Preliminary Interpreter Candidate Skills Interview (PICSI)
Information for Candidates

Overview

The PICSI is an assessment designed to measure a candidate's performance as they interpret a series of 3-4 short role-play scenarios between two different languages. It evaluates the ability to understand and retain information provided in a language, and then clearly and accurately communicate that information in the other language. Versions of this test are available for customer service applicants as well as for entry level healthcare interpreter candidates.

The content, context and vocabulary are specific to the healthcare or customer service variety.

Taking the test

You will need to be alone and in a quiet area, and you will need a pen and 2-3 sheets of blank paper for note taking. You are not allowed to use any reference materials, such as dictionaries or computers. The test usually takes about 10 to 20 minutes, depending on your pace. It is administered in one of four ways:

Live Over the phone: Our scheduling staff will call and/or email you with times to take your test. Alternatively, your coordinator may schedule your test with us directly, and provide you with the date and time. Then, at the scheduled time, we will call you at the number provided to administer your assessment. We recommend (but don't require) you use a reliable *landline* telephone when available, as there are a limited number of repetitions allowed, and cellular phone reception issues can impede your performance. Be sure to also disable call waiting before your scheduled testing time, to avoid interference.

Via our Automated Testing Platform: If you or your coordinator has requested an automated test, you will receive a link via email. Clicking on this link will prompt you to begin your test at the time that best suits you. No scheduling is necessary. Your interpreted responses will be recorded online, and a human tester will score your performance after you finish. For additional information about our automated testing option, click here.

Live Online via Video Proctoring (OVP): If you or your facility has requested Online Video Proctoring, please see the following explanation with Frequently Asked Questions about Online Video Proctoring.

On-site (proctored): Some employers or training organizations may require you to take the test on-site. On-site testing allows for proctored test administration via any one of our distinct testing modalities, including our automated testing platform, live over the phone, or Online Video Proctoring (OVP). You will be provided with the address for the testing facility during the scheduling process. Be sure to allow for extra time to find the location and get settled.

How it works

Regardless of how your test is administered (live, automated platform, OVP), when you begin, you will first hear a short series of instructions. After that the first of three or four scenarios will begin. You do not need to introduce yourself to the speakers in the scenarios. You will listen closely, taking notes, and at the end of each spoken line, you will interpret the message into the other language. You should pay attention to the overall meaning, as well as to the specific terms and concepts, and do your best to convey the messages accurately and completely. You are allowed to request repetitions (only once per line), but you are not evaluated on your use of transparency or interpreter protocol during this test.

You will find additional answers to frequently asked questions about the Preliminary Interpreter Candidate Skills Interview (PICSI) below.

Frequently asked questions
(continued on next page)

Am I required to use first person interpreting?

> For this test you are encouraged to interpret in first person (using "I" or "me" and speaking as though you were the original speaker). However, no points will be deducted for third person interpretation ("He says that he…" / "She says she went…").

When are results ready? Do I receive a copy? Who else sees my results?

> Results are usually sent out within five working business days (or one week, unless there are holidays). You may receive results sooner. If you ordered through the website and paid for the test yourself, you will receive a copy, and we will also send a copy to any other parties you requested on the order form. (If you did not list any other recipients, only you will receive a copy). If your employer/school ordered and paid for the test, only they will receive a copy, which they may or may not be able to share with you, according to their own internal policy. Self-paying candidates who chose the option to enroll in the "ON-FILE" program will have their results added to a database that LanguageStat and our partner organizations may refer to when seeking talent.

Which national/regional accents are considered standard in English?

> LanguageStat acknowledges several standard regional/national dialects and accents in English including: Australian, British (including Scottish*), Canadian, Caribbean*, Indian*, Irish, New Zealander, US American (Including regional accents: Southern, Northeastern, Mid-western, and Southwestern/Native American) and South African*. (*No points will be deducted for clear and easy to understand speech in these dialects/accents. However, if speech is deemed to impede understanding for listeners from other countries or regions, score may be lowered and/or include notes mentioning impact on communication as applicable, depending on the degree of severity.)

How are results provided? What is the passing score?

> Candidates receive a two scores- one for accuracy and one for vocabulary- as well as on overall blended score. Scores are presented as percentages, and are accompanied by an A-F ranking, corresponding to a standard US grading scale. LanguageStat recommends a 75% passing score for this test, although each organization will set their own criteria according to their needs, and some may have higher (or lower) score requirements. Notes and comments included in report.

Frequently Asked Questions *(continued from previous page)*

I have been interpreting in this language at work for years. Why do I need to take this test?

> Your employer may wish to confirm or recertify your skill level for hiring, quality, safety or regulatory reasons.

How soon can I retest? How many times may I retest?

> Please check with the organization (employer or school) that requested the test to see what, if any, retest guidelines they have in place. LanguageStat recommends at least 6 months before retesting in most circumstances, but does not enforce that recommendation.

What is transparency?

> Transparency is the concept that all parties involved in the interpreted session have the right to know everything that is said, and by whom. It is particularly important in medical interpreting. For example, an interpreter should inform the party expecting the interpretation of the need to intervene if a repetition or clarification is required. Transparency can take many forms depending on the format (for example, in-person interpreters might raise their hand for a repetition, whereas an over-the-phone interpreter would need to verbally intervene using a transparency script). Please check with your employer or training program to see what standards and protocols for transparency they have in place. Transparency and protocol are not evaluated as part of the PICSI.