



OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT  
Court Language Access Services

## Oregon Court Interpreter Certification Overview Summary

Court Language Access Services (CLAS) offers each step in the certification process twice per year. Not all of the steps must be completed in order, but you do have to complete some before you are eligible for others. For instance, you must pass the Written Exam before you can take the Oral Exam.

The Orientation to Court Interpreting is one of the first steps you need to complete in the certification process. Our goals for Orientation are to provide you with information on what makes a good court interpreter, and to help you decide if court interpreting is a career that you want to pursue.

The Orientation is a six-hour workshop where we cover: the importance of being bilingual, interpreting modes and skills required, the types of cases you will see in court and court interpreter ethics. It is important to note that we do not teach you how to interpret, nor do we practice interpreting during orientation. The goal is to provide you with information on what makes a good court interpreter, and to help you decide if court interpreting is a career that you want to pursue.

The Written Exam is usually offered once in the Spring and once in the Fall. The Written Exam is a 135-question multiple choice test that you take on a scantron sheet. You are being tested on how well you read and respond to questions in English. You will see questions about general language proficiency (synonyms, antonyms, idioms), words and phrases you hear in court, and questions about how an interpreter should behave professionally or ethically in court. You need to score an 80% to pass the exam, and you must get a passing score before you can take the Oral Exam.

The Mock Oral Exam is NOT a requirement for certification, although we strongly recommend that you take it at least once. The Mock exam is set up in almost the exact same way as the actual Oral Exam. You are in the room with a proctor, your exam is recorded, and the administration procedures are almost identical. It is a great way to not only manage your test anxiety, but also to get an idea of where you might want to focus your study for the actual Court Interpreting Oral Examination.

The Oral Exam is also offered twice per year, once in Winter and once in the Summer. Here are you are tested in the three modes of interpreting, sight consecutive and simultaneous. There are two parts of the sight interpreting portion. In part one you are given a document in English, and you will read it out loud into the non-English language. In part two you are given a document in the non-English language, and you will read it out loud in English.

On the day of the exam, you will be taken into the exam room by one of our staff, and they will stay in the room with you for the entire exam acting as the proctor. Your exam is recorded and



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is sent out to a team of professional raters to be graded. You will need to score a 70% on this exam to pass.

Once you pass the Oral Exam, there are still a few things you need to do before you become an Oregon Certified Court Interpreter. First, your results must be returned by the raters, which can take up to two months. Once those scores are received, you will take the online ethics exam. This is more like an open book test where you are allowed to look at the code of ethics as you are taking the exam. You must score a 70% on the ethics exam to pass. There is also a brief application that you need to fill out where we ask you to verify your contact information for the public roster and get a photo from you for your ID card. Finally, you attend the Orientation to Interpreting in Oregon's Courts where we focus on what happens after you become certified, and then you are sworn in as an Oregon Certified Court Interpreter.

Realistically it may take you one and a half to two years to complete the certification process. Most people take the Orientation and Written Exam in the same season. If you choose to take the Written Exam you may not pass on the first time, but you can try again in six months and continue to try until you pass. Some people pass the Written Exam and take the Oral Exam right away, which gives them about four months to study. Some people decide to wait ten months before they take the Oral Exam to give themselves enough time to study and prepare for it. Most people do not pass the Oral Exam the first time that they take it, and for some it takes two to three times before they are able to pass. Once you pass the Oral Exam, you must wait about two months for your results, and then you have about another month to take and pass the Ethics Exam and apply for the credential. At the end of the process, you attend the Orientation to Interpreting in Oregon's Court and are sworn in as an Oregon Certified Court Interpreter. It is very rare for someone to start the process in the Spring and finish the process in the fall.