

# **PROFICIENCY EXAM GUIDELINES FOR TEST ADMINISTRATORS**

## **READING PROFICIENCY TEST**

The examination should test the student's overall reading comprehension as well as their accuracy in understanding details; these can be assessed by having the student translate a variety of (short) reading passages. A student who can extract specific information reliably from everyday material (such as newspapers) in the language has attained the level of reading proficiency adequate to pass the examination. In administering the examination, the examiner may help the student with occasional words or permit the student to use a dictionary; however, the amount of reading material and time limit used for the examination should be great enough to prevent the student from using such help as a substitute for what should be general knowledge of the language. For the purpose of this evaluation, the student is not expected to make no mistakes in translating, but is expected to be able to get the gist of what is read. The mistakes the student does make should be particular ones (e.g., not knowing a particular vocabulary item or idiom, or mistranslating a verb tense in an unidiomatic way), rather than mistakes that lead the examiner to believe that the student would in general misunderstand the essential matter in the reading.

## **CONVERSATIONAL PROFICIENCY EVALUATION**

1. The student may read a passage of common, everyday prose (e.g. a newspaper article aimed at a mass audience) for a few minutes, in order to provide a subject for starting the conversation.
2. The student then carries on a conversation with the interviewer for About 15 minutes. The interview may begin with questions about the article read, but conversation should be allowed to proceed naturally on any subject of interest; interviewers may help with words, as they would do in normal conversation with a foreigner.
3. For the student to satisfy the conversational proficiency requirement, the interviewer must certify that the student could handle normal class

interchange in a basic substantive course (in mathematics, science, literature, history, etc.) conducted entirely in the language. To evaluate the student's performance, an interviewer should imagine that someone is asking, "Does this student speak Korean (Chinese, Farsi, Filipino, Vietnamese, etc.)?"

The student satisfies the requirement if the answer would come without hesitation, "Yes, of course", or "Yes, although he makes a lot of mistakes", or "Sure, but he has a terrible accent", or "Yes, he does but there are some surprising gaps in what he knows". In general, the required proficiency level has been attained if carrying on a conversation with the student is quite comfortable; even though it is quite obvious it is a conversation with a foreigner.

The student does not satisfy the requirement if the answer is "No", or "Not very well", or "Well, I'm not sure how much he understands", or "Well he can make himself understood eventually", or "Well, his Korean (Chinese, Farsi, Filipino, Vietnamese, etc.) is not very good, but he somehow does manage to communicate something". In general the required proficiency level has not been attained if the student has such massive difficulties that the interviewer feels uncomfortable in trying to carry on an ordinary conversation with the student in the language, and would normally avoid such conversation. In that case, the student could not be expected to handle normal classroom and social interchange adequately.

## **REPORTING THE RESULTS**

The results of the evaluation should be recorded on the Proficiency Test Result Form (available on the Linguistics Department Website <http://ling.ucsd.edu/Language/llp.htm>).

**NOTE:** Proficiency must be attained in **both** reading and conversation in the same quarter. Writing proficiency is **not** necessary, nor should it be tested.