

TEST ADMINISTRATION STANDARDS

ENTIRE TEST OR PHASE 2 (SIGHT AND CONSECUTIVE)

ATTENTION PROGRAM MANAGERS AND TEST ADMINISTRATOR SUPERVISORS

The instructions provided in this manual should be followed very closely. All test proctors who administer Consortium 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.

Consortium for Language Access in the Courts

November 1998
Revised: September 2000
Revised: March 2003
Revised: August 2004
Revised: July 2005
Revised: November 2010

INTRODUCTION

These instructions apply to test administration, using a pre-recorded stimuli for the consecutive and simultaneous exercises, for either Phase 2 (consecutive and sight) or complete administration of the interpreter proficiency examination.

DEFINITIONS

At each testing site, there will be individuals performing the following roles:

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 Consortium staff or the member court or agency 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 Consortium for Language Access in the Courts' *Agreements for Consortium Organization and Operation*.

Test registration clerk. The test registration clerk is the person to whom examinees report when they appear for the test. The clerk secures identification, registers the examinee, provides them with necessary pre-test information, and maintains security in the waiting area.

Test proctor. The test proctor is the person who will greet the candidates after they have registered and escort them to the testing room. The proctor has been trained to administer the test in the same fashion to all candidates. The proctor will also escort the examinees to the exit when they have finished taking the test.

SECURITY

The continued security of all test materials and instruments is of extreme importance. The cost of developing oral proficiency examinations is high. If test materials or instruments are compromised, it forces the Consortium 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

Every program manager and trained test administrator should be made aware of the security concerns as they relate to Consortium examinations.

When examinees arrive for an examination, they should not be allowed to take briefcases, gym bags, coats, and other personal belongings into the testing room. All examinees should be advised prior to the testing date not to bring any personal belongings with them. The test environment should include registration personnel who can offer to hold any personal belongings for the examinee until the conclusion of the exam. If the examinee insists upon taking a personal item into the testing room (the best example of this is a lady’s purse), place the item as far away from the test recordings and microphones as possible. If a cabinet or drawer is available, place the item in the cabinet or drawer and close it. The administration supervisor does have the option to reschedule an examinee’s test for another date if that becomes necessary; however, good advance planning and advice to examinees prior to the test date will usually avoid situations like this one.

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 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 administration supervisor’s room in a secure location.

Whenever test scripts, test stimuli, scoring dictionaries, and test results report forms are being shipped from one location to another, the shipment should always be via a traceable method (USPS, FedEx, UPS, etc.). Notice should be provided to the recipient that the materials have been shipped and the expected delivery date. Shipments should be timed so as not to be in a warehouse or mailroom over a weekend.

When test materials are received in the program manager’s office from Consortium staff at National Center for State Courts, the Inventory Control Sheet should be checked to insure

receipt of all the necessary items and the date of receipt entered on the Inventory Control Sheet. While in possession of test documentation and pre-recorded test stimuli, the program manager must store items 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.

All test materials must be returned to the National Center for State Courts at the conclusion of the test session. The Inventory Control Sheet should be completed and returned with the test materials and instruments.

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

Materials and supplies required on test day that will be provided by the Consortium include:

- 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 and General Questions and Answers (see Appendices 1 and 2). These should be distributed to candidates on the day of testing.
- Agreement and oath for candidates (See Appendix 3). Each candidate must sign an oath form on the day of testing.
- Test proctor incident reports to record any happenings that are unusual (see Appendix 4).
- Tent cards for managing repetitions during the consecutive portion of the test (see Appendix 6). The tent cards should be printed on card stock.

Materials and supplies required on test day that are provided by the member/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 member 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.¹
- CD cleaning cloth, if CDs are being used to play the pre-recorded test stimuli.

¹ In recent years, members are beginning to use digital and other, newer recording technology. That is completely acceptable, but members must ensure a clear recording of the examinees' 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. See page 17 of this manual for more information about digital recordings.

- Labels for test recordings and other test materials, pre-printed with candidate ID numbers.
- Water pitcher and cups.
- Note pad and pen or pencils.
- Box of tissues, if possible.
- Manila file folders or envelopes for storing candidates' notes. (Or, destroy candidates' notes when the candidate is finished and leaves the test room.)
- Stop watch or other timing device.

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

If a 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.

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.

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 examinee and proctor across from each other, and large enough to accommodate a playing device, a recorder, a box of tissues, pads and pencils/pens, a glass of water, and any external microphones that may be used.
- a comfortable chair for the examinee and for the proctor.
- additional chairs should be moved away from the table, especially on the examinee'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 examinee. 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 examinee with his/her back to the window. If artwork or decorative items are present in the room that may be distracting to the examinee, remove them or place them in an area that is out of sight or arrange the room so that the examinee 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 examinee or the proctor. (Material provided to the examinee prior to the test date should have included a "tip" for the examinee to bring a sweater 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.

PREPARATION OF EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

WARNING:

Each 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.

Prior to the date of testing

Well in advance of the testing date, proctors should listen to the prerecorded consecutive and simultaneous stimuli, including backup recordings, all the way through.

Read Appendix 5 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.

Review all materials to ascertain if any candidate is to be provided with special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If special accommodations are being provided, be certain that proctors understand the accommodation and are prepared to administer the examination accordingly.

On the date of testing

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. Fill water pitcher, make sure cups are available. (After the candidate enters the testing room, pour water in one cup and place it near the candidate.)
2. Make sure note pad and pencils/pens are on the table in front of where the candidate will sit.
3. 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 the headphones and perform a volume check on the playing device.
4. 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.

5. If a cassette tape is being used to record the examinee's performance, make sure a properly labeled blank tape has been inserted and is ready to record the test.
6. Position the tent cards on the table so that the top one faces the examinee.

TEST ADMINISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

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 poured 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 dictionary.

Do you have any questions about these instructions?

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 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.

CONSECUTIVE

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:

Language	Minutes	Language	Minutes
Arabic	25	Polish	22
Cantonese	22	Portuguese	22
French	22	Russian 1	22
Haitian Creole 1	27	Russian 2	22
Haitian Creole 2	22	Somali	31
Haitian Creole 3	22	Spanish 2.2	22
Hmong	22	Spanish 4.2	22
Ilocano	27	Spanish 5	22
Korean 2	27	Vietnamese 1	22
Laotian	22	Vietnamese 2	22
Mandarin	25		

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.*

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. After the last track of the consecutive has been played, press “pause.”

5. Please see the additional instructions in Appendix 5.

After the candidate has interpreted the last utterance, 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 to page 14. Begin reading with the words **“That's it!”**

If the complete test is being administered, proceed with these instructions for administering the simultaneous test:

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.

Hand candidate the headphones and plug them into the CD player. Wait for the candidate to adjust the headphones comfortably.

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.

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 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 sending any comments. Please send them to [NAME AND ADDRESS].

Stop the recorder.

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 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.

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).

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.

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.)

Repeat Room Preparation Instructions.

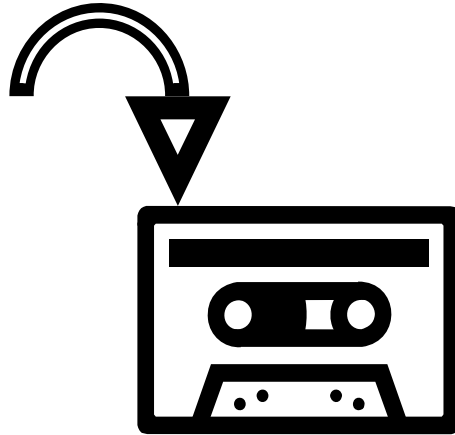
Collect the candidate's notes and put them in the folder for later destruction or destroy them immediately.

Greet the next candidate.

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

<p>IF DIGITAL RECORDERS ARE BEING USED, BE CERTAIN THAT THE FOLDER NUMBER ON THE RECORDER IS MATCHED ACCURATELY TO THE CANDIDATE'S IDENTIFICATION NUMBER.</p>
--

IF CASSETTE TAPES ARE BEING USED TO RECORD EXAMINEE PERFORMANCES 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.



The following guidelines were developed in 2010 for those members who have or who are planning to transition to digital recording. Please note that the Technical Committee’s goal is to have all members transition to digital recording by 2012.

GUIDELINES FOR TRANSITIONING TO DIGITAL RECORDING OF ORAL EXAMINATION PERFORMANCES

The Technical Committee strives to identify practices that ensure integrity in our examinations and efficient test administration methods. Members have traditionally recorded oral examination performances using tape recorders and cassette tapes. This method is proving to be more and more inefficient as cassette tapes are difficult to find and expensive, and tape recorders are bulky and becoming outdated.

The Technical Committee encourages members to transition from tape recorders and cassette tapes to digital recorders as soon as possible, with the ultimate goal of transitioning to digital recording and the secure online transmission of all test materials (including administration and rating materials and reports to staff) by January 2012. This transition will not only reduce costs to the Consortium and its members, 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 members have already made this recording transition, these guidelines were developed to assist all members to move from tape recorders and cassette tapes to digital recording. Once members are appropriately equipped and comfortable with the digital recording of examinations, the Technical Committee will develop additional guidelines and provide advice to assist members in moving to the secure online transmission of all test materials. The Technical Committee is happy to answer questions and provide assistance to any members who need information not contained in this document.

Guideline 1. Planning for Digital Recording

Members 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) will need to be replaced. Members should give careful consideration to the selection of digital recorders and the identification and documentation of the steps necessary to use them. Members will have to consider and make decisions about:

- Naming conventions for test recording files;
- File backup and short-term storage;
- File transfer to raters and/or Consortium staff; and
- Proctor training.

The following is meant to help member states through the transition process.

Guideline 2. 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 the individual needs of the member.

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. Members can consider other criteria depending

upon their priorities; for example, price, ease of use, size of function buttons, size of LCD screen, weight, etc.

Models currently in use by various members 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.

Guideline 3. Proctor Instructions

Proctors must:

- record proper identification of the test candidate,
- be alert to sound quality, and
- monitor available memory on the recorder.

At the beginning of the recording, the proctor should ask the candidate to state identifying information, such as test language, test date, and the candidate's Consortium ID number. This will allow test files to be efficiently renamed (see Guideline 5) before transfer to Consortium staff and/or raters. To ensure sound quality, the proctor should also remind candidates to speak into the digital recorder or external microphone. Lastly, proctors should monitor the recorder to ensure sufficient available memory and power if not plugged in.

Note: The Technical Committee is updating all relevant documents including the Test Administration Manual and administration script and will publish upon completion.

Guideline 4. 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 test language, test date, and candidate NCSC ID number.

Example: Spanish_20090625_12561.mp3

Guideline 5. 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 in Guideline 4, 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 Consortium 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.

Guideline 6. Long-term Storage of Test files

States *may not* retain test recordings or other test materials without formal approval by the Technical Committee. Digital test recording files may be stored for limited short-term backup purposes as described in Guideline 5 and CD or computer hard drive files must be deleted after rating is completed.

TROUBLESHOOTING FOR TEST PROCTORS

Administration of oral proficiency examinations should be administered in the same way to each and every examinee 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 examinee 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 examinee. This examinee 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 examinee. Some examinees 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 examinee 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 examinee. Proctors who administer many examinations will encounter over-solicitous examinees 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 examinee, 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 examinees 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 "bad" recording, such as skipping, distortion, or other malfunction. If, during the simultaneous portion, the examinee states the problem *prior to the start of the examination itself (in other words, during the one minute of prerecorded instructions)* the proctor should make an announcement for the tape recorder 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 tape recorder that the test will now continue and continue with the administration.

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 tape recorder, 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.

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 examinee 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.

The prerecorded introduction to the simultaneous portion of the examination informs the candidate that “if you are not ready to take the test, you should inform the proctor now.” The recording then continues with the balance of the one-minute introduction. 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 either of the machines.” These two instructions are not at odds with one another. 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, proclaims, “I am not ready to take the test,” the test can be interrupted to deal with the perceived 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 cannot 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.

APPENDIX 1

Candidate Information Sheet Phase 2 – (Sight and Consecutive Portions) or Complete 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 either Phase 2 of a two-phase testing process or a complete administration of the interpreter performance examination.
 - Phase 2 consists of sight translations and consecutive interpreting.
 - A complete administration of the interpreter proficiency examination consists of consecutive interpreting, sight translations, and simultaneous 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. These will be stored at a distance from you in the test room or in some other safe location away from the immediate testing area. Notepads and pens will be provided for you. Any notes you take will remain in the testing room after you leave.

APPENDIX 2

THIS PAGE SHOULD BE ADAPTED TO CONFORM TO ANY APPLICABLE STATE OR LOCAL LEGAL REQUIREMENTS.

General Questions and Answers

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 Coordinator 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 Consortium state representative. You may request that your test results be released to an entity or entities of your choice – you will be asked to sign a release form and a fee may be charged for the service.

APPENDIX 3

COURT INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION TEST

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

SS# (or other ID)

APPENDIX 4

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, etc:

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

APPENDIX 5

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR PLAYING THE SEGMENTS OF THE CONSECUTIVE TEST

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 preceding² the track number you want to replay;
- Press the “forward” button to the track number to be replayed;
- 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.)

² 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.

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

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** make a note of the occurrence, attach a note to the recording identifying the exact text where the problem occurred, and report 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 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.*

APPENDIX 6

Handling Repeats in the Consecutive

The following three pages represent 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 examinee, 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 examinee 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 examinee).

If an examinee 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.

**2 REPEATS
REMAINING**

**1 REPEAT
REMAINING**

**0 REPEATS
REMAINING**

CLEANING AND CARING FOR CD'S

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, sold at Staples for \$3.47 for 12). The CD's 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 CD's. They should be handled by the edges and never placed on a rough surface. Care should also be taken when placing the CD's 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.

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.

