



NEW YORK STATE UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM FOR COURT INTERPRETERS

Written and Oral Examination Guide for Per Diem Court Interpreters

Written Examination

For Languages Other Than Spanish: The written examination consists of 75 multiple-choice questions and is designed to assess English language proficiency and knowledge of legal terminology. Applicants are allowed one-and-a-half hours (90 minutes) to complete the examination. The examination includes the following areas: Reading and Understanding Written Material - Sentence Completion and Paragraph Comprehension; Grammar and Language Usage; Vocabulary - Synonyms and Antonyms; Idiomatic Expressions and Legal Terminology. This exam is typically administered each year in June. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis.

For Spanish: The written examination consists of 75 multiple-choice questions and is designed to assess language proficiency in English and Spanish and knowledge of legal terminology. Applicants are allowed one-and-a-half hours (90 minutes) to complete the examination. The examination includes the following areas: Translating Written Material; Grammar and Language Usage; Vocabulary - Synonyms and Antonyms; Reading and Understanding Written Material - Sentence Completion and Paragraph Comprehension; and Legal Terminology in English. This exam is typically administered each year in June. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis.

Oral Examination

Applicants who are successful on the written examination are invited to take an oral examination which is currently administered in the following languages: *Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS), Cantonese, French, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Urdu, Vietnamese, and Wolof*. The Examination is approximately one hour (60 minutes) in duration and consists of the following six (6) sections*:

- I English Sight Translation
- II Foreign Language Sight Translation
- III Consecutive Question and Answer (English and Foreign Language)
- IV One-Voice Simultaneous (English)
- V One-Voice Simultaneous (Foreign Language)
- VI Two-Voice Simultaneous (English)

For Sections I and II of this exam, applicants are required to orally interpret court-related documents that are given to the applicant at the time of the exam. Sections III through VI are a video-recording with one or two people speaking in a simulated courtroom situation. Applicants are instructed before each section as to the mode of interpreting required, that is, whether they are to do consecutive or simultaneous interpreting. Applicants are required to orally interpret all material spoken in English (source language) into the Language Other Than English (LOTE) and everything spoken in the LOTE

into English. All applicant responses are recorded into an audio file. Applicants are asked to speak clearly into the microphone in a normal tone of voice. Once the exam has started, the video **cannot** be stopped. Applicants are encouraged to continue even if they miss some words. A few errors will not keep applicants from obtaining a passing score. Applicant performance is evaluated for accuracy, completeness and fluency of the interpretations by bilingual experts.

* *Abbreviated Exams*: The Oral Assessment in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Hebrew, Hindi, Japanese, Punjabi, Urdu and Wolof, includes Sections I, II, IV and VI only at this time. When Sections III and V are developed, applicants will be required to successfully pass these sections in order to remain eligible for court interpreting assignments throughout the New York State Unified Court System.

References

Applicants interested in interpreting in languages that are not listed above must submit appropriate professional references and/or academic credentials after they have successfully passed the written examination. Professional references should specifically attest to an applicant's interpreting skills and/or language proficiency in the target language. Some acceptable references may include:

- transcripts from academic institutions showing passing grades in courses of study in the target language or in courses of study taught in the target language itself.
- passing an examination or language assessment in the target language by a recognized credentialing authority.
- proof of competent interpreting skills in courts of another jurisdiction.
- letters from individuals (other than family members or friends) or organizations attesting to applicant's language proficiency skills. The letters should include addresses and corresponding phone numbers where attesting individual may be reached during normal business hours.

Applicants must submit at least three (3) professional references for each language in which they wish to be qualified to provide interpreting services. References from UCS personnel are **not** acceptable. Subject to the verification of submitted references (and fingerprinting, as required of all court interpreters), applicants may then be qualified to provide interpreting services for New York State Unified Court System.

Note: In order to remain eligible to provide court interpreting services, applicants will be asked to participate and pass any oral examination that may be developed in the future for a language which currently has no oral examination.