

**NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL SERVICE
STATE PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT MANUAL
Policy Bulletin #14-01**

1210 Type of Tests

July 9, 2014

Language Proficiency Testing

**THIS SUPERCEDES ADVISORY MEMORANDUM # 97-05, AND PROVIDES INFORMATION
FOR AGENCIES ON TESTING CANDIDATES FOR LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY.**

OVERVIEW

Effective July 9, 2014, the Department of Civil Service (DCS) will be utilizing Language Line Services, Inc. to provide additional resources and support for language proficiency test administration. For the over 200 classified titles that require language proficiency, Language Line Services will ensure the availability of test examiners in such languages as Spanish, Haitian Creole, Korean, Polish, Russian, and Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese). If there are additional languages for which you require testing, please contact LanguageProficiency@cs.ny.gov.

Testing should be conducted on an as-needed basis and should be limited to reachable candidates. Language Line Services will schedule and administer language proficiency tests remotely or locally, by phone or in person, within three weeks of receiving a request. Candidates' performance will be scored using the established New York State Proficiency Levels within five business days after test administration. Language Line Services will report test results to the requesting agency and to the DCS. The fee to use Language Line Services will be paid by the DCS. Language Line Services staff have been trained to administer the tests consistent with administration by State agencies.

USING LANGUAGE LINE SERVICES

Agencies who wish to use Language Line Services must designate a staff member from their Human Resource/Personnel Office to serve as the administrator for language proficiency testing. Administrators may access the Language Line Online Registration System User Guide for NYS at <http://www.cs.ny.gov/ssd/Manuals/SPMM/1200Examinations/NYS%20Online%20Registration%20System%20User%20Guide%20with%20NYS%20OPT.pdf>. It is recommended that administrators print this guide for convenient referral. After reviewing the Guide, the Language Line Registration System may be accessed at: <https://my.languageline.com/llu/go/login/>.

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USING IN HOUSE EXAMINERS

Agencies who have a ready pool of in house examiners may continue to use them. The honorarium for an in house examiner must be paid by the hiring agency. The DCS will not be certifying or training new in house examiners as the expectation is, over time, that agencies will transition to Language Line Services.

Agencies using in house examiners must contact LanguageProficiency@cs.ny.gov to obtain revised Monitor Instructions, Candidate's Booklet, Examiner's Booklet, and Sample Letters/Forms. Please destroy existing language proficiency examination materials in a manner consistent with your agency's elimination of secure and confidential material.

Agencies must designate a staff member from their Human Resource/Personnel Office to serve as the administrator for language proficiency testing. As necessary, the administrator may designate other monitors to conduct language proficiency testing. Test results should be reported to LanguageProficiency@cs.ny.gov. The test materials are designed to be reused and are considered confidential and secure and must be maintained in a confidential and secure manner in the agency Human Resource/Personnel Office.

PRIOR TESTING OF CANDIDATES

Whether you are using Language Line Services or in house examiners, before scheduling a test, the administrator should contact LanguageProficiency@cs.ny.gov to determine if the candidate has already passed the proficiency test at the established proficiency level, or higher. Please provide the candidate's name and last four digits of the Social Security number. If the candidate has already passed the language test at the established proficiency level, or higher, the test will be waived and the candidate may be considered for appointment. The DCS will continue to maintain a database of candidates who have been tested and the level of proficiency achieved so that repeated testing is not required.

DETERMINING LEVELS OF PROFICIENCY

The process for determining levels of proficiency remains unchanged. Agencies are responsible for providing the information necessary to determine the level of language proficiency that will ensure a candidate's ability to properly perform the duties of the

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position at the examination planning scope conference. The level of proficiency must be the same for all positions within a title.

LEVELS OF PROFICIENCY

The levels of proficiency remain unchanged:

Level 1: This skill level requires relatively limited proficiency to conduct simple routine social conversations in an understandable manner making introductions, providing basic information about the surroundings, handling routine calls, or assisting others in filling out routine English language forms. Entry-level clerical titles with language parenthetics are designated as Level 1.

Level 2: This skill level requires proficiency in conducting smooth understandable conversation, reading correspondence, official documents, and forms to obtain accurate information, composing relatively simple and brief letters and memos for a variety of purposes, to explain rules or regulations, or to discuss a problem. Some higher level clerical, paraprofessional, and safety and security titles with language parenthetics are designated as Level 2.

Level 3: This skill level requires advanced proficiency evidenced by good control of grammar, a relatively large and diverse vocabulary, accurate communication in a variety of professional and social contexts, leading group activities, conducting meetings or training classes; administering tests, inventories or questionnaires including evaluating responses, preparing reports explaining relatively complex rules, regulations and procedures, conduct interviews, evaluate resources, or decide on a course of action. Some journey level personnel titles, social work, and psychologist titles with language parenthetics are designated as Level 3.

The names of candidates who fail to demonstrate the level of proficiency determined for the title will remain restricted on the language parenthetic eligible list. A retest may be granted six months after the candidate was last tested. Agencies may conduct a retest if and when they are actively canvassing the eligible list. Candidates who do not achieve the proficiency level required for the title may, upon request, receive a copy of the examiners rating of their performance. Appeal of ratings is not allowed as the opportunity for retest exists.

Questions regarding the information contained in this advisory may be directed to LanguageProficiency@cs.ny.gov.