The English oral fluency exam is based on a language proficiency rating scale of 1-5. To pass the English oral fluency examination, candidates must receive a score of 4 or higher on the three sections of the exam: photograph explanation, extemporaneous questions, and passage explanation.

**Performance Description Level 5**

Candidate’s proficiency consistently exceeds minimum standards of competence as defined in *Language Proficiency Rating Level 4*.

* Performs well in language situations that may change unexpectedly or are unfamiliar
* Discourse is cohesive and coherent
* Grasps and clearly conveys meaning; is able to differentiate shades of meaning between words and process complete content of message in a cohesive discourse
* Demonstrates broad vocabulary and ability to convey abstract concepts
* Demonstrates extensive knowledge of specialized vocabulary
* Uses words appropriately (distinguishes among words of similar meaning and selects the most appropriate term for the context.) Distinguishes between denotative and connotative meanings
* Recognizes and appropriately uses a broad range of idioms, proverbs, collocations, and sayings
* Demonstrates full grammatical and structural control (absence of patterns of error)
* Demonstrates sociolinguistic competence and full control of register
* Demonstrates knowledge of cultural nuance and references
* Rate of delivery (fluency) is adequate (reasonable intervals between utterances)
* Accent does not interfere with the listener’s comprehension
* Speaks clearly (enunciation, pronunciation, stress, intonation, and tone) and conveys meaning and nuance

**Performance Description Level 4**

Candidate’s proficiency **meets minimum standards** of competence.

* Language proficiency is sufficient for situations that may change unexpectedly or are unfamiliar.
* Discourse is cohesive and coherent
* Grasps and clearly conveys meaning; is generally able to differentiate shades of meaning between words and process complete content of message
* Demonstrates broad vocabulary and ability to convey abstract concepts
* Demonstrates requisite level of specialized vocabulary
* Generally uses words appropriately (distinguishes among words of similar meaning and selects the most appropriate term for the context). Distinguishes between denotative and connotative meanings
* Demonstrates familiarity with idioms, proverbs, collocations, and sayings
* Demonstrates full structural control (absence of patterns of error). Occasional errors in complex and/or low frequency structures do not interfere with meaning
* Exhibits infrequent grammatical errors that do not interfere with meaning
* Generally uses language in a sociolinguistically appropriate manner (i.e., tailors the language to the situation at hand; reflects the speech patterns of a wide variety of sociocultural backgrounds); varies register appropriately
* Demonstrates knowledge of cultural nuance and references
* Rate of delivery (fluency) is adequate (reasonable intervals between utterances)
* Accent does not interfere with the listener’s comprehension
* Demonstrates general ability to speak clearly (enunciation, pronunciation, stress, intonation, and tone) and to convey meaning and nuance appropriately

**Performance Description Level 3**

Candidate’s proficiency **does not meet minimum standards** of competence as defined in *Language Proficiency Rating Level 4* due to deficiencies in performance *which taken in* *aggregate* affect meaning. These may include, but are not limited to, the following:

* Language proficiency is limited to the familiar
* Discourse lacks cohesiveness and coherence
* Demonstrates limited comprehension (grasps meaning in fragments but is unable to consistently process complete content of message in a cohesive discourse)
* Demonstrates knowledge of basic vocabulary (familiar); however, may be unable to convey abstract concepts
* Lacks requisite level of specialized vocabulary needed to competently perform the duties of an interpreter
* Demonstrates some knowledge of specialized vocabulary but ability to contextualize it is limited
* Misuses words (unable to distinguish among words of similar meaning and select the most appropriate term for the context.) Fails to distinguish between denotative and connotative meanings
* Occasionally distorts and/or invents words
* Occasionally misuses the wrong work for the context
* Demonstrates limited familiarity with idioms, proverbs, collocations, and sayings
* Demonstrates partial structural control (patterns of error in language structure interfere with meaning), requiring the listener to compensate for missing or erroneous structural elements
* Demonstrates patterns of grammatical errors
* Demonstrates a limited ability to use language in a sociolinguistically appropriate manner (i.e., deviates from the rules of social discourse; is unable to reflect the speech patterns of a wide variety of sociocultural backgrounds); exhibits lapses in ability to vary register appropriately
* Demonstrates limited knowledge of cultural nuance and references
* Rate of delivery (i.e. fluency) is sometimes inadequate (lengthy pauses, hurried speech) and may interfere with communication
* Accent sometimes interferes with the listener’s comprehension
* Demonstrates basic ability to speak clearly (enunciation, pronunciation, stress, intonation, and tone), but fails to convey meaning and nuance

**Performance Description Level 2**

Candidate’s proficiency is **below minimum standards** of competence as defined in *Language Proficiency Rating Level 4*, due to deficiencies in performance which, taken in aggregate, affect meaning. These may include, but are not limited to, the following:

* Language proficiency is limited to basic communication (i.e. everyday and concrete topics)
* Fails to communicate beyond the paragraph level
* Demonstrates very limited comprehension; ability to process complete content of message is limited
* Demonstrates basic level of vocabulary
* May demonstrate superficial knowledge of specialized vocabulary but is unable to contextualize it
* Frequently misuses words (unable to distinguish among words of similar sound, form, or meaning)
* Frequently distorts and/or invents words
* Demonstrates minimal familiarity with idioms, proverbs, collocations, and sayings
* Demonstrates minimal structural control (frequent patterns of error in language structure interfere with meaning)
* Demonstrates patterns of significant grammatical error
* Demonstrates very limited ability to use language in a sociolinguistically appropriate manner (i.e. frequently deviates from the rules of social discourse; is unable to reflect the speech patterns of different sociocultural backgrounds); unable to vary register appropriately
* Rate of delivery (i.e. fluency) is often inadequate (lengthy pauses between utterances interfere with communication)
* Accent constantly interferes with the listener’s comprehension
* Frequently fails to demonstrate a basic ability to speak clearly (enunciation, pronunciation, stress, intonation, and tone) and to convey meaning and nuance

**Performance Description Level 1**

Candidate’s proficiency is significantly below minimum standards of competence as defined in *Language Proficiency Rating Level 4*, due to deficiencies in performance which, *taken in* *aggregate*, affect meaning. These may include, but are not limited to, the following:

* Language proficiency is limited to basic communication with frequent and severe errors
* Fails to communicate beyond the word or sentence level
* Demonstrates almost no comprehension (i.e. unable to grasp meaning of words or sentences)
* Demonstrates rudimentary vocabulary
* Consistently misuses words (unable to distinguish among words of similar sound, form, or meaning)
* Consistently distorts and/or invents words
* Demonstrates little or no familiarity with idioms, proverbs, collocations, and sayings
* Demonstrates some awareness of some structures, but unable to use them correctly
* Demonstrates patterns of serious and persistent grammatical error
* Demonstrates an inability to use language in a sociolinguistically appropriate manner; demonstrates no awareness of the rules of social discourse of speech register
* Rate of delivery (i.e., fluency) is inadequate (lengthy intervals between utterances interfere with communication)
* Accent is so severe that it makes communication nearly impossible
* Consistently fails to demonstrate a basic ability to speak clearly (enunciation, pronunciation, stress, intonation, and tone) and to convey meaning and nuance