Information for Teacher Prep Students Seeking Certification in World Languages

In order to obtain certification in world languages in the State of New Jersey, teacher candidates are required to demonstrate their proficiency in that language through the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), an assessment that has been developed by the American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The minimum required proficiency level is Advanced-Low, except for languages that use characters, such as Arabic and Chinese, where a minimum proficiency of Intermediate-High is required.

What is the OPI?
The OPI, administered under the auspices of Language Testing International, is an assessment of functional speaking ability in the form of a carefully structured conversation between a trained and certified interviewer and the person whose speaking proficiency is being assessed. The test is an internationally recognized, valid and reliable measure that is widely used in schools and in business to identify the proficiency level of the speaker of the language. The range of levels includes: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Superior, with the additional gradations of Low, Mid, and High for all levels except Superior. For more detailed information about the ACTFL OPI, go to: http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3348.

How does a teacher candidate register to take the ACTFL OPI?
The ACTFL Testing Office, Language Testing International (LTI), is responsible for scheduling all tests and issuing ACTFL ratings and OPI certificates. Candidates for certification must register to take the OPI and the Advanced Level Check through LTI’s Web site: www.languagetesting.com/acad_to_apply.htm.

The OPI is administered as a telephonic interview that can be easily arranged at any of New Jersey’s Regional Testing/Training Centers. The center closest to Princeton is Rutgers-New Brunswick. In addition to offering optimal conditions for the telephonic interview, the center also offers orientation sessions to acquaint candidates with the format and procedures of the OPI. Candidates wishing to avail themselves of the center’s services should contact the center at Rutgers New Brunswick using the information given below:

Rutgers University – New Brunswick
Language Institute/College Avenue Language Lab
20 Seminary Place, Room 101
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1108
Contact person: Daissy Santamaria
Contact phone number: 732-932-7373
Contact e-mail: santamar@langlab.rutgers.edu
Directions: http://maps.rutgers.edu/directions/nb.aspx

At Rutgers New Brunswick, telephonic interviews can be administered year-round, but candidates must schedule the interview in advance. The center charges a modest fee for each candidate to cover the costs for the testing room, the phone card, and personnel to proctor the OPI. This fee is
When should teacher candidates take the OPI?

It is recommended that the Official ACTFL OPI be taken no later than the fall semester of a student’s third (or junior) year. An optimum time to take an OPI is following an extended immersion experience in the target language. Sophomore year students who already can demonstrate Advanced level speaking proficiency are encouraged to take an Official OPI during that year.

If a teacher candidate does not achieve the required NJDOE rating of *Advanced-Low* on the OPI, that person is strongly advised to request OPI Diagnostic Comments from Language Testing International. OPI Diagnostic Comments outline which of the Advanced level criteria were not met, provide a thorough analysis of the student’s performance and communicate important information that can be used by both the student and professors/instructors at the college/university to fashion an appropriate plan of instruction to improve the candidate’s proficiency level. There is an additional fee for these comments.

After a period of additional language instruction and exposure to the language, the teacher candidate may apply for a retest to determine if the Advanced Low level has been achieved. Another official ACTFL OPI or an abbreviated OPI – the “Advanced Level Check” – are options for retesting. The scheduling of the retest should occur no later than the fall semester of the senior year. For more detailed information about retesting, go to: [http://www.languagetesting.com/download/retest policy2.pdf](http://www.languagetesting.com/download/retest policy2.pdf).

What are the fees associated with the ACTFL Testing:

The costs for the OPI assessments are as follows:

- An Official ACTFL OPI administered telephonically is $134.00.
- OPI Diagnostic Comments, a written evaluation of a candidate’s performance on an ACTFL OPI is $75.00
- The Official ACTFL Advanced Level Check administered telephonically is $85.00

Payment of fees is made at the time of registration using the LTI Web site.

What is ACTFL?

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) is an individual membership organization of more than 7,000 foreign language educators and administrators from elementary through graduation education, as well as government and industry. ACTFL is the author of the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* and the developer of the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). For additional information about ACTFL, visit: [http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3274](http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3274).

Who will report the results of the OPI assessment to NJDOE and how?

Test candidates are given a unique ID and directed to an LTI website for test-takers to access their
ACTFL OPI test result and print an ACTFL OPI Certificate.

Once the candidate has completed the OPI and the proficiency level is assigned, the Office of Licensing will access test scores through a special site created for the NJDOE by Language Testing International. OPI test scores are automatically posted to this secure site, unless the candidate or the University provides specific instructions NOT to release the rating to the NJDOE. Staff from the students’ college or university will not need to report this information to the NJDOE.