



STATE DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

QUALITY ASSURANCE SCREENING TEST (QAST) For

SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

ETHICAL STANDARDS

The interpreter/transliterators shall agree to abide by the Oklahoma Quality Assurance Ethical Standards. Federal, state or other laws or regulations may supersede the Ethical Standards if a conflict is present between existing law or regulations and the Ethical Standards. The interpreter/transliterators will abide by the rule of the law.

(1) The interpreter/transliterators shall be dedicated to providing competent interpreting services in a manner befitting a professional.

(A) The interpreter/transliterators shall conduct him/herself in a manner which will reflect high standards of professionalism. This requires proper behavior suitable to the circumstances of the interpreting assignment.

(B) The interpreter/transliterators will dress appropriately to the circumstances of the interpreting assignment. Dress will be as unobtrusive as possible, and care will be taken to avoid cloth patterns or accessories which would interfere with clear perception of the consumer(s) through distraction or poor foreground/background contrast.

(C) The interpreter/transliterators will, to the maximum extent possible, choose positioning of themselves to avoid distracting backgrounds or inadequate lighting, and within comfortable visual/audible range of the consumer(s).

(D) The interpreter/transliterater will request compensation for services in a professional and judicious manner. The interpreter/transliterater will be knowledgeable of fees commensurate with their level of skill, level of certification, length of experience, and nature of the interpreting assignment, as well as fees customary to the geographic region.

(E) The interpreter/transliterater duty is to function fully as the support team interpreter/transliterater when engaged in a team assignment environment to assure the accuracy of the message is rendered.

(2) The interpreter/transliterater uses discretion in accepting assignments based upon language competency with regard to the setting and/or consumers involved and according to the QA Level of Limitations.

(A) The interpreter/transliterater will base acceptance of assignments upon his/her qualifications to handle the English language characteristically utilized in any given situation. If an interpreter/transliterater cannot understand the English language used, nor express it in sign language, or cannot maintain an acceptable pace, the interpreter/transliterater should not accept the assignment.

(B) The best practice for a professional interpreter/transliterater will be to make every reasonable effort to assess the language skills of the consumer(s) involved to determine his/her ability to understand and be understood in the given assignment by asking appropriate questions of the requestor of services, without asking the identity of the consumer. If this assessment prior to acceptance is not possible, the interpreter/transliterater should arrive at the assignment early to assess the language skills taking care that the communication exchange is not assignment related. At this time, the interpreter/transliterater may decide to proceed with the assignment, or decline the assignment. If the assignment is declined prior to the assignment, or later during the assignment, assistance may be required in securing a more qualified interpreter to take the assignment at that time, or at a later scheduled time.

(C) A certification level is a guideline to what levels may be able to perform in various situations. If a Deaf individual deems an interpreter/transliterater as "qualified" they should be permitted to function as such, as long as it does not violate established QAST Level of Limitations, regulations or laws.

(D) The interpreter/transliterater should be familiar with statutory requirements regarding interpreter qualifications in a state before accepting an assignment in that state which might require a higher level of certification.

(E) The interpreter/transliterators may decline or discontinue assignments if working conditions are not safe, healthy, or conducive to interpreting.

(F) The interpreter/transliterators may render pro bono services providing it is a fair and reasonable manner.

(3) The interpreter/transliterators uses discretion in accepting assignments based upon the capacity to maintain impartiality with regard to the setting and/or consumers involved.

(A) The interpreter/transliterators should accept assignments only when the interpreter/transliterators feels comfortable dealing with the content of the communication in an impartial manner. If the personal feelings or beliefs of the interpreter/transliterators would interfere with rendering the message accurately, the interpreter/transliterators should withdraw from the assignment.

(B) Interpreters/transliterators should refrain from providing interpreter services in situations where family members, or close personal or professional relationships may affect impartiality.

(C) Interpreters/transliterators should strive for complete neutrality between consumers in the interpreting assignment. This neutrality can be compromised for various reasons. Whenever neutrality is compromised, it is the obligation of the interpreter/transliterators to assure that all affected consumers are duly advised and given the option of declining the interpreter/transliterators assignment.

(D) The interpreter/transliterators should avoid performing dual or conflicting roles while in the role as the interpreter/transliterators during the interpreting assignment.

(4) The interpreter/transliterators shall judiciously safeguard assignment-related information because it is confidential. Exceptions to confidentiality include federal and/or state laws that mandate reporting a known crime or planning to commit a crime, fraud, or physical injury to the deaf person or another individual.

(A) A full-time interpreter/transliterators may provide information to his/her employer or other appropriate staff for purposes of record keeping, program management, or supervision without breaching confidentiality.

(B) The right to privacy is inalienable for all citizens. The interpreter/transliterators has a fundamental obligation to safeguard any confidential information acquired from any source during an interpreter

assignment. Injudicious disclosures of confidential information could adversely affect the consumer's reputation, and expose the interpreter/transliterators to liability.

(C) The interpreter/transliterators should consult legal counsel when in doubt concerning disclosure in a court of law, and professional rights and responsibilities.

(D) The interpreter/transliterators should inform consumers when federal or state mandates require disclosure of confidential information.

(5) The interpreter/transliterators shall provide information when necessary, to the consumers involved as to the role and appropriate use of the interpreter/transliterators. Assuring the education of consumers as to the proper use of an interpreter is a basic responsibility of the interpreter/transliterators. The experienced consumer may also provide such education. Consumer education should be succinct, and is best presented prior to an assignment to ensure a smooth communication exchange.

(6) The interpreter/transliterators convey the content and affect of the communication transmitted using the language most easily understood by the persons involved in the communication/transaction.

(A) The interpreter/transliterators must transmit all communication in the exact way it is presented, conveying the speaker's intention. The interpreter/transliterators are not responsible for what is said or how it is said; only for conveying the message accurately and with the intended affect. The interpreter/transliterators shall withdraw from an assignment when his/her personal feelings interfere with rendering the message accurately with the intended affect.

(B) The interpreter/transliterators shall communicate in the manner most easily understood or preferred by the consumer(s), such as American Sign Language, Manually Coded English, finger spelling, gesturing, drawing, or writing.

(7) The interpreter/transliterators should not counsel nor interject personal opinion, but may exercise professional judgment in assessing whether or not communication is being understood and may also inform the consumers involved of available resources as appropriate.

(A) The interpreter/transliterators shall not step out of the role of communication facilitator by offering counsel or interjecting personal opinion. Exercising professional judgment and offering a professional opinion in assessing whether communication is being understood is not a breach of ethics.

(B) Recommending known and available resources to the consumer is considered within the professional role of the interpreter/transliterators. The interpreter's responsibility in this regard is only to inform in a courteous and helpful manner. It is the consumer's decision whether they wish to follow through with any recommendation.

(8) The interpreter/transliterators should pursue further knowledge and maintain competency in interpreting or transliterating skills. The interpreter/transliterators should strive to further knowledge and skills through active participation in workshops, professional meetings, interaction with professional colleagues, and reading of literature in the field.

(9) The interpreter/transliterators has a responsibility to be aware of and comply with all federal or state laws regulating specialized interpreting fields (educational, legal, mental health).

STATE (QAST) EVALUATION INFORMATION

Limitations of Levels

LEVEL V

Level V is a master level interpreter who is able to interpret/transliterate a minimum of ninety percent (90%) of the master performance screening. Should be able to function expressively and receptively as an Interpreter/Transliterator in a majority of situations.

Use of Professional judgment

SHOULD NOT BE UTILIZED IN THE FOLLOWING:

In any courtroom action – must be either/or National CT & CI, CSC, NAD 5, or SC:L certified (According to Oklahoma Legal Interpreter for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Act)

LEVEL IV

Level IV is an accomplished level interpreter who is able to interpret/transliterate a minimum of eighty percent (80%) of the advanced performance screening. Should be able to function well expressively and receptively in most technical situations.

Can function well as an Interpreter/Transliterator in most settings with Professional judgment

SHOULD NOT BE UTILIZED IN THE FOLLOWING:

In any courtroom action – must be either/or National CT & CI, CSC, NAD 5 or SC:L certified (According to Oklahoma Legal Interpreter for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Act)

Extensive mental health therapy

LEVEL III

Level III is an advanced level beginner who is able to interpret or transliterate a minimum of eighty-five percent (85%) of the advanced beginner's performance screening. Most group sessions are easily handled if there is a minimum of voicing required. Most one-on-one situations are easily handled.

Most one-on-one situations

Most group sessions

Most workshops with limited voicing

Public School Setting

Stronger ASL and PSE than Level I and II

SHOULD NOT BE UTILIZED IN THE FOLLOWING:

Any Legal

Mental Health

Serious Medical

Critical situation of any nature

LEVEL II

Level II is an intermediate level beginner who is able to interpret or transliterate seventy percent (70%) of the beginner's performance screening. Should be able to interpret for deaf individuals in job applications, orientation sessions and basic tutoring sessions, and simple non-technical medical examinations. These interpreting situations may or may not permit the interpreter to stop the consumer(s) for clarification.

One-on-One situations where communication can be interrupted occasionally for clarification

Limited voicing

Limited platform

Limited group session/workshop where communication can be interrupted easily for clarification

SHOULD NOT BE USED IN THE FOLLOWING:

Any Legal

Mental Health

Public School Setting (According to Oklahoma Educational Interpreter for the Deaf Act)

Intensive Platform

Serious Medical

Critical situation of any nature

LEVEL I

Level I is the entry level beginner who is able to expressively and receptively interpret or transliterate fifty percent (50%) of the beginners performance screening. Should be capable of interpreting in one-to-one situations on a non-technical basis in which the interpreter has an opportunity to stop for clarification and feedback from the deaf consumer.

One-on-One situations where communication can be interrupted easily for clarification

Limited voicing

Limited ASL (interpreting), stronger PSE (transliterating)

SHOULD NOT BE USED IN THE FOLLOWING:

Any Legal

Mental Health

Public School Setting (According to Oklahoma Educational Interpreter for the Deaf Act)

Platform

Serious Medical

Critical situation of any nature