

Language Proficiency Requirement for World Languages Candidates

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the language proficiency requirement for World Languages candidates?

World Languages candidates must meet the National Board World Languages Standards for language proficiency by providing official ACTFL Speaking and Writing Proficiency Certificates from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) with a rating at or above Advanced Low. Non-expired ACTFL certificates of Advanced Low or higher from any version of the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and Writing Proficiency Test (WPT), such as OPIc, Advanced Level Check – Speaking and Advanced Level Check – Writing, will be accepted.

2. As a World Languages candidate, why am I required to complete language proficiency testing?

Language proficiency is part of the National Board Standards for World Languages. In 2014, the National Board assessment was redesigned and Component 1: Content Knowledge, broadened the coverage of content and pedagogical knowledge across all certificate areas. For World Languages, the evaluation of language proficiency standards changed to being measured by ACTFL assessments. The use of ACTFL assessments provides National Board candidates with valid and reliable language proficiency certifications.

3. Will the ACTFL certifications take the place of Component 1 for World Languages candidates?

ACTFL certifications will assess oral and writing proficiency. Component 1: Content Knowledge will assess content and pedagogical knowledge and skills. World Languages candidates must complete Component 1: Content Knowledge as it represents a large domain within the National Board Standards. The World Languages Component 1 selected response items will focus on Standard I, Knowledge of Language and Standard IV, Knowledge of Language Acquisition. The World Languages constructed response items will assess the following: Knowledge of Language Acquisition, Culture, and Knowledge of Language Learning.

4. How were National Board Certified Teachers involved in this policy change?

National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) formed the basis of the group that completed and supported the alignment between the ACTFL assessments and the National Board World Languages Standards. Approval of ACTFL certification was gained through policy review by the National Board's Certification Council and Board of Directors, both of which contain NBCTs.

5. What's the value of ACTFL certification to World Languages candidates and the profession?

The ACTFL requirement provides a number of benefits to World Languages candidates and the profession at-large:

- Results in expanding evidence of a National Board Certified Teacher's content and pedagogical knowledge.
- Supports the testing of critical content and pedagogical knowledge within the National Board's assessment framework in a way that could not be measured without additional exam items, testing time and significant costs if language proficiency remained embedded in the National Board assessment.

6. What if I already have ACTFL certificates?

If you already have non-expired ACTFL certificates with ratings of Advanced Low or higher in speaking and writing, and the issue dates are no more than two years prior to the published registration deadline of your initial year of candidacy for National Board Certification, you can submit those certificates as evidence of having met the requirement. Submit ACTFL certifications directly from your National Board [account](#) by clicking the Submit ACTFL Documentation link on your Certification Dashboard. ACTFL certificates from both speaking and writing proficiency assessments must be submitted at the same time.

Documentation of your ACTFL certifications will not be accepted by the National Board until your initial registration is complete, including submitting payment of the \$75 registration fee. See the [Guide to National Board Certification](#) for additional information on submitting your ACTFL certificates.

7. By when will I have to obtain and submit ACTFL certifications?

You can submit your ACTFL certificates as early as the date you first register to become a candidate up until the deadline of June 30 in the year you complete your initial attempt of all four National Board components.

The issue dates of your ACTFL certificates must be no more than two years prior to the published deadline of your initial year of candidacy (the year you purchased your first component and did not withdraw).

Your Initial Assessment Cycle	The year you complete your initial attempt on all four components						Deadline to Submit ACTFL Certificates to NBPTS
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	
2019-20	X						June 30, 2021
2019-20		X					June 30, 2022
2020-21	X						June 30, 2021
2020-21		X					June 30, 2022
2020-21			X				June 30, 2023
2021-22		X					June 30, 2022
2021-22			X				June 30, 2023
2021-22				X			June 30, 2024
2022-23			X				June 30, 2023
2022-23				X			June 30, 2024
2022-23					X		June 30, 2025
2023-24				X			June 30, 2024
2023-24					X		June 30, 2025
2023-24						X	June 30, 2026

It is recommended that World Languages candidates obtain their ACTFL certificates in speaking and writing as soon as possible after registering as a candidate and well in advance of completing your initial attempt of all four National Board components. If candidates have not obtained ACTFL certificates with ratings of Advanced Low or higher before the deadline of June 30 in the year they complete their initial attempt of all four components, they risk having their National Board certification held or their candidacy terminated even if they have met all other National Board assessment score requirements.

See the [Guide to National Board Certification](#) for additional information on eligibility requirements and deadlines for obtaining and submitting ACTFL certificates.

8. What is the cost for ACTFL assessments?

The National Board, in partnership with ACTFL, will provide each candidate a discounted price of \$60.00 plus a \$35.00 remote proctoring fee to take/retake the ACTFL Advanced Level Check – Speaking or ACTFL Advanced Level Check – Writing.

9. How do I schedule the ACTFL assessments?

You may refer to the [Guide to National Board Certification](#) for instructions on registering for an LTI account and scheduling your tests. For assistance, contact Language Testing International at (800) 486-8444 or email customercare@languagetesting.com.

10. How will I be notified of my ACTFL ratings/certificates?

After your test is scored, an electronic certificate displaying your rating will be emailed to you from Language Testing International.

11. If I do not meet the Advanced Low or higher rating requirement, how soon can I retake the ACTFL assessments?

ACTFL policy provides a one-time waiver to re-test immediately; thereafter National Board candidates have to wait 30 days before re-testing.

12. Why are ACTFL certificates valid for only two years?

The rating on an ACTFL certificate describes an individual's language proficiency at the time the testing occurs. Given that language proficiency may improve or decline over time, ACTFL recommends a 2-year validity period from the date of the test. ACTFL took multiple factors into account when establishing this validity period. The rate of improvement or attrition for someone's language proficiency level after having received an official proficiency rating depends on some or all of the following:

- The highest level of proficiency ever attained.
- The motivation of the speaker to maintain or improve proficiency.
- The amount of time elapsed since the last proficiency test.
- The quantity of language use subsequent to the last proficiency rating.
- The quality/nature of the speaker's language experience over time, including the amount, if any, of formative feedback provided to the speaker during the time between proficiency assessments.

Since the individual's subsequent experience cannot be determined, the expected average duration/extended validity of a proficiency rating was established at 2 years from the date of the test.

13. Will the National Board add additional languages to the World Languages certification in the future?

At this time, adding additional languages to the World Languages certificate is not within our scope of work. Please note that a decision to not offer a certificate is not a value judgment on the subject area and is instead based strictly on market demand.