Testing Materials Agreement and Oath (Appendix H).

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 SharePoint folder within two business days. Program Managers must have submitted both a Credentials 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. 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 the Program Manager the candidates’ records, including the NCSC ID numbers and test versions, via e-mail 72 hours after the registration list is received.

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8 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 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 Credentials Oath and a Test Materials Agreement and Oath in order to access oral exam materials. Once the testing materials are uploaded into the state’s folder, 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.  

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Managers send candidate list to NCSC</td>
<td>21 business days prior to test administration</td>
<td>LASS assigns candidate ID numbers and test versions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72 hours upon receipt</td>
<td>LASS posts testing materials in state folder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 weeks before test administration</td>
<td>LASS removes testing materials from state folder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 2.6. **Downloading Exam Materials**

To download the materials from the secure site, 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. The state Program Manager will need to sign and upload to SharePoint the Testing Materials Agreement and Oath for Program Managers/Court Staff (Appendix D) prior to accessing the state's assigned folder. The state will NOT have access to

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9 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.
the testing materials until this agreement is signed and uploaded to their state folder on SharePoint.\textsuperscript{10}

For the \textbf{written exam}, Program Managers will need to download only documents. For the \textbf{oral exam}, Program Managers will need to download both documents and audio files. The following options are available for downloading:

\textbf{PDF Files:}
- Print materials directly from the SharePoint Site; or
- Store the materials on a USB drive or CD

\textbf{Audio/Electronic Files}
- Store the audio materials on an MP3player, CD or an isolated file on a computer

To download the materials from the secure site, 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.\textsuperscript{11}

Once the materials are downloaded and archived into a home folder, the Program Manager must burn the materials to CDs, 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 CDs, two separate folders on the MP3 player or two separate folders on a computer. It is advisable that the Program Managers have one CD, one MP3 player or one isolated file on a computer for consecutive and one CD, MP3 player or an isolated file on a computer for simultaneous per testing room plus a back-up CD, MP3 player or computer for each section.

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

\textsuperscript{10} 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.

\textsuperscript{11} 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written Exam</th>
<th>Naming Convention</th>
<th>Exam_Version/File Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Written Exam _2_Questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Written Exam _2_Answer Key</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral Exam Script (not yet rated)</th>
<th>Naming Convention</th>
<th>Language_Version/File Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Mandarin_2_English to Foreign Language Sight Translation Unmarked for Candidates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Vietnamese_1_Scoring Unit Dictionary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate Exam Recording</th>
<th>Naming Convention</th>
<th>Candidate ID_State_Language_Version_Examination Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>123_NA_Spanish_4_Apr2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>234_NA_Somali_1_Apr2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rated Oral Exam Script</th>
<th>Naming Convention</th>
<th>Candidate ID - Rater ID_State_Language_Version/File Name_Examination Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>01234-1010_NA_Russian_2_Simultaneous_Apr2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>23456-2020_NA_Lao_1_Foreign Language to English Sight Translation_Apr2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 E).
- An Agreement and Oath placed on top of the Answer Sheet (Appendix F).

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 E).

• **Agreement and Oath** forms for candidates (Appendix F).

• 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.

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**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.
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. 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
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.

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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.

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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.

Following the disposal of materials, the Program Manager must sign the Destruction of Testing Materials Agreement and Oath and upload this document to their state folder on SharePoint. The State will NOT be able to request new testing materials if the Disposal of Written and Oral Examinations Inventory was not received by the NCSC staff for the previous testing cycle.
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:
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 Proctor training (provided by staff at the NCSC or a designee) 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.

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 Members’ Only folder on SharePoint (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.)

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.

It is imperative that both NCSC and the state ultimately obtain a signed copy of the Raters’ promise to comply with security standards. Oath forms (Appendix I) must always be sent to the Rater for signature when they rate exams. However, consider including this security information in the Rater contract, and/or obtaining a signed oath 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 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 SharePoint site is the preferred method for Program Managers to send to and receive materials from Raters. Advantages of the SharePoint site include:

- Secure exchange of test materials,
- Elimination of shipping fees, and
- Fast transmittal 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 SharePoint site, and, if any Raters cannot use SharePoint, (2) 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. Transitioning to Digital Recording: Program Managers historically recorded oral examination performances using tape recorders and cassette tapes. This method has become more and more inefficient as cassette tapes are difficult to find and expensive, and tape recorders are bulky and becoming outdated. State court interpreter Program Managers are encouraged to transition from tape recorders and cassette tapes to digital recorders as soon as possible. This transition will not only reduce costs to the NCSC and state court administration offices, but it will also improve the sound quality of candidates’ recordings, enhance the security of exam materials, and lead to easier evaluation of examination performances. While some states have already made this recording transition, these guidelines were developed to assist in transitioning from tape recorders and cassette tapes to digital recording.

State court interpreter Program Managers will need to adjust their processes for creating, naming, copying, storing, and transferring recorded candidate performances. In addition, the administration script (included in the administration manual) may need to be revised. Careful consideration should be given to the selection of digital recorders and the identification and documentation of the steps necessary to use them. Consideration must also be given to:

- Naming conventions for test recording files;
- File backup and short-term storage;
- 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.

Models currently in use by various states include:
- Marantz PMD-661 (table-top model)
- Olympus VN-6200PC 1GB Digital Voice Recorder (hand-held model)
- Olympus WS-500M Silver 2GB Digital Voice Recorder (hand-held model)
- Sony ICDBX800 2GB (hand-held model)
- Sony IC Recorder ICD-MX20 (hand-held model)

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\(^\text{12}\):
- 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.

\(^{12}\) Materials will be posted to the state folder on SharePoint to ensure secure transmission.
• 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 recorder for each testing room plus a backup recorder. External microphones for the recorders are best. If external microphones are not used, be sure that the built-in microphones are sensitive enough to make a good quality recording and that the recorder is placed directly in front of the candidate.

• Playing device with a headset for each testing room plus at least one back-up machine.

• Blank tape cassettes (If the state is using cassette recorders). It is recommended that a separate tape be used for each candidate. While this means "wasting" one side of the tape, this approach makes it less likely that any candidate’s tapes can be damaged, not recorded properly, misplaced, or mislabeled. If the entire test is being given, 120-minute tapes are recommended; if sight and consecutive tests are being given, 90-minute tapes are sufficient.\(^{13}\)

• CD cleaning cloth, if CDs are being used to play the pre-recorded test stimuli.

• Labels for test recordings and other test materials, pre-printed with candidate ID numbers.

• 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

\(^{13}\) In recent years, many states have transitioned to the use of digital recorders and other recording technology. Members must ensure a clear recording of the candidates’ performances that can be readily heard and understood by raters. Members must also ensure that, if raters need any specific type of equipment or technology to play back the recorded performance, the raters are either in possession of such equipment or technology or that it is provided to them by the member.
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 simply then presses “play” to hear a playback of the 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.

If a cassette tape recorder is being used to record the performance, Proctors should (when prompted to do so by the administration script) rewind the recording far enough for the candidate to hear his/her own voice during the last section of the test and then ask the candidate to initial the label that is on the cassette tape.

5.4.D. Cleaning and Caring for CDs: Lint or debris on the recorded surface of the CD can cause skipping. It is very important to wipe the CD with a special cloth (e.g. Kensington Surface Guardian Lint-Free Wipes). The CDs and the inner surface of the CD player should be cleaned often during test administration.

It is also very important to avoid scratching the recorded surface of the CDs. They should be handled by the edges and never placed on a rough surface. Care should also be taken when placing the CDs on the spindle of the player to avoid scratching the recorded surface, which is close to the hole in the CD. When not in use, they should be kept in the plastic sleeve.

5.4.E. Cleaning and Caring for Tape Recorders: There are four components of the recorder that must be serviced every 10 hours of operation to maintain optimal sound fidelity of the recording and playback. They are the erase head, record/playback head, capstan, and pinch roller.

To clean these components moisten a cotton swab with alcohol or head cleaner (do not saturate the swab with fluid) and wipe the parts pictured below. Use a dry cotton swab to remove any excess fluid before using the tape player.
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 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 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of English Proficiency Test</th>
<th>Proficiency Level Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Versant English Test (VET)</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) iBT Speaking Score</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL Speaking Range</td>
<td>17-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Spoken Total Score</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS Spoken Total Band</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. 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.
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. **Sight translation** of a document from English into the non-English language;
2. **Sight translation** of a document from the non-English language into English;
3. **Consecutive interpreting** from English into the non-English language, and from the non-English language into English; **and**
4. **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 **and** 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 playing device. Put on the headphones and perform a sound quality check. Unplug headphones and perform a volume check on the playing device.
3. Perform a sound check on the 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 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. If a cassette tape is being used to record the candidate’s performance, make sure a properly labeled blank tape has been inserted and is ready to record the test.

5. 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. 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 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.

**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. Escort the candidate into the testing room. 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 secret tape recordings can be made. Be alert to the possibility that the person may have a recording device 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.”

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:
• If you are using a cassette tape recorder that has a tape counter, check to see that the tape counter is set to 000 (some tape recorders begin to make a “clicking” sound once the counter reaches the maximum 999).
• Immediately turn on the recorder so that everything said in the room is recorded.
• Check the sound-level indicators or lighted display on the machine (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].

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. 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 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.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Minutes</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic 1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Polish 1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian 1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Portuguese 1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantonese 1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Punjabi 1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French 1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Russian 1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haitian Creole 1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Russian 2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haitian Creole 2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Somali 1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haitian Creole 3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Spanish 2.3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong 1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Spanish 4.3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilocano 1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Spanish 5.1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khmer 1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Spanish 6.1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean 2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Spanish 7.1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

2. Pay close attention by following the test script so that the CD 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 tracks on the CD.

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].

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? (Wait for an answer)

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].

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).

   If you are using a **cassette tape recorder**, rewind and play back a portion of the tape to be sure you have an audible recording. Be sure to rewind far enough to determine that the candidate’s voice is audible. If not, ask the candidate to wait until the Test Administration Supervisor can be sent for. Remove the recording from the machine, have the candidate initial the tape label to verify that the ID number is correct; and put the tape in the labeled envelope.

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 Proctors 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 NUMBER ON THE RECORDER IS MATCHED ACCURATELY TO THE CANDIDATE’S IDENTIFICATION NUMBER.

IF **CASSETTE TAPES** ARE BEING USED, ALL EXAMINATION TAPES SHOULD BE COMPLETELY REWOUND AS A COURTESY TO THE RATERS.

THE **“SAFETY TAB”** LOCATED IN THE UPPER LEFT CORNER OF THE CASSETTE SHOULD BE POPPED OUT (USING A PENCIL OR OTHER SMALL, POINTED ITEM) TO GUARD AGAINST RECORDING OVER AN EXAMINATION.

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**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 Proctor 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.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^\text{14}\) 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.
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. The section numbers in the margin of the script should match the tracks on the CD.
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.
   
   If you are practicing this on a CD player, watch the track counter and note when the track counter number changes in relation to when the voice recording resumes.
5. **REPETITIONS REQUESTED BY THE CANDIDATE:** If the candidate requests a repeat of a passage, you can make that happen easily:

   **Using a CD Player:**
   
   - Press the “back” button until you reach the number immediately preceding the track number you want to replay;
   - Press “play.”

   You will want to watch the track counter always, and also be careful to not back up too far. This event requires dexterity and familiarity with the operation of the machine you are using. Not all players operate in exactly the same manner. You must experiment with skipping backward to the beginning of the current track and also to the beginning of the previous track and be comfortable that you understand the player controls before you begin testing. (Also, remember that the candidate is allowed only two repetitions of entire sections during the consecutive portion.)

   During the **actual test administration**, the following instructions should be observed:

---

15 Unless you go back to the previous track and then forward to the track you wish to replay, some CD models “clip” the first word or two of the segment.
Be careful not to cut off the last word(s) of a section of the test text (the test stimulus). Be sure the passage has been played through in its entirety before pausing the player. Practicing with the script well before testing will help you with this. The recording has a few blank seconds between sections so you can be sure the passage is complete before pausing the machine.

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

**IMPORTANT CAUTION:**

When the player is playing the foreign language part 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 actual 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 until you are certain that the interpretation is complete. If you

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**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.
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 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 CD 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 CD through the headphones. If the problem is confirmed, the Proctor should remove the CD from the CD player and replace it with the backup CD. (Again, it is important that the Proctor listen to all CDs 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 CD recordings 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 (tape recorder, CD 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_Spanish_4_Apr2014

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 burned onto CD’s or 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 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' SharePoint Folders: When a Program Manager coordinates rating directly with Raters, 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' SharePoint 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.

7.3.B. Materials to Upload to Raters' SharePoint Folders: When a Program Manager receives testing materials in its SharePoint folder prior to testing, (see Section 2.5), included will be a folder labeled “Rating Materials” for each language/version that the state is testing. Each Rating Materials folder will contain all documents required for rating. It is the Program Manager’s responsibility to upload the following item to each Rater's individual library: (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: [table]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Each Program Manager must provide the following to their Raters:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) A recording of each candidate's exam;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) The &quot;Rating Materials&quot; folder; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Any Proctor Incident Reports.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

17 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.
1. Rater results form;  
2. The marked 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. Oath for Raters and consultants;  
9. Scoring unit suggestion forms; and  

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 SharePoint and notify them that the materials are available. (NCSC staff will ensure that Raters have access to their folders. Staff will also assist Raters with the set-up and use of SharePoint.)

7.3.C. Preparing Materials for Shipment to Raters: Although it is recommended that Program Managers transmit documents electronically to Raters via SharePoint, 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.

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

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18 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.
19 “Marked” means that the scoring units are bold and underlined.
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 SharePoint: 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 SharePoint folder marked scripts, results forms for each candidate, and a signed oath. The Program Manager must then transfer the exam materials from the Rater’s SharePoint folder to the State SharePoint folder. (Note: the Rater may have files in his/her SharePoint folder for multiple states. 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. 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 SharePoint:
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 receiving 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.\(^\text{21}\) A large “X” shall be written through the scoring units (bolded, underlined text) if it was rendered incorrectly.
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

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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. Bundle up and return all exam materials to the Lead Rater 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 is desirable. 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, SharePoint, 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 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.22

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
• 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

22 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
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. 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.

Section 7.9. Disposal of Testing Materials

Following confirmation that LASS staff has successfully received all candidate information, the Program Manager will have a period of 24 hours to delete or destroy hardcopies of the written and oral examination materials that were provided by the LASS staff23. Following the disposal of materials, the Program Manager must sign the Destruction of Testing Materials Agreement and Oath (and upload this document to their state folder on SharePoint. The State will NOT be able to request new testing materials if the Disposal of Written and Oral Examinations Inventory was not received by the NCSC staff for the previous testing cycle.

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.

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23 LASS Staff will be responsible for deleting materials on the secure site.
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.

Audio CDs should be physically destroyed and disposed of properly\(^\text{24}\).

\(^{24}\) 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.²⁵

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;
   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

²⁵ 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.
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 after each administration of a given exam and prior to the next administration of that exam to ensure reliability for the rating process.26

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 $12,000.27

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.

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26 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.

27 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.
Appendix B  SharePoint Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I download a document from my library?
   - Select your library from the left pane
   - Click ‘Library Tools’ header
   - Click ‘Documents’ tab
   - Select the document to download
   - Click on ‘Download a Copy” or ‘Export’

2. How do I download multiple documents from a library?
   - Select your library from the left pane
   - Click ‘Library Tools’ header
   - Click ‘Documents’ tab
   - Select the documents to download
   - Click on “Export All”

3. How do I move or copy a document from/to libraries?
   - Select your library from the left pane
   - Click ‘Library Tools’ header
   - Click ‘Documents’ tab
   - Select the documents to move/copy
   - Click on ‘Copy Document’ or ‘Move Document’
   - Select the library where the document is to be copied or moved

4. How do I upload a file or multiple files to a library or folder?
   - Select your library from the left pane
   - Select a folder (if using one)
   - Click ‘Library Tools’ header
   - Click ‘Documents’ tab
   - Click ‘Upload Document’ button
   - Select ‘Upload Document’ or 'Upload Multiple Documents'

5. Why are my credentials not working?
   - Make sure you are logging into the correct website:
     https://extranet.ncsc.org/CICPEP (don’t forget the "s" after the "p" in https).
• Your credentials are case sensitive; make sure you are entering them as given by LASS staff.
• Don’t confuse the O (the letter) for the 0 (the number). Your credentials have a 0 (zero) after the D: NCSCAD0\USERNAME.
• Are you leaving a space before or after entering your username or password? If you are, the site is detecting your credentials as incorrect.
• If you are still having challenges, please contact NCSC.

6. Why is it taking a long time to upload/download?
• Many of the files that you are downloading have a lot of data, so it might take a while. You may want to plan accordingly.
• Your server might not recognize the site and its content. If this is the case, please add the site link into your secure site under internet options.
• You may need to contact your IT department so they can do their magic to allow the site on your court server.

7. I downloaded the materials, where did they go?
• Make sure to check your “downloads” files.
• If you assigned them a home folder while downloading, check that folder.

8. Why can’t I download files?
• Your server might not recognize the site as secure. Make sure you enter the link: https://extranet.ncsc.org/CICEP under your secure sites under internet options. You might also want to contact your IT department.

9. Why did my screen go white when I tried to login?
• This could be an authentication issue. Please contact NCSC, so that they can help you resolve this problem.
Appendix C  
SharePoint Credentials Oath

The SharePoint State Courts Interpreter Testing Site  
Language Access Services Section  
Credentials Agreement & Oath for Raters

I, __________________________, hereby state that I will not share the credentials assigned to me by the Language Access Services Section (LASS) to access the SharePoint State Courts Interpreting Testing Site (SharePoint) with anyone. If, I believe that my credentials have been compromised, I am to notify the LASS immediately to suspend my credentials and create new credentials.

Rater

Signature: __________________________

Printed Name: __________________________

Date: __________________________

Court/ State: __________________________

Language Access Services Section

Received by: __________________________

Date: __________________________

Signature: __________________________
The SharePoint State Courts Interpreter Testing
Site Language Access Services Section Credentials

Agreement & Oath for
Language Access Program
Managers

I, ________________________________, hereby state that I will not share the credentials assigned to me by the Language Access Services Section (LASS) to access the SharePoint State Courts Interpreting Testing Site (SharePoint) with anyone. If, I believe that my credentials have been compromised, I am to notify the LASS immediately to suspend my credentials and create new credentials.

Language Access Program Manager

Signature: ________________________________
Printed Name: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________
Court/ State: ________________________________

Language Access Services Section

Received by: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________
Signature: ________________________________
Appendix E

Written Exam Answer Sheet

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Date _____________________________________ Test Site City/State ____________________
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Appendices
COURT INTERPRETER WRITTEN EXAMINATION

Agreement and Oath for Test Candidates

I certify and affirm that I will not copy, record, discuss, or 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
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]
The SharePoint State Courts Interpreter Testing Site

Language Access Services Section

Testing Materials Agreement & Oath

For Program Managers and Court Staff

I, ___________________________ certify and affirm that I will not copy, record, discuss, nor in any way divulge the contents of the Testing Materials provided by the National Center for State Courts to anyone, other than staff of the Language Access Services Sections of the National Center for State Courts, during any testing period, my period of employment as a program manager, court staff 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 that I will not disclose such information either during the period of my employment as a program manager/court staff or thereafter.

Language Access Program Manager/Court Staff

Signature: ___________________________

Printed Name: ___________________________

Date: ___________________________

Court/ State: ___________________________

Language Access Services Section

Received by: ___________________________

Date: ___________________________

Signature: ___________________________
Appendix I

Rater Oath Form

The SharePoint State Courts Interpreter Testing Site
Language Access Services Section
Testing Materials Agreement & Oath for Raters

I, __________________________________________ certify and affirm that I will not copy, record, discuss, nor in any way divulge the contents of the Testing Materials provided by the Language Access Services Section to anyone, other than staff of the Language Access Services Sections of the National Center for State Courts, during any rating period, my period of employment as a rater, or at any other time while the test is being rated, or utilized. I recognize that the content of any test material is of a highly confidential nature and hereby certify that I will not disclose such information either during the period of my employment as a rater or thereafter.

Rater
Signature: __________________________________________

Printed Name: _______________________________________

Date: _______________________________________________

Court/State: _______________________________________

Language Access Services Section

Received by: _________________________________________

Date: ______________________________________________

Signature: _________________________________________
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 either 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. If you use synonyms of words or two versions of phrases, only the last thing you say will be counted.

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

   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.
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. If you use synonyms of words or two versions of phrases, only the last thing you say will be counted.

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

   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. If you use synonyms of words or two versions of phrases, only the last thing you say will be counted.

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

   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.
COURT INTERPRETER ORAL EXAM

Agreement and Oath for Test Candidates

I certify and affirm that I will not copy, record, discuss, nor in any way divulge the contents of the [STATE NAME] interpreting proficiency test, either during the testing period or at any other time thereafter.

Signature               Date

Print Name

TEST ID#
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)

________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________

Do not use this form for routine test administrations. This form is for reporting any unusual occurrence or deviation from the standards.
Appendix P  Templates for Repeats in Consecutive

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2 REPEATS REMAINING
1 REPEAT REMAINING
Appendix Q  Sample ADA Accommodation Request for Oral Exam

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 _____________________________.

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**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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Oral Interpreting Exam Performance Deficiencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inaccuracies with Numbers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Interference</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literal Interpretation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deficiencies presented here are meant to be general, and are not specific to particular language pairs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Omissions</th>
<th>Candidates completely leave out certain words, phrases, sentences and sometimes even entire paragraphs of source material.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrasing</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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.  

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:


### Scoring Unit Descriptions and Testing Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORING UNIT CATEGORY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>TESTING GOAL(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: Grammar</td>
<td>“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.”&lt;sup&gt;31&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Ensure that candidates recognize and, within the limits of the source and target languages, satisfactorily handle the interpretation of grammar, especially verbs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Language Interference</td>
<td>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).</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: General Vocabulary</td>
<td>Vocabulary that is widely used in ordinary parlance and could be spoken by native speakers appearing in any courtroom.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Legal Terms and Phrases</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Idioms and Sayings</td>
<td>An <em>idiom</em> 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.&lt;sup&gt;32&lt;/sup&gt; <em>Sayings</em> are short expressions such as aphorisms and proverbs that are often repeated and familiar setting forth wisdom and truth.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Register</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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writer is doing with language at a given moment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>G: Numbers and Names</strong></td>
<td>Any number, measurement, or proper name.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H: Markers, Intensifiers, Emphasis and Precision</strong></td>
<td>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).</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I: Embeddings and Position</strong></td>
<td>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).</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J: Slang and Colloquialism</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>