

**Requirements:** The ACTFL official Oral Proficiency Interview is required of all of the above listed majors/programs. This interview exam must be taken and passed at least one semester prior to graduation. It is recommended that the student take the exam as soon as possible after they have completed their study abroad experience in a country of the target language. The student may take the exam as many times as needed to pass. However, all expenses will be incurred by the student; therefore, it is recommended that the student be prepared to pass the first time.

### What is the Official ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)?

The OPI is a valid and reliable means of assessing how well a person speaks a language. It is a 20-30 minute telephonic interview between a certified ACTFL tester and an examinee. The interview is interactive and continuously adapts to the interests and abilities of the speaker. The speaker's performance is compared to the criteria outlined in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines - Speaking (Revised 1999). The interview is double rated and an Official ACTFL Oral proficiency Certificate stating the candidate's proficiency level is issued to the candidate.

The OPI takes the form of a carefully structured conversation based on the interests and experiences of the test candidate. Often candidates are asked to take part in a role-play. This task provides the opportunity for the examinee to demonstrate linguistic functions not easily elicited through the conversational format.

## Descriptions of Ratings

The **Intermediate level** is characterized by the speaker's ability to:

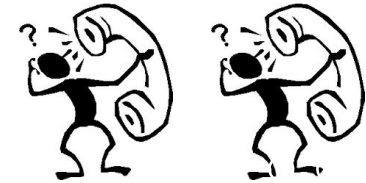
- Create with the language by combining and recombining learned elements, though primarily in a reactive mode
- Initiate, minimally sustain, and close in a simple way basic communicative tasks
- Ask and answer questions.

The **Advanced level** is characterized by the speaker's ability to:

- converse in a clearly participatory fashion
- initiate, sustain, and bring to closure a wide variety of communicative tasks, including those that require an increased ability to convey meaning with diverse language strategies due to a complication or an unforeseen turn of events
- satisfy the requirements of school and work situations, and
- narrate and describe with paragraph-length connected discourse.

**Cost: \$140.00** (Credit card or Check made payable to LTI [Language Testing International – The ACTFL Testing Office])

# OPI: ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW



For forms and instructions go to:  
<http://www.ohio.edu/modlang/>

## Required Ratings

### Ohio University Majors with Language Requirement:

Education Majors: **Advanced Low**

International Studies Majors:

Arabic: **Intermediate Mid**

French: **Intermediate High**

German: **Intermediate High**

Indonesian: **Intermediate Mid**

Italian: **Intermediate High**

Japanese: **Intermediate Mid**

Mandarin: **Intermediate Mid**

Spanish: **Intermediate High**

Russian: **Intermediate Mid**

Swahili: **Intermediate Mid**

Spanish Certificate: **Intermediate High**

Spanish Major: **Intermediate High**

German Major: **Intermediate High**

## Intermediate-Mid

Intermediate-Mid level speakers are able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is generally limited to those predictable and concrete exchanges necessary for survival in the target culture; personal information covering self, family, home, daily activities, interests and personal preferences; physical and social needs, such as food, shopping, travel and lodging.

Intermediate-mid speakers tend to function reactively, by responding to direct questions or requests for information. They are capable of asking a variety of questions when necessary to obtain simple information to satisfy basic needs, such as directions, prices and services. When called on to perform functions or handle topics at the Advanced level, they provide some information but have difficulty linking ideas, manipulating time and aspect, and using communicative strategies, such as circumlocution.

Intermediate-Mid speakers are able to express personal meaning by creating with the language, by combining and recombining known elements and conversational input to make utterances of sentence length and some strings of sentences. Speech may contain pauses, reformulations and self-corrections as they search for adequate vocabulary and appropriate language forms. Because of inaccuracies in their vocabulary and/or pronunciation and/or grammar and/or syntax, misunderstandings can occur, but they are generally understood by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives.

## Intermediate-High

Intermediate-High speakers are able to converse with ease and confidence when dealing with most routine tasks and social situations of the Intermediate level. They are able to handle

successfully many uncomplicated tasks and social situations requiring an exchange of basic information related to work, school, recreation, particular interests and areas of competence; hesitation and errors may be evident.

These speakers handle the tasks pertaining to the Advanced level, but they are unable to sustain performance at that level over a variety of topics. With some consistency, speakers at the Intermediate-High level narrate and describe in major time frames using connected discourse of paragraph length. Their performance of these Advanced-level tasks will exhibit one or more features of breakdown: failure to maintain narration or description semantically or syntactically appropriate major time frames, disintegration of connected discourse, misuse of cohesive devices, reduction in breadth and appropriateness of vocabulary, failure to successfully circumlocute, or a significant amount of hesitation.

Intermediate-High speakers can generally be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, although the dominant language is still evident (e.g. use of code-switching, false cognates, literal translations, etc.), and gaps in communication may occur.

## Advanced Low

Speakers at the Advanced-Low level are able to handle a variety of communicative tasks, somewhat haltingly at times. They participate actively in most informal and limited number of formal conversations on activities related to school, home, leisure activities and, to a lesser degree, those related to events of work, current, public, and personal interest.

They demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in all major time frames (past, present and future) in paragraph length discourse, but control of aspect may be lacking. They can handle appropriately the linguistic challenges

presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine situation or communicative task with which they are familiar, though at times their discourse may be minimal for the level and strained. Communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution may be employed. In their narrations and descriptions, they combine and link sentences into connected discourse of paragraph length. When pressed for a fuller account, they tend to grope and rely on minimal discourse. Utterances are typically not longer than a single paragraph. Structure of the dominant language is still evident in the use of false cognates, literal translations, or the oral paragraph structure of the speaker's own language rather than that of the target language.

While the language of Advanced-Low speakers may be marked by substantial, albeit irregular flow, it is typically somewhat strained and tentative, with noticeable self-correction and a certain "grammatical roughness." The vocabulary of Advanced-Low speakers is primarily generic in nature.

Advanced-Low speakers contribute to the conversation with sufficient accuracy, clarity, and precision to convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion, and it can be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, even through this may be achieved through repetition and restatement. When attempting to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the linguistic quality and quantity of their speech will deteriorate significantly.

(Full Descriptions can be found by downloading the "Proficiency Guidelines" pdf at

<http://www.yearoflanguages.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=33>  
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