

Before the Oral English Proficiency Test

Why do you need to take the OEPT?

University policy requires that international graduate students whose first language is not English be certified for proficiency in oral English before serving as a TA directly instructing students.

There are multiple methods to use an exam to be certified as proficient in oral English for this type of role:

- TOEFL iBT Speaking ≥ 27
- IELTS Speaking ≥ 8.0
- OEPT ≥ 50

How do you prepare for the OEPT?

Your department will schedule an appointment for you to take the OEPT. You will receive an email from "OEPT Registration" with the test location, date, and time. Save this e-mail, as you may need it to start the test.

Based on feedback from test-takers, **we highly recommend taking the OEPT practice test at least once!** There are 2 versions, so you can try multiple times.

Do your best to come as rested, nourished, and relaxed as possible!

Tips for Test Day!

- Arrive approximately 5 minutes in advance of the test session.
- If you arrive after the starting time, you may be required to reschedule the test for a different day and/or time.
- Wait in the hallway until you are asked to enter the test room.
- Have your Purdue ID or other official photo ID ready (passport or U.S. driver's license). We do not accept electronic IDs, IDs without photos, or IDs that are not in English.
- If you do not have a photo ID, you will not be allowed to take the test.
- Bring a bottle of water with a screw-on cap. No other food or drink is permitted.
- Silence your cell phone, but keep it with you so that you can log into the test with your Purdue username, password, and two-factor authentication.
- Put all other belongings in your bag, backpack, purse, etc. You must leave all bags in the front of the testing lab.
- You will be provided with paper, pencils and a pen to take notes.
- You may want to bring a sweater or jacket in case the lab is cold.

Structure of the OEPT

For each item, you can take up to 2 minutes to prepare your responses, including by writing notes using pens and paper that we provide. Next, you have up to 2 minutes to actually speak your answer. You should speak for at least 90 seconds.

Outline of the OEPT:

Commenting on Campus Academic News
Giving Advice to a Student about Challenges in a Course
Weighing Pros and Cons about Competing Academic Opportunities
Explaining a Graph about University Trends
Reporting Information from a Voicemail about Student Concerns
Reporting Information from a Conversation about Graduate School
Reporting Information from a Lecture about Best Practices
Reading Aloud a Text about University Policies

After the Oral English Proficiency Test

Accessing Scoring and Results

Policies and Procedures

- **Scores are generally made available in 10 business days or less.**
- Departments access scores on the OEPT App.
- **Departments, not the OEPP, report scores to students**, so contact your department if you have questions about your score.

Registering for SCLA 620

Registration Information

- Departments must request and coordinate enrollment in SCLA 620 on behalf of their students.
- Due to high demand, classes may fill very quickly. Students who are needed as TAs most immediately are given priority. A small number of students may therefore need to postpone enrollment.

The SCLA 620 Experience

Course Overview

Student Spotlights

- ◇ A five-credit course which includes classes and individual instruction.
- ◇ The course focuses on:
 - Intelligibility, e.g., pronunciation, fluency, prosody, rhythm, and intonation
 - Comprehensibility, e.g., grammar, vocabulary, and idiomaticity
 - Professional Skills, e.g., handling Q&As
 - Culture, e.g., norms in American university classrooms
- ◇ Core Assignments:
 - Introduce Yourself Professionally
 - Give an Overview of Your Field of Study
 - Teach a Mini-Lesson
 - Explain Course Policies on a First Day of Class
 - Interview a TA
 - Interview Undergraduates

Interpreting OEPT Scores

- **A score of 50 or higher** means you are certified for oral English proficiency and can be considered for TA positions involving the direct instruction of undergraduate students.
- **A score of 45** means your proficiency is borderline. Your department may allow you to hold an instructional TA position if you are concurrently enrolled in SCLA 620 during the first semester that you hold the teaching position. If you do not take SCLA 620, you may retake the OEPT after at least 6 months have passed.
- **A score of 40** means you are not ready for a TA position involving instruction. It is recommended that you take SCLA 620 to improve your oral English. If you do not take SCLA 620, you may retake the OEPT after at least 6 months have passed.
- **If you scored 35** you are not eligible to take SCLA 620. You are highly encouraged to take PLaCE Short Courses to work on improving your speaking skills before retaking the OEPT. You may retake the OEPT after at least 6 months have passed.

Additional ESL Resources

Complete List

- English Boost in [PLaCE \(Purdue Language and Cultural Exchange\)](#)
- [Conversation Groups](#) in the Purdue Writing Lab