



TRANSCENDING YOUR LANGUAGE BARRIERS

## Communication Skills Test (CST)

### Information for Candidates

#### Overview

The Communication Skills Test is an assessment designed to measure a person's ability to interact in a professional context using two or more languages (usually English and one or more other languages). It evaluates the ability to understand and retain information provided in a language, the ability to clearly communicate ideas through speech, and knowledge of occupation specific terminology. This test does not evaluate or certify your ability to interpret or translate.

Each language will be assessed separately in a series of interviews, consisting of three sections each: Language comprehension (listening), efficacy of oral communication (speech), and healthcare terminology. Candidates testing in two languages will have two interviews, first in English, and then in the target language, but at no point will they be interpreting or translating. Candidates testing in three or more languages will have additional interviews. Usually all of the interviews will take place on the same call, one immediately after the other.

#### How it works

Each section of the test will begin with a practice exercise or example. While the practice questions will not hurt your score if you get them wrong, correct answers may help your overall score, or shorten the test.

The first section of each language interview will be *comprehension (aka listening)*. In this section, you will hear a series of short readings. After each reading, you will hear a few questions related to the content of the reading. Here is an example (you will not see text during test, only hear audio):

"Angela withdrew \$300 dollars from the bank this morning before she took her cat to the veterinarian for a routine checkup and vaccination. The vet bill was \$200, which she paid in cash, and she gave the rest of the money to her mother."

"Now, some questions:"

"What two places did Angela visit?" (answers: Bank and veterinarian)

"Why did Angela take her cat to the vet?" (answer: checkup or vaccination)

"How much money did Angela give her mother?" (answer: \$100)

The second section of each interview will be *efficacy of oral communication*, or speech. In this section you will be presented with open-ended starter topics and asked to talk for approximately 2 to 3 minutes about each topic, giving your thoughts and opinions. Keep in mind that the starter topics are just prompts to get you started, and there are no wrong answers. Your responses will be evaluated based on how clearly, coherently and fluidly you communicate, taking into account pronunciation, grammar and syntax, pace and vocabulary. Here is an example (audio only on test):

"Some school systems have proposed limiting the amount of homework that can be assigned to elementary school children, to ensure that they are not overwhelmed and have enough time for



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play each day. Give your opinion about how much homework you think is appropriate for elementary students. Do you think playtime is as important as homework? Please explain.”

The third section of each interview will cover *healthcare terminology*. In this section you will have two separate exercise types: *term recognition* and *term definitions*. First you will hear a series of brief definitions, and you will need to state the term that corresponds to each definition. Then, you will hear a series of vocabulary terms, and you will need to provide a clear and precise definition for each term given. (You may request spelling.)

You may find the following questions useful when trying to define terms:

- What is it? (thing/person/concept/etc.)
- What is it used for?
- What are its characteristics?
- What makes it different from other similar things/people/concepts?
- (When applicable) What is the size, color and/or location?

Here are some examples (audio only on test):

Recognition: “A cloth tube, closed at one end that is worn on the foot. It may also cover part or all of the calf. You put it on before your shoes.” (Answer: sock or stocking)

Definition: “Refrigerator” (Answer: A large kitchen appliance in which you store food to keep it cool and avoid spoiling.)

## Preparing for the Test

In addition to being in a quiet area, and having a pen and paper to take notes, you may wish to prepare for the healthcare terminology portion of the test by checking some of these links:

*Glossary of Health Coverage and Medical Terms (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services)*

<https://www.cms.gov/ccio/resources/files/downloads/uniform-glossary-final.pdf>

*Health Insurance Glossary (eHealth)*

<https://www.ehealthinsurance.com/health-insurance-glossary/terms-a/>

*English-Spanish Dictionary of Health Related Terms (California-Mexico Health Initiative/California DHS)*

<http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/dept/spanish/engspdict.pdf>

*English-Spanish Dictionary of Health Terms (University of Connecticut)*

[http://www.publichealth.uconn.edu/assets/mfwd\\_dictionaryengspan.pdf](http://www.publichealth.uconn.edu/assets/mfwd_dictionaryengspan.pdf)

*Learn English Vocabulary: The Human Body and Anatomy (LEO Network)*

<https://www.learnenglish.de/vocabulary/body.html>

*Glossary of Sexual Health Terms (Planned Parenthood)*

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/glossary>

*Human body: Body, Head, Eye, Hand, Foot; Internal Organs (Free online Picture Dictionary for Kids)*

<http://kidspicturedictionary.com/english-through-pictures/people-english-through-pictures/human-body/>

*Body parts (Learn English Teens - British Council)*

<http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/grammar-vocabulary/vocabulary-exercises/body-parts>

## Taking the test



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You will need to be alone and in a quiet area, and you will need a pen and 2-3 sheets of blank paper for note taking. You are not allowed to use any reference materials, such as dictionaries or computers. The test usually takes about 90 to 120 minutes, depending on your pace. It is administered in one of three ways:

On-site proctoring: You will need to go into the offices of the requesting organization, or to another requestor's approved testing site, where they will verify your identity, and then proctor the test while you test over the phone.

Online via Video Proctoring (OVP): If testing from home, you will be required to use the Online Video Proctoring service, please go over the "LPA ONLINE VIDEO PROCTORING" at the end of this document.

Over the phone remote: Testing over the phone without proctoring or identity confirmation is not recommended and can only be performed in special circumstances with explicit permission from the requesting organization. (Report will indicate that this was an un-proctored test without identity confirmation.)

### Passing Scores

For Spanish language applicants, Mile High Multilingual Services (MHMS) requires a minimum score of **80%** in **BOTH** the listening **AND** speaking sections of the test, in both languages (English and Target Language), to be considered passing. For other languages, a minimum of **75%** in BOTH the listening AND speaking sections of the test, in both languages, is required to be considered passing.

### Paying for the Test

Please note that you will need to pay the cost of the test in advance to confirm an appointment.

The price of the test will depend on a couple of factors: 1) your language combination and 2) your test administration method (i.e. over the phone versus Online Video Proctoring (OVP)).

Languages are priced according to the following tiers:

### Spanish

**Core:** Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, French, Somali, Arabic (Modern Standard), Portuguese, Russian, Korean, Japanese, Hindi, German, Italian, Greek, Turkish, Ukrainian, & Haitian Creole.

**Rare:** Any language not found in the Spanish nor Core language groups.

### Standard HC-CST Testing Rates are as follows:

English/Spanish	\$110.00
English/Core	\$140.00
English/Rare	\$160.00
Online Video Proctoring (OVP)	\$ 15.00

Your program may provide a discount, depending on your language combination. Please, ask your program coordinator for any corresponding discount code.



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You can pay over the phone at 866-264-5212

### Cancellations/Rescheduling

A late fee is charged for tests canceled or rescheduled within 24 business hours of a confirmed test schedule. Tests canceled with less than 1-hour' notice are charged the full amount and are non-refundable.

In order to cancel or reschedule an assessment appointment without any fee, The ASSESSOR should be notified at least 1 working business day beforehand (at least 24 hours in advance, not counting weekends or holidays).

Cancelling or rescheduling with less than 1 working business day of notice will result in a scheduling fee. Self-pay candidates will need to pay their fees to reschedule or will receive a partial refund for cancellations when applicable. If testing through an employer, school or other institution, we will bill the fee to the requesting organization. That organization may (or may not) require candidates to reimburse their fees and/or provide an explanation before allowing candidates to reschedule.

#### 1-24 hours notice: Late Rescheduling Fee (LRF)

If cancelling or rescheduling with less than 24 working hours' notice, but with more than 1-hour notice, THE ASSESSOR will charge a Late Rescheduling Fee (LRF). The amount of the fee will vary according to the rarity of the language(s):

- English/Spanish testing LRF: \$20
- English/Core Languages testing LRF: \$30 (*Core languages include: Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, French, Somali, Arabic, Portuguese, Russian, Korean, Japanese, Hindi, German, Italian, Greek, Turkish, Ukrainian, & Haitian Creole*)
- English/Rare Languages testing LRF: \$40 (*all languages not listed above*)

#### Less than 1-hour notice: Missed Appointment Fee (MAF)

If cancelling or rescheduling with less than 1 hour notice, or if the candidate is not available for testing within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time, THE ASSESSOR will charge a Missed Appointment Fee (MAF). ***The amount of the missed appointment fee is the same as the full cost of the assessment.***



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## Frequently asked questions

*(continued on next page)*

*Why do I need to test in my native language?*

We recommend testing all languages used on the job, including the native language (even if it is English) for three main reasons: First, to provide a reference score for comparison. Second, to avoid cultural bias. (If candidates for a bilingual position are only tested in one of the two languages, then native speakers of that language would tend to score higher, and receive hiring preference, regardless of their skill level in the other language.) Third, your employer may need to show documentation of your skill level in all languages used on the job for HR and/or regulatory purposes.

*I am a (nurse/banker/physical therapist, etc.). Why are some of the questions from non-related general topics?*

In real world situations you will encounter topics other than those strictly related to your field that are nonetheless necessary to complete your job. The comprehension and oral communication sections of the test evaluate your overall communication ability in the language.

*When are results ready? Do I receive a copy? Who else sees my results?*

Results are usually sent out within five working business days (or one week, unless there are holidays). You may receive results sooner. If you ordered through the website and paid for the test yourself, you will receive a copy, and we will also send a copy to any other parties you requested on the order form. (If you did not list any other recipients, only you will receive a copy). If your employer/school ordered and paid for the test, only they will receive a copy, which they may or may not be able to share with you, according to their own internal policy. Self-paying candidates who chose the option to enroll in the "ON-FILE" program will have their results added to a database that THE ASSESSOR and our partner organizations may refer to when seeking talent.



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## Frequently Asked Questions (continued from previous page)

*Which national/regional accents are considered standard in English?*

THE ASSESSOR acknowledges several standard regional/national dialects and accents in English including Australian, British (including Scottish\*), Canadian, Caribbean\*, Indian\*, Irish, New Zealander, US American (Including regional accents: Southern, Northeastern, Mid-western, and Southwestern/Native American) and South African\*. (\*No points will be deducted for clear and easy to understand speech in these dialects/accents. However, if speech is deemed to impede understanding for listeners from other countries or regions, score may be lowered and/or include notes mentioning impact on communication as applicable, depending on the degree of severity.)

*Does passing this test make me an interpreter?*

No. This test shows you have demonstrated the ability to understand and orally communicate in a language, and that you know profession-specific terminology. It does not evaluate your ability to retain and accurately convert information between languages. THE ASSESSOR offers interpreter assessments that use different exercise types to evaluate those skills.

*I have been speaking this language at work for years. Why do I need to take this test?*

Your employer may wish to confirm or recertify your skill level for hiring, quality, safety or regulatory reasons.

*How are results provided? What is the passing score?*

Candidates receive an A-F ranking in each section, and an overall A-F ranking in each language, corresponding to a standard US grading scale. THE ASSESSOR does not provide a passing/failing score for this test, although we generally recommend a score of 80% or higher (B grade or higher). Each organization will set their own criteria according to their needs, and some may focus on specific test sections when making hiring or enrollment decisions.

*How soon can I retest? How many times may I retest?*

Please check with the organization (employer or school) that requested the test to see what, if any, retest guidelines they have in place. THE ASSESSOR recommends at least 6 months before retesting in most circumstances but does not enforce that recommendation.

*Can I retest in just one language/section? Can I add an additional language?*

Yes, you can retest in one language or add a third (or fourth) language. In certain circumstances partial retesting by section may also be available. Please contact the requestor for single language additions/retests or to discuss section -specific retests. Our testing team will review your results and recommend a partial retest if indicated.



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### Online Video Proctoring (OVP) FAQ

To improve test validity and ensure security, THE ASSESSOR provides an optional online video proctoring service, which allows for identify verification and visual supervision. This allows a test candidate to be assessed off-site, all while being continually supervised by a qualified proctor, providing a similar level of supervision as an on-site test candidate.

#### How does OVP work?

When a test schedule is confirmed, the candidate is provided a web link to be used on the day of the test. At the scheduled test time, the test candidate should click on the link from within their test confirmation email, which will immediately open a browser-based video/audio interface (app required for iOS). Although the test candidate will only hear audio from the proctor and tester, the proctor will see (and hear) the candidate and their surrounding environment.

After a brief introduction, the video proctor will ask the candidate to present a valid photo ID before beginning their assessment. Once the candidate's ID has been verified, the test will begin. The candidate will then be observed for the duration of the test. In some languages or language combinations, the proctor may also administer part or all of the test. In other languages there may be a separate proctor and tester.

#### What are the benefits of OVP?

ID Verification - At the start of each proctored test, the candidate is asked to present (via camera) a valid form of photo ID, to ensure that the person taking the test is the same person who was scheduled for the test.

Test security - Continual video and audio supervision both discourages and detects cheating, increasing validity of results.

Compliance – Some jurisdictions and organizations may require evidence of identity verification/proctoring be kept on file for legal, regulatory and/or organizational compliance. To assist clients with audit preparedness, reports with candidate results will now also document if the test was proctored on site or over-video.

Convenience for candidates – Allows for a greater geographical diversity of candidates, and allows for additional scheduling flexibility for candidates wishing to test outside of the office hours of the requesting agency.

Convenience for clients – Client agencies no longer need to coordinate scheduling, no longer need to provide a testing space and phone connection, and no longer need to have employees spend time proctoring the assessments.

#### Technical Requirements

Taking an online video proctored test with THE ASSESSOR does not require that the candidate register or create an account. Candidates can enter the virtual testing space from either a computer (Mac, Windows) or via their mobile device (iOS, Android).

- High speed (broadband) internet connection via Wi-Fi or Ethernet. (4G/LTE not recommended due to concerns about both connection reliability and the large amount of data consumed by constant video connection.)
- iOS device (app), Android device (app or browser), Macintosh - 2011 or newer (browser), or PC -Windows 7 or later (browser)
- Mac/PC/Android users: Recommend that the Chrome browser (<http://www.google.com/chrome>) should be installed and up to date. (Most recent versions of Opera and Firefox browsers also supported. Apple Safari, Microsoft Edge, and Internet Explorer not supported at this time.)
- iPhone/Android users: Download the iOS or Android appear.in app before the test appointment.
- Wired headset required for both phone and computer users. High quality wired headset recommended. Bundled Apple wired "earpods" or equivalent acceptable (wireless "airpods" or other Bluetooth headsets should not be used). Regardless of brand, we recommend that you test the quality of your headset before your test appointment.

High quality webcam. Built in webcams on most modern smartphones or laptops will be sufficient. If using a desktop computer, please make sure to install your webcam and load the necessary drivers before the test appointment.

#### Compatibility Check

The test confirmation email will include 2 separate links; one to a secure video chat room that will be used for the test appointment. The other will be for an alternate open video room where candidates can test their connection in advance of the test.

Candidates are asked to test their connection and software in advance using the provided links.

#### ID Requirements

THE ASSESSOR accepts the following documents as standard proof of identity:

- o US State/Federal government issued photo IDs
- o Valid Driver's License
- o Valid State Issued Identity Card with photo
- o Valid Federal Permanent Resident Card ("Green Card")
- o Valid (or expired within 6 months) US Passport/US Passport Card
- o Valid Military ID (must include photo)
- o Valid (or expired within 6 months) Foreign Passport
- o Valid Canadian national or provincial issued photo ID (including Driver's License)
- o Valid French national photo ID ("carte d'identité national")
- o Valid Ecuadorian national ID Card ("Cédula")