

FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions about the official Oral Proficiency Interview

1. Who needs to take the OPI?

Anyone can take the Oral Proficiency Interview exam, but it is required of all Spanish majors, students who would like to receive the certificate in Spanish, and language education majors at Ohio University. It is recommended for anyone who needs an official rating of their oral language abilities.

2. What is the OPI?

The Oral Proficiency Interview is an official double rated interview given by testers certified by the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). In order to determine your speaking level in any given language, you will have a telephone interview with a tester who will then evaluate your language level according to strict standards.

3. Can I prepare for the test?

The Interview is designed to rate your level at the time that you take it, and is not designed for any special preparation. You might want to practice speaking with a native speaker, read texts out loud, and listen to the radio or television in order to increase your fluency. For some it is a good idea to practice speaking the foreign language over the phone. It is a conversation that does not have any scripted questions, so there are no precise questions you can prepare to answer.

4. When do I need to register for it?

It is best to send in your registration by 6th week of the quarter you plan to take the test. This allows for the testing site (LTI) to find an interviewer who can accommodate the times you indicate. You will be contacted by LTI via e-mail about one week prior to the scheduled interview.

5. How do I register for it?

The Department of Modern Languages website (www.ohio.edu/modlang/OPI) has a link to a document that you must fill in and either fax or e-mail to the testing site (LTI). Make sure you use only the form on the DML website or OU will not be able to access your rating.

6. How do I pay for the OPI exam?

You will make a direct payment to LTI with either a check or a credit card. Do NOT send any payments to the Department of Modern Languages.

7. Why do I need to take it?

This interview gives a very accurate and objective assessment of your oral language skills. Your class work assesses your written and reading skills. In order to maintain high standards, certain degrees require this objective assessment. You will also find the rating extremely useful in future job placements where you will need to prove your oral language abilities.

8. What do I do if I do not achieve the required rating?

You may retake the exam as often as necessary until you attain the required level. Since the exam has a fee, you should not take it until you feel you have a high level of proficiency. LTI requires at least 90 days between interviews. If you need to take it at the end of the subsequent quarter, a waiver of the 90-day requirement can be requested by Ohio University. You will not receive your diploma until you attain the required rating if the interview is part of your program of studies.

9. How often can I take it?

You may take it as often as necessary until you attain the required rating.

10. How do I schedule it if I am not on the Athens campus?

You must schedule your interview by completing the forms available on the Department of Modern Languages website under OPI. Follow the instruction sheet precisely. Make sure you allow a window of time to schedule the interview, as your time depends on tester availability. You will also need to arrange for a proctor if you are not on the Athens campus. Your proctor should be a person of authority and must fill out the proctor sheet, sign it and you must send it to the testing site, LTI. You must also make the call from a landline. We suggest you use a calling card to pay for the call, as it is not toll free.

(www.ohio.edu/modlang/OPI)

11. Can I take it from outside of Ohio?

Yes, follow the steps in #10.

12. How to I sign up for it if I am abroad?

See #10.

13. If I don't pass the OPI, when can I take it again?

See #8.

14. Do I have to pay each time I take the OPI?

Yes, you must pay the fee each time you take it. Therefore, it is a good idea to be well prepared the first time. The fee does not change for retakes.

15. What is a proctor?

The proctor is the person of authority (teacher, librarian, boss, etc) who will check your ID, place the call, introduce you to the tester, and then leave the room while you do the interview. It is important that the proctor be a responsible person who can verify your identity and place the call properly.

16. How do I find a proctor if I am not on the Athens campus?

You should check with your public library, go to an area university or school, ask a business secretary, etc. You will need a landline and a quiet room where you can take the exam.

17. Is the call free?

No, this is not a toll free call. You will need to pay for the call if you are taking the exam off campus. We suggest you have a calling card. You must use a landline. Cell phones are not permitted because of poor reception. If you complete the interview at the OHIO campus, there is no charge for the call.

18. Can I make the call from my cell phone?

No, cell phones are not permitted because of poor reception. You must find a landline where you can make the call. If you use a cell phone and lose reception, you will forfeit the interview.

19. How do I get my rating?

LTI will provide you with a link to the test site for your rating. You must retain the original e-mail message from them verifying your interview time. If you cannot access the link, or lose the e-mail, contact Dr. Partyka (partyka@ohio.edu) about two weeks after you take the test and she can verify your rating.

20. How do I inform my college of my rating?

You cannot officially inform your college. Dr. Partyka and/or Barb Reichenbach are the only instructors who can notify your college of your rating. If your DARS does not reflect that your rating has been reported, please contact Dr. Partyka. Send Dr. Partyka your PID and major so she can report your rating to the proper college.

21. How do I get the official rating paper certificate?

You must pay for this at the time of registration. The certificate will be sent directly to you. You may also be able to download a certificate if you retain the original access code provided to you.

22. Can I take it my last quarter at the university?

It is not recommended that you wait until the last quarter. If you do not attain the required rating, you will have to postpone graduation; therefore you should take it at least one quarter previous to graduation. However, you may take it your last quarter.

23. Should I take the OPI even if it is not required of my program?

You may wish to take the OPI if you are applying for jobs that require proof of language proficiency. Keep in mind that language proficiency deteriorates if you do not use the language. Therefore, an OPI rating of one year may be invalid the following year.

24. Where do I go to take the exam when I am in Athens?

Check the Modern Languages web site for any changes of location. Currently, the exam will be given in Gordy Hall recording studio in the basement – 017A. Signs will be posted throughout Gordy during exam week at the end of each quarter.

25. Where do I go to take the exam when I am off campus?

You need to arrange a place that has a landline telephone and is quiet with no room for disturbance. The interview will take about 20-40 minutes.

26. Can I make the call from a cell phone?

No, you must use a landline.

27. Do I receive my diploma if I don't pass the OPI?

The OPI is not a pass/fail grade. It gives a rating. If you do not attain the required rating for your program, you will not have fulfilled one of the requirements for graduation and will not receive your diploma.

28. Can I graduate without the OPI score?

Not if you are required to take the OPI exam as one of the requirements for your degree program, major or certificate.