

## Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) Procedures for ALTA Language Services, Inc.

**The OPI may be taken at the following locations on the following days only for 2019:**

January 10-11 <b>Registration deadline Jan. 4</b> February 21-22 <b>Registration deadline Feb. 15</b> March 21-22 <b>Registration deadline March 15</b> April 25-26 <b>Registration deadline April 19</b> May 23-24 <b>Registration deadline May 17</b> June 20-21 <b>Registration deadline June 14</b> July 25-26 <b>Registration deadline July 19</b> August 22-23 <b>Registration deadline Aug. 16</b> September 5-6 <b>Registration deadline Aug. 30</b> October 10-11 <b>Registration deadline Oct. 4</b> November 14-15 <b>Registration deadline Nov. 8</b> December 12-13 <b>Registration deadline Dec. 6</b>	<u><b>Memphis</b></u> Shelby County Justice Center
	<u><b>Jackson</b></u> Supreme Court Building
	<u><b>Nashville</b></u> Administrative Office of the Courts
	<u><b>Chattanooga</b></u> Hamilton County Courts Building
	<u><b>Knoxville</b></u> Supreme Court Building

### Testing Limitations

The candidate may take the English and target language interview as many times as needed until receiving a passing score of 12 on each interview.

#### **(1) Schedule interview by registering on-line with ALTA**

To purchase your test(s)

**Call ALTA at 1-888-465-4648** and ask them to add you to the portal. They will then send you an email with a link to purchase the OPI.

**The group code for the OPI is “ACTN”**

Please schedule to take the English and target language interviews in 30 minute increments, for example: English OPI at 10:00 a.m., Spanish OPI at 10:30 a.m. The latest time an interview can be scheduled is 3:30 p.m.

#### **(2) Notify the AOC of you testing date and time**

Once the interview has been scheduled at any location, please contact Ryan Mouser at the AOC, (615) 741-2687 or [ryan.mouser@tncourts.gov](mailto:ryan.mouser@tncourts.gov) with notification of the location, date, and time of the interview. You will be sent an email advising of the specific address to take the interviews along with directions and staff contact information.

#### **(3) What to bring to the interview**

Photo identification of one of the following: i.e., driver’s license, passport, employee ID card.

#### **(4) Length of Interview**

Each oral test takes an average of fifteen to twenty minutes and is recorded. The evaluator will ask the candidate various questions in order to get a sample of the candidate's ability to speak and comprehend the language. The questions are designed to elicit the full range of the target language, and require the candidate to perform various linguistic tasks (e.g., giving and supporting an opinion, providing a description, explaining something that occurs daily or that occurred in the past). The evaluator is listening for *what* the candidate can do with the language, as well as *how well* the candidate uses and controls the language (i.e., handling structures of the language, etc.).

#### **(5) Test Results**

Following the test, the evaluator determines the skill level of the candidate in each subcategory (**see Oral Assessment Categories**) according to ALTA's Oral Language Testing Protocol. The evaluator then assigns an overall score. Test results are reported to the AOC the next business day following the interview. Once results have been received, the AOC will email the results to the candidates within 5 business days.

<b>1</b>	A level 1 speaker has no ability whatsoever in the language. He/She cannot understand anything and can convey nothing.
<b>2</b>	A level 2 speaker can understand isolated words and simple expressions. He/She can convey isolated words or simple expressions and memorized sentences.
<b>3</b>	A level 3 person can understand and express simple sentences using subjects and verbs in the present tense. The range of vocabulary is limited to elementary needs and basic courtesies.
<b>4</b>	The level 4 person can understand basic sentences around the immediate setting as well as basic questions. He/She can express simple ideas using the present tense and may occasionally use other simple tenses. He/She can convey basic information, but has difficulty even in basic conversations.
<b>5</b>	A person at a level 5 has the ability to participate in basic conversations. The subjects are routine in nature and tend to be repetitive, for example weather. A level 5 speaker uses primarily the present tense and cannot use advanced tenses, thus is very restricted on expressing and understanding any subject other than what is most familiar to him/her. Speech is slow, and he/she requires more rephrasing and repetition to understand a native speaker.
<b>6</b>	A level 6 person can use and understand the present, past and future tenses with some errors. He/She does not use advanced tenses. He/She can easily participate in a conversation on basic subjects like weather, but not in a general conversation. He/She usually cannot understand normal native rates of speech.
<b>7</b>	A person at a level 7 cannot easily participate in general conversations. He/She can participate in conversations that are routine or on topics that are well known to the person. He/She will have trouble with a native speaker's normal pace. He/She will use simple tenses with a few errors, but will avoid advanced tenses. A candidate at this

	level in a general conversation will cause misunderstandings between himself/herself and the listener based on lack of ability to convey clearly his/her message.
<b>8</b>	A person at a level 8 can participate in general conversations surrounding routine and topics in most social and work-related settings. He/She will have trouble with some normal speed conversations and with topics that are more advanced or specialized. He/She may lack the capability to speak at a normal speed, and will not use advanced grammatical structures or will make many mistakes. A candidate at this level will potentially cause misunderstandings between himself/herself and the listener based on some lack of ability to convey clearly his/her message.
<b>9</b>	A person at a level 9 can successfully handle in-depth conversations in the target language, on a broad range of subjects and at a normal rate of speech. He/She has difficulty understanding some slang or idioms or some advanced grammatical structures, but can figure out what is said by the context of the discussion. When speaking, a person at a level 9 can express himself/herself over a broad range of topics at a normal speed. He/She may have a noticeable accent and will make grammatical errors, for example with advanced tenses, but the errors will not cause misunderstanding to a native speaker.
<b>10</b>	A person at a level 10 can handle all of the tasks that a level 9 can, with the addition of demonstrating skills such as selling and persuasion. He/She can successfully handle in-depth client questions, and does not require as much contextual support for understanding of slang and idioms. A person at this level is able to select vocabulary that conveys a finer shade of meaning with more precision than a level 9 and can better support his/her opinions. Errors in speech are few, are limited to advanced grammatical situations and do not affect understanding.
<b>11</b>	A person at a level 11 is nearly fluent. He/She can handle a wide variety of communicative tasks with finesse. His/her communication is close to that of a well educated speaker, and only encounters difficulty if speech is highly abstract. Errors in speech are very few, are limited to advanced grammatical situations and do not affect understanding.
<b>12</b>	The level 12 oral skills are equivalent to native fluency. The person can understand everything said in the language and can speak with precision and finesse using the full of grammar, vocabulary, idioms and expression.

### **Oral Assessment Categories**

The ALTA evaluation process assesses the level of skill in two areas – speaking and listening – which are further subdivided into the scoring subcategories as shown below:

**Communication** – Communication consists of four elements:

1. ACCENT: What degree of non-native accent and pronunciation does the candidate have?
2. SCOPE: How easily can the candidate express ideas?
3. SPEED: How rapidly can the candidate speak and how much does the candidate hesitate?
4. STRUCTURE: How well does the candidate use the complexity of the language?

**Comprehension** – Comprehension consists of three elements:

1. **SCOPE:** How wide is the candidate's range of comprehension?
2. **SPEED:** What speed of talking by a native speaker can the candidate understand?
3. **STRUCTURE:** What complexity of speech can the candidate understand?

**Grammar** – Grammar consists of three elements:

1. **NOUNS:** How well does the candidate use proper gender and cases (where applicable)?
2. **STRUCTURE:** How well does the candidate use complex structures?
3. **VERBS:** How well does the candidate use correct conjugations, subject-verb agreement, mood and voice?

**Vocabulary** – Vocabulary consists of one element:

1. **SCOPE:** How wide is the candidate's range of vocabulary and how precise?  
All oral evaluations are scored across these subcategories according to ALTA's scoring protocol, which encompasses each of these elements. An overall score is provided which is a holistic measurement of performance with respect to performance in all of the scoring subcategories.