



STUDY GUIDE FOR BEI COURT INTERPRETER PERFORMANCE TEST CANDIDATES

2015

Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services
OFFICE FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING SERVICES

Candidate Information
Examination Information
Sample Examination

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Please save this handbook. You may need it for later reference.

2015

This study guide was prepared by the National Center for Interpretation Testing, Research and Policy at the University of Arizona for the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Division for Rehabilitation Services, Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

FORWARD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The study guide for court interpreter certification candidates has been prepared by the University of Arizona National Center for Interpretation Testing, Research and Policy (UA NCI). The guide's purpose is to provide user-friendly information about the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) court interpreter certification process, and it contains information about the BEI Court Interpreter Certification Test, including the test's development, testing process, and sample tests. The BEI Court Interpreter Certification Test is administered by the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS), BEI Certification program.

We hope that this study guide will facilitate your participation in BEI certification process. If you have questions after you have read the study guide, please contact DARS DHHS BEI Certification program staff by phone at (512) 407-3250 or by email at bei@dars.state.tx.us.

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CHAPTER 1: THE BEI INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION PROCESS

1.1 BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS), Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) interpreter certification process is to ensure that individuals working in the state of Texas as certified American Sign Language (ASL) or English interpreters and transliterators meet the minimum proficiency standards established by BEI for successfully discharging the responsibilities of a state-certified interpreter. To this end, the BEI has developed a Court Interpreter Performance Test which is administered through the DARS DHHS BEI Certification program.

The procedures used to create the Court Interpreter Performance Test provide an empirical basis for the BEI interpreter certification process, ensuring the test's validity in assessing the interpreting proficiency of candidates.

In the field of interpretation as a whole, interpreter advocates for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing have led the way in establishing state-of-the-art interpreter training curricula and certification standards, and in cultivating legislative support for those efforts. The state of Texas has been at the forefront of this movement. In 1980, the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters was created within the Texas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TCDHH) which is now DARS DHHS. The BEI, made up of seven members appointed by TCDHH, established Texas' first interpreter certification system, which has operated for over 30 years and has provided testing and certification for interpreters at five distinct certification levels. This was also the nation's first state interpreter certification program as well as the first established by a state agency.

In 2000, TCDHH began reviewing its current process for certifying interpreters and decided to develop a new process in February 2001 with the goal "to achieve a reliable certification program of the highest quality and which is fair to candidates." In May 2001, a contract for test development was awarded to the National Center for Interpretation Testing, Research and Policy at the University of Arizona (UA NCI). This resulted in a new two-part certification process in 2006 at the Basic, Advanced, and Master levels to ensure that individuals working in the state of Texas as certified ASL English interpreters met the BEI's minimum proficiency standards for successfully discharging the responsibilities of a state-certified interpreter.

In October 2013, DARS DHHS issued an invitation for bid, soliciting proposals for the development of an ASL English Court Performance Test. In March 2014, DARS DHHS contracted with UA NCI for the development of the Court Performance Test. DARS DHHS created an expert panel—drawn from experts in ASL English court interpretation—to serve as the primary source of content knowledge for a job analysis and to provide subject matter expertise on test development issues. These panel

members also included leading educators, interpreters, and community activists with exceptionally broad and deep collective experience in all areas of language services for persons who are deaf.

UA NCI conducted a job analysis to provide an empirical basis for developing a valid ASL English Court Interpreter Performance Test. The job analysis was accomplished by determining the parameters of the work performed by practicing certified court interpreters in Texas using the survey method. UA NCI's job analysis sought to establish a number of representative legal settings where certified ASL English court interpreters are working, in what capacity, and what modes and languages are used. Establishing court interpreters' work parameters allowed for the development of a certification test designed to select candidates with the proficiency to fulfill minimal job requirements at each level of certification. In addition to the survey instrument, other methods were used to gather data and corroborate the survey findings, including: (1) feedback from subject matter experts; (2) previous surveys of certified court interpreters in Texas; and (3) research on court usage statistics.

This empirical process identified the Knowledge Skills Abilities, and Talents (KSATs) essential to the job of a BEI certified interpreter. In addition, the process ensured that the content domain (the linguistic content and settings) of the certification testing instrument was valid and based on evidence from the job analysis, BEI subject matter experts, practitioners, and the testing expertise of UA NCI. These empirical determinations became the foundation for the production of the newly established BEI Court Interpreter Performance Test, informing its content, format, and structure.

1.2 HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

The Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test is a criterion-referenced evaluation. This means that interpreter proficiency is measured according to standards of minimum competency set by certified and practicing interpreters, language and testing specialists, and the BEI.

This study guide does **not** provide instruction; its purpose is to familiarize you with the general format, content, and evaluation criteria used in this test. We intend the certification process to test only your interpreting proficiency.

The study guide is **not** intended to substitute for techniques to enhance interpreting proficiency, such as academic preparation or years of professional or practical experience. As with any other proficiency or criterion-referenced examination, one cannot open a book or follow a set of procedures to achieve the necessary standard of performance.

1.3 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

An applicant who is hearing must meet the following qualifications to become a Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI)-certified court interpreter:

- hold at least one BEI certificate at Level III, IV, V, III Intermediary, IV Intermediary, V Intermediary, Advanced, Master, or Oral: Comprehensive; or hold certification from Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) with a Comprehensive Skills Certificate, Certificate of Interpretation/Certificate of Transliteration, Reverse Skills Certificate, Certified Deaf Interpreter, or Master Comprehensive Skills Certificate, or National Interpreter Certification Advanced or National Interpreter Certification Master;
- pass the written examination on legal and court procedure skills and knowledge; and
- pass the court performance test, with the exception that applicants who are deaf seeking court certification are exempt from taking the court performance test.

An applicant who is deaf seeking court certification must have the required training and qualifications to take the written examination. Before taking the court interpreter examination, an applicant must provide to DARS DHHS proof that the applicant has completed instruction in court interpretation in one of the following methods:

- completion of DARS DHHS-approved courses of instruction in courtroom interpretation knowledge and skills with not less than 12 Continuing Education Units (CEUs);
- mentoring by a certified court interpreter who has been approved by DARS DHHS to act as a mentor for not less than 120 hours of actual practice; or
- a combination of instruction and mentoring totaling 120 hours.

A military service member or military veteran applicant may satisfy the training and qualification requirements listed directly above with verified military service, training, or education. This does not apply to a military service member or military veteran applicant who holds a restricted license issued by another jurisdiction or has an unacceptable criminal history according to the laws applicable to DARS.

A military spouse applicant will be issued an expedited BEI court interpreter certificate if the spouse holds a current license issued by another jurisdiction that has licensing requirements that are substantially equivalent to the requirements stated above for applicants who are hearing and/or who are deaf.

The current list of DARS DHHS-approved courses of instruction in courtroom interpretation skills and training programs for interpreters applying for court interpreter certification or for certified court interpreters needing continuing education unit credits may be obtained from DARS DHHS or the DARS Inquiries Unit.

A person with an expired certification must not perform work for which a certification is required under Government Code, Chapter 57.

CHAPTER 2: ABOUT THE BEI COURT INTERPRETER PERFORMANCE TEST

The Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test is a criterion-referenced test of the three interpretation modes most commonly used by interpreters in Texas. These are:

- Consecutive Interpreting—a two-person dialogue where spoken English is rendered into American Sign Language (ASL), and ASL is rendered into spoken English after each person finishes their utterance.
- Simultaneous Interpreting—rendering spoken English into ASL (or ASL into spoken English) at the same time the person is speaking or signing.
- Sight Translation—reading and rendering a written English document into ASL.

2.1 RELIABILITY

To ensure that the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test is reliable, both the testing procedure and the scoring of the test are standardized. Standardization requires that the length, difficulty, and testing process is uniform for all candidates, regardless of where or by whom the test is administered. Each candidate receives the same instruction and test stimuli, according to specified administration procedures.

Furthermore, the structure of the exam stimuli and objective scoring system employed in the test enables accurate and consistent scoring, which improves the exam's statistical inter-rater reliability (or agreement in scoring between multiple raters), overall reliability, and validity.

2.2 VALIDITY

The validity of the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test is important because of the significant impact that interpretation has on the people who use interpreter services. The major criterion for a functional test of proficiency is that the skills tested should be related to real life situations. For this reason, the BEI Court Interpreter Performance Test is based on both the experience of practicing interpreters and the empirical research of testing experts.

While interpretation evaluation is often based solely on subjective assessment, for this examination a two-part system is used to ensure the validity of the test, including both objective and subjective assessments.

2.3 PILOT TEST

To determine the reliability and validity of test items, the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test went through several revisions in collaboration with subject matter experts. The test was then piloted to a small population. The data collected from the administration of the pilot test was used to refine the test's format and content. The final version of the Court Interpreter Performance Test was created based upon the information gathered from the pilot data.

2.4 RATER TRAINING

To ensure inter-rater reliability, or agreement in scoring among different raters, raters participate in a training program for the content evaluation part of the test. The purpose of this training is to ensure consistency in scoring so that the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test is administered fairly. The training program includes scoring practice with a number and variety of renditions. The raters are made aware of varieties in language use and are instructed to accept appropriate variations if they meet all other test criteria.

2.5 TEST DAY REQUIREMENTS

Candidates must arrive at least 30 minutes before the scheduled appointment time and must bring only photo identification and the confirmation letter to the site. Candidates who arrive later than 15 minutes after their scheduled appointment forfeit the testing opportunity and fees.

Water is provided for candidates. Candidates must not bring electronic devices such as cell phones, pagers, tablets, or PDAs into the testing room. Handbags, wallets, briefcases, backpacks, jackets, coats, and other personal items are not allowed in the testing room and should be secured in the candidate's vehicle before the appointment.

2.6 WHAT TO EXPECT WHILE TAKING THE TEST

The Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test is administered by a proctor, which may be a Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, BEI Program staff member. The test proctor meets you in the designated waiting area and asks you for proper identification before asking you to sign a commitment to confidentiality statement. By signing the confidentiality statement, you are acknowledging that you are prohibited from discussing or divulging the contents of the testing materials. This includes topics, subject matter, vocabulary, specific signs, and the identity of individuals displayed on the test.

Breach of the confidentiality statement, cheating, or compromising the integrity of the BEI Court Interpreter Performance Test is grounds for denying an application or suspending or revoking an interpreter's certificate. DARS DHHS will investigate anyone

alleged to have gained unauthorized access to confidential testing materials and will seek to recover the cost necessary to develop new testing materials.

You are then escorted into the testing room. You have the option of standing or sitting when taking the performance test. Since the entire performance test is recorded, you are asked to state a candidate code number provided by the proctor for the record. You have the opportunity to ask questions following the general introduction.

The proctor starts the recording and the test begins with a general introduction; the test also contains a specific introduction before each part of the test. Samples of these introductions are reprinted in Chapter 3 of this study guide, which also contains information about the warm-up, one-minute pause, and each part of the performance test.

Once the test begins, the recording **cannot be stopped**, rewound, or replayed, but may be paused between segments. You are advised to continue interpreting throughout. If you encounter a particularly challenging portion of the scenario, do not allow yourself to fall behind. Doing so is likely to result in your omitting language that you might otherwise render appropriately. As in a real interpreting scenario, in which you cannot stop the speaker whose words you are interpreting, you should continue interpreting.

Remember that the BEI Court Interpreter Performance Test simulates actual interpreted proceedings. You are asked to render the information in the same manner as if you were working as an interpreter. All materials must be interpreted so that the intent, tone, and the language level of the speaker, signer, or document is conserved without distorting or omitting any of the meaning of the original message in the source language.

In other words, you should strive to fully conserve the *conceptual meaning* of the original message in the target language. This means conserving as many facets of *meaning* as possible as you interpret from the source language into the target language. (The “source language” is the language in which the original message is conveyed, and the “target language” is the language into which the message is interpreted.) For example:

- appropriate colloquialisms should be used if they were used in the source language;
- appropriate formal grammatical structures should be conserved in each language;
- slang should not be substituted for formal language or vice versa;
- the source language should not be "cleaned up" or "improved;"
- all of the source language message should be interpreted so that the target language message is equivalent to the source language message; and
- the source language message should be interpreted in the first person, not the third person, if the text clearly calls for the first person; for example if the speaker says “My name is John Stevens” you:
 - provide the interpretation in the first person, "My name is John Stevens;" and

- do not provide the interpretation in the third person, "His name is John Stevens."

For a sample of two scenarios and the tasks you will be asked to perform, please see Chapter 6 in this study guide.

CHAPTER 3: OVERVIEW OF THE BEI COURT INTERPRETER PERFORMANCE TEST

The Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test has several factors which add to its complexity:

- complexity of the language;
- complexity of the topics and/or settings; and
- speed of the speaker or signer.

These factors were identified empirically, as described in the “Background of the BEI Interpreter Certification Process” section.

In every section of the test, you are presented with a **stimulus**, which is either a recording or a written document. As with all interpreted encounters, you are asked to interpret from the stimulus’ **source language** into the **target language**. The source language is the language in which the original message is conveyed. The target language is the language into which the message is interpreted.

Throughout all sections of the test, your goal should be to render the source language message into the target language *without distortion or omission of any aspect of the message’s meaning*. In other words, the target language message you produce should conserve everything that is conceptually relevant to the meaning of the original message.

The criteria for determining whether the source language is interpreted into the target language appropriately are discussed in detail Chapter 6 of this study guide.

3.1 TEST CONTENT

The content of the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test focuses primarily on the language found in a variety of complex, high-stakes legal settings, such as law enforcement interactions and legal proceedings and meetings. The content was determined by an empirical job analysis of legal interpreting in Texas. Examples of possible topics include interactions that occur with attorneys, law enforcement, and in all stages of a judicial proceeding.

3.2 OVERVIEW OF TEST SECTIONS

The Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test contains the following sections four sections; each is described in detail below.

Consecutive Interpreting

There are two consecutive interpreting parts on the test. Both consist of a two-person dialogue, and you are expected to watch a recording and render one interlocutor's spoken English into American Sign Language (ASL) and the other interlocutor's ASL into spoken English.

There is a pause after each person's statement or question; this pause gives enough time for you to render your interpretation. These sections contain prompts to "Listen Now" and "Watch Now" during the spoken and signed portions of the consecutive, and another prompt to "Interpret Now" during the appropriate pause.

If you wish, you may take notes during the consecutive portions of the test.

Simultaneous Interpreting (English to ASL)

There are two English to American Sign Language simultaneous interpreting parts on the test.

You are expected to watch a recording and render the speaker's English into ASL.

Simultaneous Interpreting (ASL to English)

There is one American Sign Language (ASL) to English simultaneous interpreting part on the test.

You are expected to watch a recording and render the signer's ASL into English.

Sight Translation

There is one sight translation on the test because the job analysis conducted by University of Arizona National Center for Interpretation Testing, Research and Policy (UA NCI) indicated that Texas court interpreters for the deaf and hard of hearing are frequently required to sight translate written documents from English to American Sign Language (ASL).

Because the source language is written rather than spoken or signed language in this part of the test, there is no pre-recorded video stimulus. Instead, at the beginning of this part, you are instructed to read a short, written English document and interpret it into ASL for a person who is monolingual.

3.3 GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE TEST

The Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test begins with the following general introduction:

The purpose of this introduction is to familiarize you with the structure of this assessment. The exam consists of six components. They are:

Consecutive Interpreting
Simultaneous Interpreting (English to ASL)
Simultaneous Interpreting (English to ASL)
Simultaneous Interpreting (ASL to English)
Consecutive Interpreting
Sight Translation

Your performance will be video recorded for scoring purposes. Each part of the exam will be preceded by a brief introduction, which will identify the topic and setting, as well as remind you of the expected target language. All six of the exam parts will be followed by a short warm-up designed to acquaint you with the specific communication style of the source. Raters do not score the warm-up.

Each part will contain a prompt that alerts you when to begin interpreting.

If at any time you are unable to see or hear the source clearly, please notify the proctor immediately so the problem can be corrected. Once the exam begins it may NOT be stopped. This concludes the introduction. If you need additional clarification please ask the proctor at this time.

3.4 PART-BY-PART TEST INSTRUCTIONS

Each part of the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test follows the same basic format (with the exception of the Sight Translation, which is discussed below). Before each part of test, you listen to an introduction. Each introduction provides you with some information about the content of that part of the test, as well as information about the interpretation setting and who the client is.

The following is a sample of an introduction for the English to American Sign Language (ASL) simultaneous interpreting part of the exam:

INTRODUCTION: This is a Simultaneous Interpreting part of the exam. You have been asked to simultaneously interpret a courtroom interaction between an English-speaking judge and an English-speaking attorney. You are to simultaneously interpret the spoken English of the judge and the attorney into ASL for the court. You will be given a warm-up to become acquainted with the content of this part of the exam, followed by a 1-minute pause. Your performance during the warm-up will NOT be scored.

3.4.1 Warm-up Section

Following the introduction, there is a recorded “warm-up” section for each part (except for the Sight Translation). The **warm-up** consists of the beginning portion of the scenario. This provides you with more information, such as who is speaking or signing, what topics are being discussed, and where the presentation is taking place. You may choose to interpret or simply watch the warm-up. The warm-up section is not scored; it is included to introduce the content of the script and to give you the opportunity to think about the context and topic of the scenario and to prepare to interpret the rest of the scenario.

3.4.2 One Minute Preparation

Following the recorded warm-up, you are given **one minute** to prepare for your interpretation. It may be to your advantage to take some time and think about who is speaking, where they are speaking, and the topic that is being presented. This may help you to interpret more accurately and improve your processing time. After this one-minute pause, the actual test is introduced with the words, “Begin Interpreting Now,” after which you are expected to interpret. *Once the video has begun playing, it may NOT be stopped, rewound, or replayed. Be sure to continue interpreting throughout. If you are uncertain about a word or expression, do not allow yourself to become distracted, as it is important to keep pace with the test.*

3.4.3 Sight Translation

The final part of the test is the **Sight Translation**. It differs from the previous parts in that it does not include a recorded stimulus. At the beginning of this part, you are instructed to sight translate a short, written English document into American Sign Language (ASL) for a person who is monolingual. Following is a sample of the introduction to this part:

INTRODUCTION: This is the Sight Translation part of the test. You have been asked to sight translate a document written in English for a monolingual ASL user. You will have a total of seven minutes both to prepare and to deliver your sight translation. You may start your sight translation when you wish, but if you have not started in two minutes, the proctor will instruct you to begin.

Note that this section is timed. It may be to your advantage to review the document completely before beginning your rendition, so you are familiar with the full context of the message. If you have not begun your rendition within two minutes, you will be instructed by the proctor to do so. Keep in mind that you will have the document available to you throughout this part of the test.

3.5 TEST FORMAT

Table of Test Parts, Mode of Translation, and Time Allotted

Test Part	Mode	Time
A - Consecutive Interpreting	English to ASL and ASL to English	13 min.
B - Simultaneous Interpreting	English to ASL	5 min.
C - Simultaneous Interpreting	English to ASL	4.5 min.
D - Simultaneous Interpreting	ASL to English	7 min.
E - Consecutive Interpreting	English to ASL and ASL to English	14 min.
F - Sight Translation	English to ASL	7 min.

Total Time: Approximately 68 minutes (includes time for introductions, warm-ups, and instructions)

The Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test includes six parts:

- A. English to ASL and ASL to English (Consecutive)—Lasts approximately 13 minutes.** You will be watching a recording alternating between spoken English and ASL and will be expected to render the spoken English into ASL and the ASL into spoken English. The recording has been made with attention to speed as a factor of complexity to allow the candidate sufficient processing time. The interlocutors are interacting at a normal, conversational speed.
- B. English to ASL (Simultaneous)—Lasts approximately 5 minutes.** You will be listening to a spoken English source and will be expected to render an equivalent message in ASL. The source has been recorded with attention to the speed of the signed stimulus. The signing speed is controlled so that its speed is also consistent and presents information to the candidate at a slower, conversational rate.
- C. English to ASL (Simultaneous)— Lasts approximately 5 minutes.** You will be listening to a spoken English source and will be expected to render an equivalent message in ASL. The source has been recorded with attention to

the speed of the signed stimulus. The signing speed is controlled so that its speed is also consistent and presents information to the candidate at a slower, conversational rate.

- D. ASL to English (Simultaneous)—Lasts approximately 7 minutes.** You will be watching a signed ASL source and will be expected to render an equivalent message in spoken English. The recording recorded has been made with attention to the speed of the signed stimulus. The signing speed is controlled so that its speed is also consistent and presents information to the candidate at a normal, conversational rate.
- E. English to ASL and ASL to English (Consecutive)—Lasts approximately 14 minutes.** You will be watching a recording alternating between spoken English and ASL and will be expected to render the spoken English into ASL and the ASL into spoken English. The recording has been made with attention to speed as a factor of complexity to allow the candidate sufficient processing time. The interlocutors are interacting at a normal, conversational speed.
- F. Sight Translation—Lasts 7 minutes.** You will be reading from a printed English source and will be expected to render an equivalent message in ASL. The Sight Translation differs from Parts A-E in that it consists of a written English document rather than a pre-recorded video.

CHAPTER 4: EVALUATION OF THE BEI COURT INTERPRETER PERFORMANCE TEST

4.1 WHAT THE TEST MEASURES

Your performance on the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test is scored in two ways: **objectively** and **subjectively**. This two-part assessment system provides a reliable, fair, and valid device for certification of interpreters. Your performance will be evaluated by a team of Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) approved raters.

The test assesses your interpreting ability along the following four dimensions:

1. **Interpreting Proficiency:** The ability to meaningfully and accurately understand, produce, and transform American Sign Language (ASL) and spoken English to and from the other language in a culturally appropriate way.
2. **Delivery:** The ability to maintain appropriate delivery, pacing, coherence, and composure consistently throughout the interpretation.
3. **Adaptability:** The level of resourcefulness you display in adapting to changes, patterns, and challenges in the text.
4. **Pronunciation/Fluency:** *Pronunciation*, or the ability to produce spoken language, including accurate English phonology and the appropriate use of rhythm, stress, and intonation, without interfering with meaning or undermining comprehensibility; and *Fluency*, or the ease with which a candidate can produce native-like language, including the degree of hesitation and the clarity of signs.

Of these dimensions, Interpreting Proficiency is assessed through an objective assessment mechanism (as described below). The remaining three dimensions will be scored holistically through a subjective assessment system.

4.2 THE SCORING SYSTEM

The system used to score the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test is based on an innovative system that has set the standard in language proficiency testing in the field of interpretation. The purpose of this scoring system is to provide a replicable, fair, and valid device for assessing the interpreting ability of candidates for certification. The function of this system is to assess a speaker's accuracy in transforming meaning from the source language and conveying *the same* meaning in the target language.

There are two parts to the system: objective assessment and subjective assessment. The objective assessment will be used specifically to determine a candidate's

interpreting ability. The subjective assessment supplements this by holistically evaluating a candidate's performance along several other linguistic dimensions. Each of these is discussed below.

4.2.1 Objective Assessment

A candidate's level of Interpreting Proficiency is the only one of the four dimensions assessed by the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test that is objectively determined. Candidates are assessed based on how many Objective Scoring Units they render appropriately.

Objective Scoring Units are contained in every part of the test. They represent significant words, phrases, and clauses that are critical as determined by the job analysis and the expert panel used to develop the test. These include specialized terminology, register variation, rhetorical features, general vocabulary, grammatical structures, and appropriate sociocultural discourse, as well as features specific to American Sign Language (ASL) such as:

- the use of classifiers and non-manual markers;
- accuracy of fingerspelling; and
- the use of sign space and grammatical space.

In the Sample Interpreter Performance Test section in this study guide, Scoring Units are identified by underlining and superscripted numbers. For example, "You have the right to¹ remain silent," as found in Sample #1. These scoring units are distributed throughout the test.

The basic criterion of the objective scoring system is meaning. The raters assess whether the interpretation was rendered in a way that communicates the full meaning of the original message without distorting or omitting anything that is conceptually relevant to the meaning. *Each of the Objective Scoring Units will be assessed according to how well you convey meaning.* In other words, raters are assessing if you can communicate the meaning or concept in understandable, coherent, fluent language. Grammatical perfection is not the goal. The final criterion is whether you can ensure that the client receives information that is complete and comprehensible.

The Objective Scoring Units are scored in strict compliance with established guidelines for accuracy. In the test development process, a large glossary of "acceptable" and "unacceptable" renditions of each scoring unit was established. The acceptability of these renditions depends solely on the meaning being conveyed, rather than on the literal words used. This glossary is not exhaustive. Instead, it serves as a guide to the raters in assessing candidates' responses. The raters are trained in its use, and trained to assess novel renditions not included in the glossary.

The raters reach a consensus on the acceptability of novel responses, which are then added to the glossary. In this way, candidates are afforded an empirically-based,

objective scoring system that is still sensitive to dynamic variation in language. The result is the objective assessment of a candidate's ability to accurately and faithfully convey the meaning of a significant language sample. In Chapter 7 of this study guide, Sample #1 includes a table of "acceptable" and "unacceptable" renditions for each underlined Objective Scoring Unit in the script. These are numbered according to the superscripted numbers for reference.

Remember that it is to your advantage to interpret each scenario completely. Using your time wisely and interpreting as completely as you can is the best possible approach to the test.

Following are some examples of the areas covered by the objective scoring system:

Grammar and Word or Sign Order

The raters assess your ability to adhere to grammatical and syntactical accuracy in order to communicate without obscuring or distorting meaning.

Consider, for instance, the English statement "If I had had it, I'd have given it to you." This sentence conveys two important parts of its meaning. First, the "if" signals the contrary-to-fact utterance. It is important that the phrase be interpreted in a way that conserves the implication that the speaker did not have the object at the time in question, but would have given it if he or she had had it. Second, it is important to convey the fact that the event occurred in the past, through the use of tense as appropriate.

Vocabulary and Idioms

The raters evaluate your ability to render the appropriate vocabulary and idioms. This includes words for which there are no sign equivalents, or terms requiring expansion. You should strive to render the closest and most precise equivalent possible throughout the examination.

For example, if you see the sign gloss SKILL-TALENT-PROFICIENCY, it is important that you choose the appropriate English word that conveys the full meaning. For instance, if you are interpreting in a trial and the defendant signs, "For my talent during that evening, I performed knife throwing," it is important to convey the English equivalent for "talent" rather than "proficiency" or "ability."

Conservation of Intent, Style, and Tone

The raters assess your ability to conserve the intent, style, tone, and language level of the speaker. These elements of meaning are conveyed through word or sign choice, mouth movement, intonation, and in other ways. As an interpreter, you serve as a medium for another person. Therefore, you must make it possible for anyone who is listening to understand what was said as much as possible.

If you hear, see, or read formal language, you should render the equivalent formal language in the target language. By the same token, if you hear, see, or read colloquial

or slang language, you should render the interpretation in colloquial or slang language. Your interpretation may be considered incorrect if the level of the language is not conserved.

For example, if you hear, see, or read the statement "I'll be seeing you," it would be acceptable to render that colloquially as, "See you later," "So long," or "See you around." However, "Farewell" or "Until we meet again" are unacceptable renditions because they are formal, rather than colloquial, and do not conserve the level of the original language.

Conservation of Register

An essential component of meaning that must be conserved is register, which is a term that means the use of a particular variety of language according to the context.

For example, we call the kind of language used in the legal profession the "legal register," which is composed of the special vocabulary, terms of art, and turns of phrase used in the legal profession. Specialized registers are attached to the language of many professions and occupations such as healthcare, engineering, and academia.

Additionally, register refers to the language styles we use in different situations and contexts. For example, the formality of our speaking style varies depending on the person we are talking to, and his or her age, culture, education, gender, and social status. We all use different language styles, depending on the speech situation we are in. We speak differently to our friends than we do to our professors. A doctor who is trying to help a patient understand something will "lower" the register of her speech to make herself more comprehensible.

The linguist Martin Joos wrote that English has the following five levels of register, or formality:

1. **Frozen Language** is static language that never changes, For example:
 - "Ladies and Gentlemen of the jury..."
 - "Four score and seven years ago..."
 - "The patient presented with"

2. **Formal Language** is the kind of language used by a speaker giving a lecture or making a presentation. In this style the sentence structure is complex, and there is little interaction between the speaker and the audience. For example:
 - "Ladies and Gentlemen of the jury"
 - "Four score and seven years ago"
 - "The patient presented with"
 - "The patient presented with a headache of localized at the right temple and nausea."

- “The importance of early intervention for students with learning disabilities cannot be overemphasized.”
3. **Consultative Language** is the kind of language used by teachers, doctors, technicians, and other experts who are explaining a concept or a procedure using some technical terms, but at the same time, interacting with the audience or person. For example:
- “What other symptoms have you had besides nausea and headache?”
 - “It is so important to take advantage of every educational opportunity for your son.”
4. **Colloquial Language** is the kind of language used in “everyday” conversation. Easily understood language is used, and if technical terminology is used, it is explained and examples are given. Colloquial language tends to use more idiomatic expressions and slang in the interest of being understood. For example:
- “I feel like somebody put my head in a vice and I feel sick to my stomach.”
 - “I want to do whatever I can to help him make the grade.”
5. **Intimate Language** is the kind of language used between very close friends and family members. Because there is an intimate relationship between people in the conversation, there is less attention paid to specific references. Often intimate language is “non-referential,” meaning that what a pronoun refers to may not be obvious. For example:
- “It’s killing me and I feel like I’m totally going to do that.”
 - “I told you that would happen if you didn’t stop.”
 - Home signs, these are also an excellent example of intimate register.

Other considerations

What is the impact of using a high register with a person who may be uneducated or who may not be an expert in the terminology used in a specific field? Usually, the effect is that you are excluding the person from truly understanding your explanation and in effect “withholding” information instead of sharing it. Therefore, people usually lower the register when they know that the person they are talking to may not have the educational, professional, or cultural background to understand technical explanations. This is not because of a lack of intelligence; it is simply a lack of the experience of technical vocabulary.

If you are speaking to a child, would you use a low or high register? We speak to children differently than we speak to adults. What are those differences? We speak to an elderly woman or man differently than we would to a young adult.

Keep this kind of speech style in mind during the examination, as you will be expected to adjust to different registers to foster effective communication.

4.2.2 Subjective Assessment

There are three general categories of subjective assessment in the performance test:

- delivery;
- adaptability; and
- pronunciation and fluency.

Your entire performance for *each part of the test* is assessed holistically. Each category is assessed using a three point scale.

Delivery

This is the ability to maintain appropriate delivery, pacing, coherence, and composure consistently throughout the interpretation. Delivery is scored as follows:

- **1 point** (Fails to Meet Expectations)—consistently fails to maintain appropriate delivery, pacing, coherence, and composure throughout the interpretation
- **2 points** (Meets Expectations)—occasionally fails to maintain appropriate delivery, pacing, coherence, and composure throughout the interpretation
- **3 points** (Exceeds Expectations)—maintains appropriate delivery, pacing, coherence, and composure throughout the interpretation

Adaptability

This is the level of resourcefulness the candidate displays in adapting to changes, patterns, and challenges in the text. Adaptability is scored as follows:

- **1 point** (Fails to Meet Expectations)—consistently fails to adapt to changes in the pattern of a passage; overreliance on circumlocution
- **2 points** (Meets Expectations)—occasionally fails to adapt to changes in the pattern of a passage; some overreliance on circumlocution
- **3 points** (Exceeds Expectations)—always adapts to changes in the pattern of a passage

Pronunciation and Fluency

Includes *Pronunciation*, or the ability to produce accurate phonology using appropriate rhythm, stress, and intonation as well as *Fluency*, or the ease with which a candidate can produce native-like language. The assessment of fluency includes the degree of hesitation and clarity of signs. Pronunciation and fluency are scored as follows:

- **1 point** (Fails to Meet Expectations)—consistently speaks or signs with hesitation and often needs to repair interpretation, which interferes with communication; approaching acceptable pronunciation and clarity of signs and the use of rhythm, stress, and intonation, but makes frequent errors that interfere with meaning

- **2 points** (Meets Expectations)—occasionally speaks or signs with hesitation and needs to repair interpretation, but speech or ASL is intelligible even with errors; has acceptable pronunciation and clarity of signs and the use of rhythm, stress, and intonation that does not interfere with meaning
- **3 points** (Exceeds Expectations)—speaks or signs without hesitation; rarely needs to repair interpretation; has native or native-like pronunciation and clarity of signs and use of rhythm, stress, and intonation; and is easy to understand.

CHAPTER 5: NOTIFICATION OF TEST RESULTS

The Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) reports test results within 90 days after the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test is administered. If additional delays occur, DARS DHHS staff notifies the candidate. Candidates who are awarded certification are:

- added to the database of certified court interpreters;
- notified by regular mail or email of the results; and
- sent a certificate, a wallet-sized card, and information about applicable laws, rules, and policies that pertain to the requirements for annual certificate renewal and five year recertification.

Unsuccessful candidates are notified through email or regular mail of the results and must:

- wait to retake the test six months after the test was administered;
- submit a new application and fee to retake the test; and
- comply with all eligibility requirements.

The notification letter contains valuable feedback about test results and provides information for getting training before retaking the BEI Court Interpreter Performance Test. The candidate should use the [BEI Study Guide for Court Interpreter Performance Test](#) to help understand the rating criteria.

CHAPTER 6: SAMPLE BEI COURT INTERPRETER PERFORMANCE TEST

In this section of the study guide, you will find samples of the kind of scenarios you will be asked to interpret for the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Court Interpreter Performance Test.

Sample #1 is a short English to American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting scenario (the actual simultaneous scenario will be longer and take about five minutes). You are instructed to render it simultaneously. It includes an Introduction, a Warm-up, and the interpreting scenario. Throughout the scenario, words, phrases, and clauses are underlined to indicate Objective Scoring Units. Following the scenario, you will find a grid with an initial glossary of acceptable and unacceptable ASL renditions of each English scoring unit. These are included to help you understand what the raters will look for in your rendition.

Recall that, in the actual test, you will be watching and listening to this scenario rather than reading it. Therefore, to help you prepare for the test, we recommend that you have someone read this sample scenario to you or have someone videotape it for your use. You may then want to record your own performance for review. This exercise may be worth carrying out several times before you actually read the sample for yourself.

When you do read the sample directly, you may want to compare your renditions to the task you are asked to perform. Pay particular attention to the underlined examples of Objective Scoring Units. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Did I interpret each of the scoring items without omitting any aspect of meaning?
- Was my rendition complete, or was there more to say that I left out?
- Was the terminology I used appropriate, or did I instead describe the concept?
- What other ways can I think of to get the same idea across?
- What aspects of the script were particularly challenging?

These and similar questions will help you get a sense of your performance and an idea of your interpreting strengths and weaknesses.

Because of the nature of ASL, we are unable to provide sample scripts for the ASL to English portions of the test. You may want to have a colleague record an ASL version of one of the sample scripts, or of other legal scenarios, and use that recording as a source for practicing your ASL to English interpreting skills. For the types of topics that might be useful to record, see the “Overview of Test Parts” section.

Sample #2 is a short consecutive interpreting scenario (the actual consecutive scenario will be longer and take about 14 minutes). It includes an Introduction, a Warm-up, and the interpreting scenario. A recommended timed pause for your interpretation is included after each question and answer. As with Sample #1, words, phrases, and

clauses are underlined to indicate Objective Scoring Units. Again, we are unable to provide the responses (A) in this dialogue in ASL, but an English version is provided along with scoring units. You may want to have a colleague help you translate the ASL portion and record this consecutive script, or of another legal consecutive, and use that recording as a source for practicing your consecutive interpreting skills. We recommend that you record your rendition of this exercise and then, following the process outlined above, ask yourself the same series of questions as you review your rendition. A glossary of acceptable/unacceptable renditions is not included for Sample #2, but as an exercise it may be useful to create your own.

Sample #3 is an example of the Sight Translation part of the test. It is about the same length as the actual Sight Translation on the test. This document is printed here twice. The first copy is an unmarked copy of the document. The second copy contains examples of underlined Objective Scoring Units. We recommend that you record several of your ASL renditions of the exercise using the unmarked copy before you look at the marked copy. Follow the process outlined above and ask yourself the same series of questions as you review your renditions. A glossary of acceptable/unacceptable renditions is not included for Sample #3, but as an exercise it may be useful to create your own.

6.1 SAMPLE #1

INTRODUCTION: This is a Simultaneous Interpreting part of the exam. You have been asked to interpret for a monolingual ASL user and an English-speaking police officer. You are to simultaneously interpret the police officer's spoken English into ASL. You will be given a warm-up to become acquainted with the content of this part of the exam, followed by a 1-minute pause. Your performance during the warm-up will NOT be scored.

WARM-UP: Hello, I'm Detective Smith. This is just a formality, and with your permission, I'd like to talk to you for a little while about some important information regarding your rights. It won't take long, about a minute or so.

You will now have one minute to prepare for this part of the exam. You will be prompted to begin interpreting in one minute.

[1-minute pause]

BEGIN INTERPRETING NOW:

Officer: Now, I will advise you of your Miranda rights. You have the right to remain silent¹, and you can refuse to answer my questions². If you do talk to me, anything you say may be used→ against you in a court of law³. I know you don't have anything to hide, but I need you to know this stuff. You also have the right to consult an attorney

before speaking⁴, and to have an→ attorney present during questioning⁵. / If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed→ for you⁶. After all, we're all on the same team here. If you decide to answer questions now⁷ without an attorney present, you still have the right to change your mind at any time⁸.

6.1.2 SAMPLE #1 ACCEPTABLES AND UNACCEPTABLES TABLE

Below is an initial glossary of possible renditions for each underlined and numbered Objective Scoring Unit. Recall that it is not exhaustive, but instead helps to capture the sense and level of complexity expected of the candidate's rendition.

Item #	Scoring Criteria	Scoring Item	Acceptables	Unacceptables
1		You have the right to remain silent	You not have to talk - double handed confidential;	Not talk;
2		You can refuse to answer my questions	Answer, answer, don't want, think self; can refuse	Don't want answer (must have concept of refuse);
3		Anything you say may be used against you in a court of law	If you go ahead – talk police will put down; and later in court can show judge	Literal translation
4		The right to consult an attorney before speaking	Before discuss, suspend, meet lawyer	Right to advise an attorney before talking;
5		Have an attorney present during questioning	Lawyer with you when police question;	Have an attorney present;
6		If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed for you	Money tight - can't pay lawyer court will get lawyer for you	If poor without expansion;
7		If you decide to answer questions now	Literal translation; Concept of decide must be included;	Concept of decide is missing;
8		You still have the right to change your mind at any time	Anytime can decide to stop talking;	Concept of right is missing;

6.2 SAMPLE #2

INTRODUCTION: This is a Consecutive Interpreting part of the exam. You have been asked to interpret during a direct examination of a deaf defendant in court. You are to consecutively interpret the attorney's spoken English into ASL and the deaf person's ASL into spoken English. Do not interpret any rendition simultaneously. There is a timed pause on the recording after each rendition for you to render your interpretation. If the speaker or signer begins the next rendition before you have finished your interpretation of any segment, it is to your advantage to focus on the next rendition. You will be given a warm-up to become acquainted with the content of this part of the exam, followed by a 1-minute pause. Your performance during the warm-up will NOT be scored. Please begin interpreting after you hear the words, "Begin Interpreting Now."

WARM-UP:

- Q: Would you please state your full name for the record?
A: John Smith.
Q: You are the defendant in this case, aren't you Mr. Smith?
A: Yes, sir.

You will now have one minute to prepare for this part of the exam. You will be prompted to begin interpreting in one minute.

[1-minute pause]

BEGIN INTERPRETING NOW:

- Q: In the late night hours of December 14 and early morning hours of December 15th of last year, were you in the vicinity of the 2700 block¹ of Sunset Blvd. in the City of Harlan²?

[PAUSE 17 SECONDS FOR INTERPRETATION INTO ASL]

- A: No. I live in a different part of town, several miles away³, on Highland.

[PAUSE 6 SECONDS FOR INTERPRETATION INTO ENGLISH]

- Q: On the date and time in question⁴, what were you doing?

[PAUSE 7 SECONDS FOR INTERPRETATION INTO ASL]

- A: I was going to my job⁵ to begin my shift⁶ at the furniture factory.

[PAUSE 8 SECONDS FOR INTERPRETATION INTO ENGLISH]

Q: What are your working hours? At what time do you start⁷ and at what time does your shift end, Mr. Smith?

[PAUSE 13 SECONDS FOR INTERPRETATION INTO ASL]

A: I go in at two in the morning and I finish at eleven in the morning⁸. Sometimes it's different hours, but that's my current schedule⁹.

[PAUSE 12 SECONDS FOR INTERPRETATION INTO ENGLISH]

Q: Did you go straight to work¹⁰ or did you go any other place¹¹ before going to work on the night of the 14th of December, early morning hours of the 15th?

[PAUSE 16 SECONDS FOR INTERPRETATION INTO ASL]

A: Before going to work I went to visit my brother. He plays guitar in a band¹² and he was just finishing at the Starlight Nightclub¹³ near my house.

[PAUSE 13 SECONDS FOR INTERPRETATION INTO ENGLISH]

END OF SAMPLE

6.3 SAMPLE #3 (UNMARKED COPY)

INTRODUCTION: This is the Sight Translation part of the exam. You have been asked to sight translate a police report written in English for a monolingual ASL user. You will have a total of seven (7) minutes both to prepare and to deliver your sight translation. You may start your translation when you wish, but if you have not started in two (2) minutes, the proctor will instruct you to begin.

BEGIN SIGHT TRANSLATION NOW:

I responded to assess a reference to a man with a gun call. I went to Decatur to assist after three suspects bailed from a vehicle. After one of the men was caught I met with Officer Gibson, who had the suspect in his car. I took custody of the suspect identified above. Engine 16 had responded to treat the suspect for a dog bite to his lower left leg. Doctors said only one bite mark would need a stitch. Doctors said it could wait to be treated until after our investigation was through. I helped him in my car and transported him to the main police station for questioning. He said he has no gang affiliation. He identified his cousin as one of the suspects still at large. He did not know the second man, and claimed to have just met him yesterday. He said all three of them were at an

apartment near 16th street. The apartment was where the “other dude” got the car that they were in. He claimed not to know that it was carjacked earlier. He said that it was a Maxima and he had exited it and run because he was scared. He said he was bit by a police dog during the chase. After that he said he wasn’t really sure what was happening or what had happened. I did not question him further.

6.4 SAMPLE #3 (Marked copy)

INTRODUCTION: This is the Sight Translation part of the exam. You have been asked to sight translate a police report written in English for a monolingual ASL user. You will have a total of seven (7) minutes both to prepare and to deliver your sight translation. You may start your translation when you wish, but if you have not started in two (2) minutes, the proctor will instruct you to begin.

BEGIN SIGHT TRANSLATION NOW:

I responded to assess a reference to a man with a gun call. I went to Decatur to assist after three suspects bailed¹ from a vehicle. After one of the men was caught I met with Officer Gibson, who had the suspect² in his car. I took custody³ of the suspect identified above⁴. Engine 16 had responded to treat the suspect for a dog bite⁵ to his lower left leg⁶. Doctors said only one bite mark would need a stitch⁷. Doctors said it could wait to be treated until after our investigation⁸ was through. I helped him in my car⁹ and transported him to the main police → station¹⁰ for questioning. He said he has no gang affiliation¹¹. He identified his cousin¹² as one of the suspects still at large¹³. He did not know the second man¹⁴, and claimed to have just met → him yesterday¹⁵. He said all three of them were at an apartment near 16th street. The apartment was where the “other dude”¹⁶ got the car that they were in. He claimed not to know that it was carjacked¹⁷ earlier. He said that it was a Maxima and he had exited it and run¹⁸ because he was scared. He said he was bit by a police dog during the chase¹⁹. After that he said he wasn’t really sure what was happening or what had happened. I did not question him further²⁰.