

# **NAD-RID National Interpreter Certification (NIC) Knowledge Test Candidate Bulletin**

## **History and Background**

NAD and RID formed the National Council on Interpreting (NCI) to, among other things, develop the NAD-RID National Interpreter Certification (NIC) test--for the remainder of this document to be referred to as the NIC test. This new test replaces the former NAD certification test as well as the current RID generalist test (CI and CT). Both the NIC Knowledge and the NIC Interview and Performance test are available now. For more information about the NCI, please visit <http://rid.org/nci.html>.

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The policies and procedures outlined in this edition take precedence over previous editions. NAD and RID reserve the right to modify, change or restate policies and procedures at any time.

## **NAD-RID National Interpreter Certification (NIC) Test Development Process**

### **Internal/Organizational Commitment**

In 2002, under the guidance of a psychometric services company, the NCI appointed a group of content experts. They, in turn, surveyed several hundred professionals in the field in order to develop a blueprint for the new test. This blueprint identifies the skills and knowledge necessary for a capable professional sign language interpreter to practice safely and competently.

### **About the Test**

The written test was composed in accordance with generally accepted test development procedures. It is also monitored for validity and reliability. A modified Angoff study was conducted according to appropriate psychometric procedures to determine a passing score for the NIC Knowledge test. Ongoing psychometric analysis is performed on this test to assure that it remains a valid and reliable instrument for measuring a professional interpreter's abilities. Mechanisms are in place so that all candidates are treated fairly and without regard to age, color, creed, disability, ethnicity, hearing status, national origin, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation.

### **Raters**

The selection and training of raters for the NIC Interview and Performance tests are conducted in accordance with the criteria determined by industry-wide psychometric standards. Raters represent diverse geographic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They

are agents of the associations and are therefore compensated for their services. Raters for the interview and performance portions of the test will be trained to identify skills that meet or exceed the established professional standards. Psychometric procedures have been established to monitor rater reliability.

### **Local Test Administrators (LTAs)**

LTAs are hired as agents of the associations. The LTA is bound by a contract which includes clear admonitions about the safekeeping of all materials and the penalties which may ensue should the contract be breached. LTAs are trained in test administration protocol and are compensated for their services.

### **Test Dates and Sites**

#### **Supersites**

Supersites have been established around the country. These sites are under contract and are evaluated periodically. Each supersite has a site coordinator who oversees the logistics of the testing room facilities and equipment.

The same NIC Knowledge test is delivered by two means:

- The paper-and-pencil version is administered on standardized dates, the first Saturday in June and December. Locations for these exams are published in the RID *VIEWS* and are also available on the RID Web site.
- The computer-based version is delivered at several hundred sites nationwide and is available year-round. For this version, the candidate will be able to choose the date, time and place of testing from the listing provided by the company NAD and RID has contracted with to administer this version of the NIC test. Information regarding the specific sites and dates is made available to candidates after their applications are processed. Applicants will receive a receipt letter, which includes proprietary information, necessary for logging on to the testing company's web site. At the website, the applicant will enter the necessary information to gain access to test scheduling and will select the testing slot that best suits their individual needs.

#### **Applying for the NIC Knowledge Test**

The NIC content experts, under the guidance of the psychometricians, have established comparability between the NIC Knowledge test and the previous written test. Therefore any currently certified member in good standing of RID has proven their competency and is exempt from having to take the NIC Knowledge test. This includes NAD certified members as well as RID certified members holding the CSC, IC/TC, IC and TC. Those certified members may take the NIC Interview and Performance test without taking the NIC Knowledge test. To apply for the NIC Knowledge test, a person must complete and send an application form with payment of appropriate fees to arrive at the RID national office eight weeks in advance of the published test date, for the paper-and-pencil version, and four weeks in advance of when you would like to take the computer-based version. Online registration is also available on the RID Web site. For the paper-and-pencil version only, your preference for the testing location (site code) must be indicated on the form. Any request for a special accommodation must be noted on the application and supporting documentation must be attached to the application.

One need not be a member to apply for the test; however, one of the benefits of RID membership is lower testing fees. In order to receive the reduced member rate, you must already be a member in good standing of RID and include the member ID number from your membership card on the testing application. You may not apply for RID membership and NIC testing at the same time and receive the reduced member rate. Member fees for testing apply to the Certified, Associate or Student categories only.

### **Notification of Testing**

For those taking the paper-and-pencil version, approximately two to four weeks prior to the test date, applicants will receive a letter confirming the date, time, and location of the test. The name and pager and/or phone numbers to contact the LTA proctoring the test will also be included. The LTA should be contacted for directions to the site only. All other questions should be directed to the RID national office.

### **Declined Written Testing Opportunities**

Applicants for either version of the NIC Knowledge test must contact the RID national office in writing by the noted deadline in their test notification or receipt letter if they do not plan to attend the exam. For those taking the computer-based version, you will need to contact the testing company by their deadline as well. Anyone submitting a completed application for the paper-and-pencil version will be scheduled for the next available biennial test administration unless notified in writing that the applicant does not intend to take the exam. Facsimile, e-mail and regular mail submissions are accepted. It is the applicant's responsibility to take the exam. If they notify the office in a timely manner that they will not be in attendance, they will be scheduled for the following exam. If they do not show up for the exam, and did not contact the office by the deadline, they will be required to provide documentation to the Director of Certification of an acceptable emergency situation to avoid the forfeiture of fees. Failure to do so will result in the applicant's forfeiture of all application and test fees.

### **Cancellations**

Cancellations due to a documented emergency situation, as outlined in the policy below, will be given special consideration.

Acceptable Emergency Situations:

- The death of an immediate family member.
- A doctor's verification of accident, illness, or hospitalization.
- A natural disaster.

Upon receipt of documentation, and subsequent verification by the Director of Certification, the application and test fees will carry over to the next available test date. Notification of emergency cancellations must be made to the national office on the business day following the documented emergency unless the nature of the emergency precludes you from contacting us. If so, you need to contact the national office at the first available opportunity.

If an individual misses a testing opportunity and the certification department determines that the late cancellation did not meet the established policy requirements, an individual can appeal through the established appeal procedure of writing a letter to the NAD-RID Certification Council (CC) in care of the RID national office. The CC is composed of representatives from both NAD and RID. Individuals who have paid the application and test fees and decide that they no longer wish to take the written test will be reimbursed only their test fees. Requests for reimbursement must be made in writing to the Director of Certification by the established deadline.

### **At the Test Site**

Applicants must register at least 20 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the test. They must bring a photo ID and their confirmation letter to the test. During registration, applicants will be required to sign in, show a photo ID, verify personal information as indicated on the test roster, and sign confidentiality forms. Demographic information forms may also be available for self-disclosure.

For the paper-and-pencil version, all testing materials — test booklet, ScanTron answer sheet, #2 pencils, and note paper, if needed — will be provided by the LTA. Once an examination has begun, there is absolutely no talking, signing, gesturing or any communication permitted in the room. LTAs will collect the test booklet and answer sheet from anyone violating this rule and file a formal written report with the Director of Certification.

Applicants cannot mark in the test booklet. If they do, they will be assessed a fee of \$25.00 which must be paid to RID before any of their test results can be released. Exams will begin and end on time. No late arrivals will be permitted. Applicants are allowed a maximum of three hours to complete the test. All test-related material, as well as the final portion of the demographics survey, if used, must be returned to the LTA before leaving the test site.

Comment forms will be provided for applicant feedback about the test, test administration or site conditions. These forms may be completed at the site and given to the LTA or completed later and mailed to the RID national office.

### **Test Format**

The test consists of 150 multiple-choice questions covering the ten tasks listed below. Applicants must receive a scaled score of 500 or better to pass the test. Applicants are encouraged to answer all questions; unanswered questions will be marked wrong.

1. Assess each interpreting situation to determine if qualified for the assignment.
2. Prepare for assignment by determining logistics and purpose of interaction for all parties involved.
3. Maintain competence in the field of interpreting (e.g., attending workshops and classes, reading professional literature, working with a mentor).
4. Apply the Code of Ethics for the interpreting profession.
5. Provide interpreting services that reflect awareness and sensitivity to culturally and ethnically diverse groups.

6. Facilitate the flow of communication during the interpreting process.
  7. Apply the appropriate communicative mode and language register.
  8. Construct equivalent discourse in the target language while monitoring message comprehension and feedback to modify interpretation accordingly.
  - 9-A. Use ASL proficiently within expressive interpreting tasks, including choice of sign vocabulary, use of sign modification to show variation in meaning and grammatical function, and appropriate use of space, facial expression, and body movement.
  - 9-B. Comprehend ASL proficiently during the interpreting task, including sign vocabulary choice and sign modification to show variation in meaning and grammatical functions.
  - 10-A. Use English proficiently to construct an equivalent message in the target language, including appropriate vocabulary choice, tone, grammar, and syntax, with appropriate use of register, pausing, rhythm, intonation, pitch, and other supra-segmental features.
  - 10-B. Comprehend English proficiently to construct an equivalent message in the target language, including appropriate vocabulary choice, tone, grammar, syntax, appropriate
- Further information regarding the NIC Knowledge test, including an expanded test outline and a list of suggested reference materials, are available on the RID website at: <http://rid.org/nic.html>.

### **Results, Retakes and Extensions**

After administering the paper-and-pencil version of the NIC Knowledge test, the LTA is required to send all test materials to the RID national office by the following Tuesday. Result notification letters are generally issued within ten business days after the tests are received from the test site.

For those taking the computer-based version, results are printed and given to the test taker before leaving the testing site.

The results letter will indicate how well one achieved in answering the test questions as they relate to each of the ten tasks.

Applicants passing the NIC Knowledge test are considered “candidates for certification” and are eligible to take the NIC Interview and Performance test as soon as it is available.

If the applicant does not pass the NIC Knowledge test, s/he should apply to retake the test by sending another application form with the appropriate payment.

Those failing the paper-and-pencil version of the NIC Knowledge test must wait six months from the date of test administration before they may retake the exam, while those taking the computer-based version must wait three months between testing opportunities.

Those passing the NIC Knowledge test are required to take and pass the NIC Interview and Performance test within five years of the date of its first administration or notification of achieving candidacy status, whichever is later. Passing the NIC Knowledge test does not give a person the option to take the RID CI and CT performance tests; all NIC candidates for certification must continue forward in the NIC testing pathway.

Failure to complete the testing process and achieve certification within the five-year time limit will result in the loss of candidacy status. As a result, the former candidate will need to take the NIC Knowledge test again at the appropriate, regular rate—including the application fee. Retake rates are not valid in this situation.

The NAD-RID Certification Council will consider, on an individual basis, granting up to a one year extension of candidacy to a person who has taken the NIC Knowledge test and has been unable to take the performance test during the allotted five year time frame for the following reasons:

- A sudden and unforeseeable traumatic, catastrophic, or incapacitating life altering event that disrupts the life of the candidate or immediate family member for a considerable amount of time.

*(Please note: normal life events (planned or unplanned) may not be considered as meeting the definition of traumatic, catastrophic or incapacitating. Events which meet the above definition of traumatic, catastrophic or incapacitating, which occur near the beginning or end of the five year period, or which are incapacitating for only a short duration, may not be applicable in granting an extension.)*

### **Appeal Process**

The NAD-RID Certification Council will review appeals related to the administration of the test, such as violations of proper procedure and/or deviation from established policy, and will attempt to issue a response within 120 days of receipt. Appeals must be sent in writing by certified mail to the Director of Certification at the RID national office. An appeal must be filed within 90 days from the date of notification of test results.

If the NAD-RID Certification Council upholds an appeal, the test retake must be completed within one year of the date of notification by the CC. If the test retake is not completed within the year, the applicant will be responsible for the re-application process and fees.

Contact information for the RID national office:

RID Certification Department  
333 Commerce Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone 703-838-0030 Voice  
Fax 703-838-0454