

# *Court Interpreter Program*

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### *Judicial Council of California*

**What is the difference between a certified California court interpreter and a registered court interpreter?**

California has both certified and registered court interpreters. The languages that require certification at this time include **American Sign Language (ASL), Arabic, Eastern Armenian, Western Armenian, Cantonese, Farsi, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.**

Candidates in these languages must take the Bilingual Interpreting Exam, as available. If your language is not included in this list, it is called a **registered language** and requires you to pass a two-part Oral Proficiency Exam (OPE).

**What tests are required for certified and registered languages?**

<b>Required Elements</b>	<b>Certified</b>	<b>Registered</b>
Written Exam	√	√
Oral Proficiency Exam (English)	Optional	√
Oral Proficiency Exam (Non-English Language)	Optional	√
Bilingual Interpreting Exam	√	Not available

The Bilingual Interpreting Exam was formerly referred to as the “Oral Exam” or the “Oral Interpreting Exam.” This is a change in name only.

**Can I become a registered interpreter in a certified language?**

No. You cannot take Oral Proficiency Exams to obtain registered status in any of the following 14 spoken certified languages: Arabic, Eastern Armenian, Western Armenian, Cantonese, Farsi, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, or Vietnamese. There is no registered status in these languages. You must meet all the steps previously described in order to become a certified interpreter in these languages.

Prometric administers court interpreter certification exams in the following languages: **Arabic, Cantonese, Eastern Armenian, Farsi, Khmer, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.**

Candidates who wish to be qualified to interpret in a certified language must take the certification exam as available.

**What is the purpose of the OPE exam?**

The OPE measures your functional ability to communicate in the individual language being tested. It does not assess your interpreting ability.

### **What is the content of the OPE exam?**

The exam itself is a 20–30 minute conversation over the telephone, between you on one end of the phone line and an American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) trained and certified interviewer on the other end of the phone line. You will take the OPE from a proctored test center. The exam has four components:

- Warm-up
- Level checks
- Probes
- Wind down

During the test, the interviewer will engage you in discussion of topics of interest, and then probe your level of speaking ability.

### **What does the OPE cost?**

**NOTE: this information below doesn't reflect the new approved prices.**

The cost for a single OPE is \$168. If you are taking OPE's for registered status, you will need to take an English OPE (\$168) plus an OPE in every language for which you are seeking registered status, and in which an OPE is offered (e.g., English \$168 + French \$168). For registered status in one language, the total cost would be \$336.

### **What is the content of the Bilingual Interpreting Exam?**

The Bilingual Interpreting Exam measures interpreting performance in the following modes.

- Sight Translation–English to Foreign Language: oral interpretation of a document written in English to the foreign language. You will be given six minutes to review the document and complete the interpretation.
- Sight Translation–Foreign Language to English: oral interpretation of a document written in the foreign language to English. You will be given six minutes to review the document and complete the interpretation.
- Consecutive Interpretation: interpretation of a simulated trial with an English-speaking attorney and a witness speaking in the foreign language. You will be given at least 22 minutes to complete this portion.
- Simultaneous interpretation: interpretation of English proceedings delivered at approximately 120 words per minute. You will be given seven minutes to complete this portion.

### **How long am I eligible to take the Bilingual Interpreting Exam for certified languages?**

There are two limiting factors to become eligible to take the Bilingual Interpreter Exam. The first requirement is to complete and pass the Written Exam. As of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2018, all written exams previously taken or moving forward are valid for four years. Once you pass the Written Exam, you are permitted four attempts to take and pass the Bilingual Interpreting Exam. There is no time limit to take or complete the four attempts, and you may take the Bilingual Interpreting Exam in a particular language once during any exam cycle. However, If you do not pass the Bilingual Interpreting Exam within four attempts, you must retake and pass the English-only Written Exam before taking the Bilingual Interpreting Exam again.

### **When is the next Bilingual Interpreting Exam?**

The Bilingual Interpreting Exam schedule is typically posted two times per year. The exam is administered on fixed dates, usually two times a year. Go to <https://www.prometric.com/en-us/clients/California/Pages/Bilingual-Interpreter-Exams.aspx> for currently scheduled dates and registration timeframes.

### **How much does the Bilingual Interpreting Exam cost?**

\$340