

TEST ADMINISTRATION FOR COURT INTERPRETERS

RFP # 06-EOP-45065049-01

VENDOR QUESTION AND RESPONSE LOG

No.	Date Question Received	QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES
1	5/31/06	<p>Question: Can we get the names of the current raters?</p> <p>AOC Response: The names of the raters and their contact information will be provided only to that vendor selected by the AOC for award of the resulting contract.</p>
2	5/31/06	<p>Question: How much do they currently get paid?</p> <p>AOC Response: The current raters are paid at the rate of \$41.50 per hour.</p>
3	5/31/06	<p>Question: How do we cost out 12 languages? Which are the most common? In what proportion are they tested?</p> <p>AOC Response: The AOC expects proposers to use their business judgment in costing out the 12 languages; however, the following historical examination data is provided for proposer’s use and is cumulative for the dates July 1, 2000–February 28, 2006:</p> <p>The following languages are in order of most common to least common for the written examination: Spanish (4158/62.73%), English/Registered Exam (1131/17.06%), Korean (433/6.53%), Mandarin (175/2.64%), Vietnamese (158/2.38%), Cantonese (126/1.9%), Russian (122/1.84%), Arabic (80/1.21%), Tagalog (71/1.07%), Eastern Armenian (69/1.04%), Japanese (63/0.95%), Portuguese (31/0.47%), Western Armenian (11/0.17%).</p> <p>The following languages are in order of the most common to least common for the oral examination: Spanish (3244/68.61%), English/Registered Exam (525/11.10%), Korean (446/9.43%), Mandarin (130/2.75%), Cantonese (80/1.69%), Vietnamese (66/1.40%), Russian (64/1.35%), Japanese (62/1.31%), Tagalog (36/0.76%), Eastern Armenian (33/0.70%), Portuguese (20/0.42%), Western Armenian (12/0.25%), Arabic (10/0.21%).</p> <p>The following languages are in order of the most common to least common for both examination: Spanish (7402/65.18%), English/Registered Exam (1656/14.58%), Korean (879/7.74%), Mandarin (305/2.69%), Vietnamese (224/1.97%), Cantonese (206/1.81%), Russian (186/1.64%), Japanese (125/1.10%), Tagalog (107/0.94%), Eastern Armenian (102/0.90%), Arabic (90/0.79%), Portuguese (51/0.45%), Western Armenian (23/0.20%).</p>

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4	5/31/06	<p>Question: What is the written to oral ratio tested?</p> <p>AOC Response: According to cumulative examination data for July 1, 2000–February 28, 2006, of the 11,356 total examinees, 6,628 (58.37%) sat for the written examination and 4,728 (41.63%) sat for the oral examination.</p>
5	5/31/06	<p>Question: Since proposals are public information, how can we obtain a sample or past copy of a proposal?</p> <p>AOC Response: All requests for public information must be addressed to James Carroll, Manager, Office of Communications, Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts, 455 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102, and such requests must contain a level of detail sufficient to identify the specific document(s) requested. The AOC’s Office of Communications manages not only the request for public information process, but also obtaining the requested information and coordinating either copying the information for transmission to the requester, or scheduling time that the requester can review such requested documents at the AOC. For more information regarding the AOC's process for handling requests for information under the California Public Records Act, and the level of detail necessary for all such requests, please contact the AOC’s Office of Communications directly at (415) 865-7740.</p>
6	6/01/06	<p>Question: RFP Page 5 of 18: Section 3.6.4 Ensure that Rater Panels for all oral Exams 1) are administratively...3) that no members of the Rater Panel or test development panel shall be involved in interpreter training or have a vested financial interests in the outcome of the applicant’s performance. With regard to the bolded section: We understand the requirement that test developers and raters not be involved in interpreter training for profit. However, is it the intention of the RFP to imply that Dr. X of the University of X who would be the Principal Investigator for this contract should we bid, would be disqualified because they are the director of an interpreter training program – the X Institute for Interpretation, among their other duties at the University of X, which involves directing testing and other projects. The individual is the administrative head and does not take part in the training, except for 1 lecture. Would this disqualify the University of X from bidding. The University of X is a non-profit educational institution, so there would be no conflict of interest from our point of view, but how would Administrative Office of the Courts opine?</p> <p>AOC Response: The prospective vendor’s status as a non-profit educational institution on its own does not satisfy the condition that no members of the Rater Panels and test development panels have a vested financial interest in the outcome of the applicant’s performance. However, the AOC would NOT view the affiliation of a member of the administrative team to an interpreter training program as a disqualifying factor, provided complete independence is maintained between the administrative team and the Rater Panels and test development panels. The AOC would require that such independence be clearly reflected in any proposals submitted by a prospective vendor.</p>

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7	6/01/06	<p>Question: RFP Page 3 OF 18: Section 2.2 The AOC is currently reviewing proposals from vendors for the purpose of evaluating and developing recommendations concerning the statewide examination process and testing instruments for certification and registration of California court interpreters. Regarding (AOC RFP #05-EOP-45064049-01). Can you explain briefly when the above RFP was announced, the proposal submission date, and what entity or consultant, if anyone, has been selected?</p> <p>AOC Response: The AOC's answers to these questions can be obtained by reviewing the posting of that RFP at the following web address: http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/rfp/ctintexam-rfp.htm Proposals continue to be evaluated, however, selection of a vendor for contract award is not anticipated prior to the end the term of a contract resulting from this RFP.</p>
8	6/01/06	<p>Question: We understand that the performance of this contract when awarded will be for 1 year, with a 12-month option. Is this correct?</p> <p>AOC Response: No, that is incorrect. Per the RFP page 3 of 18, Section 3.1, the initial term of the resultant contract will be ten (10) months (September 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007), with an option to extend the contract, at the AOC's sole discretion, for an additional period of one-year (12 months).</p>
9	6/01/06	<p>Question: RFP page 14 of 18 Section 7.4 Please explain fee structure for certified interpreter exam. Does the fee cover both written and oral, meaning that if a candidate pays the fee, he/she may take the exam, and if he/she passes written, then he/she can go on to oral without paying another fee? But should they fail the written during the 2006-2007 fiscal year, they must pay the fee again in that same year in order to reapply for the written? The same conditions for the oral?</p> <p>AOC Response: A candidate who wishes to take a Certified Court Interpreter Examination, including both the written and oral components, must pay a \$250.00 application fee. The application fee entitles the candidate to the written exam examination and the oral examination immediately following the written, provided that the candidate passes the written examination. In the event that the candidate does not pass the written examination, the candidate must reapply for the written examination and submit an application fee of \$250.00. Candidates who have passed the Certified written examination within the past 48 months may apply to retake just the oral examination, but would be required to submit a new application fee of \$250.00.</p> <p>A candidate who wishes to take the Registered Court Interpreter Examination, including both the written and oral components, must pay a \$250.00 application fee. The application fee entitles the candidate to the written exam examination and the oral examination immediately following the written, provided that the candidate passes the written examination. In the event that the candidate does not pass the written examination, the candidate must reapply for the written examination and submit an application fee of \$250.00. Candidates who have passed the Registered written examination within the past 48 months may apply to retake just the oral examination, but would be required to submit a new application fee of \$250.00.</p>

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10	6/01/06	<p>Question: Is it possible to suggest a change in fee structure to the AOC for 2006-2007 to take into consideration the costs of hiring federal certified interpreters for rating, whose rate has just gone up?</p> <p>AOC Response: As cited in the RFP page 14 of 18 Section 7.4, the current test application fee structure shown in the table below is expected to be kept in place for the FY 2006–2007, and should be used without changes for the purpose of developing the vendor’s cost/fee proposal.</p>
11	6/01/06	<p>Question: Pages 3-4, Section 2.1: What format are the current exams or item banks in? How will these be transferred to the new vendor? What types of language software are used to publish the current exams, given that it is quite common for specialized software for each language to be used? Will only hard copy, fixed forms be used? Will all the recordings and scripts for the exams also be transferred?</p> <p>AOC Response: The majority of the current exams are in Word format. Some of the exam materials and item banks are formatted using different software. An electronic copy and a list of software/hardware required for opening the documents will be provided to the selected vendor. Additionally, a hard copy and/or PDF file of each of the exams will be provided. All recordings and scripts will be transferred via secure mail after execution of the resultant contract.</p>
12	6/01/06	<p>Question: -Page 4, Section 3.2.1: How much of the test preparatory material will be applicable for the new vendor (e.g., test specifications, test durations, oral proficiency preparatory materials, any practice test items, etc.)?</p> <p>AOC Response: All of the test preparatory material will be applicable and available to the new vendor upon request after execution of the resultant contract.</p>
13	6/01/06	<p>Question: Page 5, Section 3.4.2: How many statewide locations are required, and what are the required or preferred locations?</p> <p>AOC Response: The Certified Court Interpreter written examination for Spanish is currently offered in five locations including, the Bay Area, Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Diego. The Certified oral examination for Spanish is currently offered in four locations including, the Bay Area, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Diego. The Certified written examinations for languages other than Spanish are currently offered in three locations including, the Bay Area, Los Angeles, and Sacramento. The Certified oral examinations for languages other than Spanish are currently offered in three locations including, the Bay Area, Los Angeles, and Sacramento.</p> <p>The Registered Court Interpreter written examination is currently offered in five locations including, the Bay Area, Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Diego. The Registered oral examination is currently offered in four locations including, the Bay Area, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Diego.</p> <p>The AOC expects that, at a minimum, these statewide locations will be kept in place during the term of the resultant contract.</p>

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14	6/01/06	<p>Question: Page 5, Section 3.4.2: Have any tests been compromised in the past? Are past compromises a threat to current exam validity? In other words, were items exposed during a compromise?</p> <p>AOC Response: Yes, in the distant past one of the Spanish exams was compromised, however, that event does not pose a threat to exam security as the compromised exams were discarded and are no longer in use.</p>
15	6/01/06	<p>Question: Page 5, Section 3.4.3: Is 100% of the fee retained by the contractor?</p> <p>AOC Response: The application fees are meant to offset some portion of the vendors' total cost of providing the services to the AOC. The exact percentage of the fee that would be retained by the vendor will depend upon the cost/price proposal supplied by the vendor.</p>
16	6/01/06	<p>Question: Page 5, Section 3.4.5: What is the current examinee appeals process, and is this acceptable?</p> <p>AOC Response: Currently, an applicant who fails the oral examination has the right to file an appeal when he or she has evidence of bias, fraud, discrimination, or manifest error in the administration of the examination. These are the only grounds for appeal. An appeal must be submitted in writing to the testing agency within 90 days of the date of the applicant's failure notice. The appeal letter must state the evidence and basis for the applicant's belief that his or her failure was the result of bias, fraud, discrimination, or manifest error in the administration of the examination. The testing agency will research and investigate the applicant's allegations and report its finding to the applicant in writing within 60 days of the date the applicant's letter was received by the testing agency. (An applicant's disagreement with examiner recommendations, ratings, or performance evaluation comments is not grounds for appeal. Appeals deemed frivolous cannot be accepted or acted upon. This is not to imply that applicants are discouraged from seeking clarification of examination related issues or answers to questions. Such inquiries are always welcome.)</p> <p>The AOC expects the proposer to submit a recommended appeals process as part of their proposal. The proposed appeals process need not be modeled directly upon the current appeals process.</p>
17	6/01/06	<p>Question: Page 5, Section 3.5.1: Are the existing exams error free? How will updates be handled, or are none expected during the course of this contract?</p> <p>AOC Response: The AOC is not currently aware of any errors in the exams. No updates are expected during the course of this contract. Any errors discovered will be corrected on an as needed basis. Minor errors will be expected to be corrected by the selected vendor.</p>
18	6/01/06	<p>Question: Page 6, Section 3.5.4: Are any special scoring algorithms used? Are tests statistically equated and placed on a standardized scale?</p> <p>AOC Response: Yes, a special scoring algorithm is used. Yes, tests are statistically equated and placed on a standardized scale.</p>

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19	6/01/06	<p>Question: Page 6, Section 3.6.1: How many raters are required to rate each oral test? Will the current rating scales be used? What is the current daily or hourly rate for examiners certified by the state?</p> <p>AOC Response: Currently, at least two raters are required to rate each oral test.</p> <p>The minimal requirements to pass both the written and oral components of the exam will remain the same. However, some minor modifications might be made to the grading system.</p> <p>The current hourly rate for examination raters is \$41.50. The chairperson for the oral examination is \$22.50 per hour. Written examination proctors are paid at two different levels. The chief proctor for the written examination is paid at \$19.50 per hour. The assistant proctors for the written examination are paid at \$16.50 per hour.</p>
20	6/01/06	<p>Question: Page 6, Section 3.6.5: How will the oral tests be delivered to the new format? Electronically? Or in some taped format?</p> <p>AOC Response: The oral tests are on audio tapes. The audio tapes will be delivered via secure mail after execution of the resultant contract.</p>
21	6/01/06	<p>Question: What are the current durations of the oral and written tests?</p> <p>AOC Response: The current average duration of the Certified oral examination is 45 minutes. The current average duration of the Registered oral examination is 20 minutes. The average duration of the Certified written examination is 4 hours and 15 minutes. The current average duration of the Registered written examination is 2 hours.</p>
22	6/01/06	<p>Question: Will the current raters be available to work on this contract? Can these names be forwarded to the new vendor?</p> <p>AOC Response: Yes, the names of the raters and their contact information will be provided to the selected vendor by the AOC.</p>

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23	6/01/06	<p>Question: What is the current cutscore for each of the examination? How were these cutscores established? Are the examinations multiple hurdle, such that the candidate must pass the written prior to completing the oral portion?</p> <p>AOC Response: Because the current written exam cutscores are predicated on an algorithm, they will only be made available to the selected vendor.</p> <p>Yes, the examinations are multiple hurdle, such that the candidate must pass the written prior to completing the oral portion.</p> <p>The following description of the process for establishing the current cutscores was provided by the existing contractor:</p> <p>“In licensure and certification testing it is a common practice to use a criterion-referenced approach to setting the pass point (cutoff score) for an examination (Plake, 1999). This approach provides a defensible rationale for identifying a cutoff score. The cutoff score is estimated using the Angoff method. Criterion-referenced tests are designed to “yield measurements that are directly interpretable in terms of specified performance standards” (Glaser & Nitko, 1971, p. 653, as cited in Kane & Wilson, 1984). The cutoff score can then be set by relating the minimum performance on criterion behaviors to a specific test score (Truxillo, Donahue, & Sulzer, 1996).</p> <p>The Angoff method defines the cutoff score as the lowest score the minimally competent applicant is likely to achieve. Candidates scoring below this level are believed to lack sufficient knowledge, skills, or abilities to perform the job in a manner that protects the public. Among the many standard-setting methods, the Angoff is the most popular (Hudson & Campion, 1994; Maurer & Alexander, 1992; Sireci & Biscin, 1992 as cited by Impara & Plake, 1997). Maurer and Alexander (1992) credit the method’s popularity to, among other things, its psychometric benefits; for example, 1) the item probability values elicited from Angoff ratings can be easily translated into a raw score, 2) item difficulty can be compared to Angoff ratings, and 3) the use of a continuous 100-point scale allows for finer distinctions to be made.</p> <p>Angoff data is gathered for each written exam by language. If the passing standard established through the Angoff analysis is higher than the standard established by the Court Interpreter Pass Point Algorithm (e.g., test mean raw score plus one standard error of measurement (SEM)), then the Algorithm is applied. Historically, the passing standard identified through the Algorithm results in larger numbers of candidates passing the written exam than the Angoff analysis.”</p>
24	6/01/06	<p>Question: Is the same English test administered to all language categories?</p> <p>AOC Response: The same English test is administered across all language categories for the Certified Court Interpreter Examination. The English test for the Registered Court Interpreter Examination is different than the Certified Court Interpreter Examination.</p>

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25	6/01/06	<p>Question: RFP Page 8 of 18, Deliverable #4: Is electronic submission of test forms and oral examination allowed? If not, how will exams be submitted to the contractor for exam administration?</p> <p>AOC Response: No, electronic submission of test forms and oral examination is not allowed. Currently, secure mail (such as Federal Express) is used for transport of exam materials.</p>
26	6/01/06	<p>Question: RFP Attachment B, Page 22 of 30, Exhibit C, Section 1.A: What will the Contract Amount be?</p> <p>AOC Response: The “Contract Amount” set forth in Attachment B will constitute the maximum not-to-exceed amount the AOC will pay to the contracted vendor for all services provided to the AOC under the resulting executed contract. The Contract Amount will include all allowable expenses, and off-set amounts, and will be based on and determined by the vendor’s submitted cost/fee proposal.</p> <p>In the contract resulting from this RFP No. 06-EOP-45065049-01, the AOC will replace the “\$TBDS” (including Contract Amount) with amounts, based upon the proposed fee schedule of the proposer awarded the contract as a result of this RFP.. Please refer to Sections 5.2 and 5.3 on page 12 of 18, and Sections 13.1 and 13.2 on page 16 of 18 of the RFP regarding Attachment B. The AOC does not expect, nor desire, a proposer to submit a revised Attachment B with proposed numbers inserted as replacements for the “\$TBDS”.</p>
27	6/01/06	<p>Question: RFP Attachment B, Page 26 of 30, Exhibit D, Section 1: This is the first mention of development-- aren't the oral and written tests already developed and ready for administration?</p> <p>AOC Response: The term “development” was included in the referenced “Summary of Work” in error. Please disregard. The “Summary of Work” provision contained in Section 1 of Exhibit D, Work To Be Performed, of Attachment B should read as follows:</p> <p>“The Judicial Council of California, as part of its charge to administer justice in the State of California, oversees and administers the State’s Certified Court Interpreter and Registered Court Interpreter programs through the Administrative Office of the Courts in order to provide for equal justice to all California citizens and residents and provide for their special needs in their relations with the judicial branch. These programs are intended to establish and apply standards for providing and maintaining competent spoken-language interpretation of court proceedings. Accordingly, the State has retained the Contractor to provide services hereunder in support of the testing requirement for certifying interpreters for the programs. The Contractor shall provide the Work as set forth below in connection with administering, maintaining, and training / Norming for standardized language interpretation examinations for applicants to the California Court Interpreters program.”</p>
<i>End of Questions and Responses</i>		