

THE ROLE OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The purpose of this document is to report to the Consortium the results of the Technical Committee's exploration of its role and responsibilities. It is presented for the edification of the Consortium and discussion, and possibly revision, as may be appropriate. The goal is to help facilitate clarity and understanding of the Technical Committee's responsibilities.

Areas of Responsibility

The following topics are within the purview of the Technical Committee:

1. Construction and Design of Court Interpreter Performance Exams
 - Traditional model
 - Abbreviated
 - Written
 - Other
2. Administration of Court Interpreter Exams (including Instructions)
3. Content of Test Construction Manuals
4. Rating of Court Interpreter Exams
5. Language-Specific Exam Development
6. Establishing Recommended Qualification Standard Levels for Interpreters (e.g., Qualified, Master)
7. Establishing Minimum Qualifications for Test Administration and Rating
 - Program Manager
 - Test Administrator
 - Test Rating Supervisor
 - Test Rater
8. Assessments of Tests Developed by the Consortium
9. Assessments of Tests Administered by Other Organizations

Consideration of these areas of responsibility guide consideration of the overall role of the Technical Committee in the context of the General Membership, Executive Committee, and NCSC staff.

General Membership

The general membership of the Consortium should be responsible for setting the direction for the organization. Regarding topics that are assigned to the Technical Committee, the membership should approve decisions about major policy decisions regarding court interpreter testing. The membership should also approve budgets for the work of the committees.

Some of the general policy areas that should be approved by the entire Membership of the Consortium include:

1. What types of tests are to be administered?
 - Full Oral Performance Exams
 - Abbreviated Oral Performance Exams
 - Written Exams
2. What is the agreement among states regarding how tests are to be administered?
3. For which languages will additional exams be developed? (full and abbreviated oral performance exams)
4. What is the recommended status to be granted to tests administered by outside organizations?

Executive Committee

The role of the Executive Committee is to provide leadership and governance to the Consortium. The

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Executive Committee establishes agendas, orchestrates the work of the committees, and coordinates meeting agendas. The Executive Committee also makes decisions consistent with the policies established by the Consortium Membership on issues that require immediate attention. Within the overall framework of the approved budget, the Executive Committee can also make decisions about the expenditure of funds.

Some of the issues that could be addressed by the Executive Committee regarding the work of the Technical Committee might include:

1. Is the Technical Committee making progress in addressing the items on its work plan?
2. Has the Technical Committee followed approved procedures in conducting its business?
 - Notice
 - Deliberation
 - Input
 - Expertise
3. Is the Technical Committee appropriately constituted?
4. Can the Technical Committee spend funds on special projects not explicitly endorsed at an annual meeting? The Executive Committee should be able to make limited re-allocations within the approved budget. If certain expenditures are consistent with the priorities contained in the budget, expenditures can be authorized by the Executive Committee.

Technical Committee

The Technical Committee is “the expertise group” and, as such, should be comprised largely of persons who meet certain minimum qualifications. Three of the members should be designees of member states possessing as much of the expertise or experience in the following areas as possible:

- A practicing interpreter with considerable experience as a court interpreter
- Knowledge and experience of the principles and techniques of writing court interpreter certification examinations
- Experience as a rater of court interpreter certification examinations, or at least as a rating supervisor

A fourth member should be a practicing professional interpreter, preferably one with test development and rating knowledge and experience.

Given a certain level of expertise, the Technical Committee should also have limited authority to make some operational decisions that implement policies established by the membership and the Executive Committee. All decisions should be subject to review, and full notice should be provided to each member of the Consortium. For three types of decisions, the process could work in the following manner:

1. **Non-Substantive.** For these matters, the Technical Committee should have the authority to make final decisions, provided that it provides notice to the rest of the membership.

Example: Update to Test Administration Manual. Wording is changed to make the manual more user-friendly. Unclear directions are re-written. Changes are approved by the Technical Committee. Notice is provided to all members, with change effective upon receipt of notice.

2. **Substantive (Operational).** For matters that are substantive in nature but do not change Consortium policies, the Technical Committee should have the authority to make final decisions, provided that it provides notice of the proposed change to the rest of the membership, and a reasonable time for member input, before the change is effective.

Example: Change to Test Administration Procedure. Technical committee finds that Somali test

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takes longer to administer, since the utterances in Somali are longer than in most other languages. Twenty-five minutes is granted to allow Somali interpreters to complete consecutive portion of exam.

Proposed change is approved by the Technical Committee. Notice of proposed change is provided to all members, stating that change will be effective within 90 days for comment. If after a review of input, the proposal is not changed, the proposal becomes effective without further notice. If proposal is changed, amended proposal is approved by the Technical Committee, and notice provided to the membership.

3. **Substantive (Policy and Procedure).** For matters that affect the policy directions established by the Consortium, full participation by all members of the Consortium is needed. The Technical Committee makes a report and recommendations to the Consortium, and solicits input. Proposed changes are reviewed and approved by the membership of the Consortium.

Example: Technical Committee reviews RID Special Certificate: Legal program. Committee makes report to Consortium and solicits input. Technical Committee makes recommendations and solicits feedback. Technical committee reviews feedback and revises recommendations, if necessary. Consortium votes on recommendations and approves or rejects.

The Technical Committee should also make regular reports to the executive committee and the Consortium membership.

NCSC Staff

The staff of the NCSC provides valuable expertise to the members of the Technical Committee, providing a broad nationwide perspective that informs committee decisions. The NCSC also provides specific expertise in test construction, administration, and rating. The NCSC is also responsible for maintaining the records of the Technical Committee and the Consortium.

In addition, the role of the NCSC includes the following:

1. Serves as a liaison to persons responsible for test construction in states and other organizations;
2. Serves as a liaison to test construction, psychometric, and other technical consultants;
3. Identifies issues that need to be brought to the attention of the technical committee (with suggestions for action where appropriate);
4. Works on the development of glossaries;
5. Approves test and dictionary content;
6. Updates dictionary;
7. Promptly reports on problems in test administration and rating occurring in the states;
8. Provides test administration and rating services;
9. Provides technical assistance;
10. Performs statistical analysis of test results, including tests for validity and reliability; and
11. Makes editorial changes to technical committee documents.

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