

**Proficiency in spoken and written language
Secondary Foreign Language Education
School of Education Policy**

For candidates who plan to student teach in a modern language:

Before admission to EDC 430, Methods of Teaching Foreign Languages, students should submit official scores for ACTFL's **Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)** and the **Writing Proficiency Test (WPT)** with Language Testing International [www.languagetesting.com/]. Students must see Dr. Hammadou in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures, 102 Independence Hall, to sign up for both of these tests **prior to May 1 of spring semester.** Call 401-874-4712 for an appointment.

Before admission to EDC 484/485, Student Teaching:

- (1) Students must provide proof by written examination (WPT) of a proficiency level in writing of Advanced – Low (ACTFL scale) or higher.
- (2) Students must provide proof by oral examination (OPI) of a proficiency level in speaking of Advanced – Low (ACTFL scale) or higher.

If a student has one score of Intermediate-High, he/she may petition for permission to student teach after submitting a written plan of remediation in the affected area. Students may not student teach with any score below Intermediate-High.

Students are urged to spend at least one semester in a country in which the target language is spoken. Residence in a country in which the target language is spoken or participation in a structured study abroad program are essential components of preparation for foreign language teaching. Students are reminded that competence in the language is not simply a matter of sitting in classes and therefore students are expected to be proactive in finding meaningful ways to improve their skills outside of classes on a regular basis.

NOTE: Research at the Foreign Service Institute documented that motivated adult language learners typically required at least **240 hours** of intensive language instruction to move their OPI ratings from Intermediate-High to Advanced-Low. [Liskin-Gasparro, J.E. (1982). *ETS Oral Proficiency Testing Manual*. Princeton, N.J. Educational Testing Service.]

Language Testing International returns official scores 6 weeks after administering the WPT and OPI scores 4 weeks after the test. See www.languagetesting.com/ for more information.

Anyone requiring a retest must wait 90 days before retaking either test. Please plan accordingly.

Frequently asked questions about the Oral Proficiency Interview

WHAT IS THE OPI IN MODERN LANGUAGES?

The OPI assesses your oral proficiency in a modern language by identifying patterns of strengths and weaknesses in oral communication as you respond spontaneously to questions from an interviewer. The specific aspects evaluated are: accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. However, the raters do not count errors, rather they listen for the overall success of your oral paragraphs.

WHO MUST TAKE THE OPI?

The OPI is required of all foreign language education graduates of all NCATE/ACTFL nationally accredited institutions such as URI and by many states in the United States.

WHEN SHOULD I TAKE THE OPI?

It is recommended that you take the OPI soon after you complete your study abroad experience. The first OPI must be taken before entering EDC 430, Methods of Teaching Foreign Languages.

WHO ADMINISTERS THE OPI?

Officially trained raters from Language Testing International, the testing branch of the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in a telephone interview.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I DO NOT GET A RATING OF ADVANCED-LOW OR HIGHER?

Your advisor will meet with you to make individualized suggestions. Among the most common suggestions will be: to take an additional conversation course, an immersion abroad experience, and/or extensive tutoring. You may take the OPI 90 days after your previous test. You may be required to delay student teaching for a year if there is not enough time to successfully retest before student teaching.

See www.languagetesting.com for further up-to-date information about the test.