

English Proficiency Evaluation

Use the questions below in order to evaluate the English proficiency of the prospective J-1 scholar through an interview. The interview must be a minimum of 15 minutes and must be conducted either in person or over videoconference or telephone. The interviewer should use only English while speaking to the prospective J-1 scholar. The interviewer should explain that they will ask a series of questions that must be answered in English and that the prospective J-1 scholar will be given a rating of 1 through 5 (with 5 being highest) based on this evaluation and that record of English proficiency is required by the U.S. Department of State.

Questions

***Ask at least one from each category.**

- 1) Warm-up: (Note to interviewer: explain that the answer to this question will not be scored.)
 - a) Tell me about your family.
 - b) Tell me about your hobbies.
 - c) Tell me about your favorite professor.

- 2) Getting Assistance: (Note to interviewer: explain that answers from this point forward will be scored.)
 - a) Tell me about a time you became ill. How did you obtain assistance?
 - b) Tell me about a time you were locked out of your home/car/office. How did you obtain assistance?

- 3) J-1 Program Activities/Duties:
 - a) Tell me what you know about research and/or higher education in the U.S. What do you hope to learn?
 - b) Tell me what you know about American culture and society. What do you hope to learn?

- 4) Daily Life in the U.S.:
 - a) If you are given the opportunity to come to Penn, how would you establish your life? For example, how would you find a place to live and how would you get to and from work?
 - b) Describe how you keep healthy and/or manage stress in your daily life. How do you plan continue to do this if you come to the U.S.?

- 5) Reading and Comprehension of J-1 Program Materials: (Note to interviewer: it is understood that the potential scholar may not be familiar with the J-1 process; however, their ability to understand the process if chosen must be evaluated.)
 - a) If you are invited to come to Penn, what resources will you use to learn about the visa process?
 - b) If you have traveled or lived in another country please describe how you received permission to do so.

- 6) Understanding Rights, Responsibilities, and Protections:
 - a) How many hours do you expect to work per week in the U.S.? What would you do with your free time?
 - b) How much vacation time do you expect to receive in the U.S.? What would you do with your vacation time?

- 7) Question Formulation: (Note to interviewer: this is needed in order to evaluate ability to formulate a question.)
 - a) Please ask me two questions on any topic.



Evaluating Proficiency

Use the below scale to evaluate the prospective J-1 scholar. A level of 3.5-5 is considered successful and a level of 1-3 is considered unsuccessful. Levels are based on the *ETS Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Kit (SPEAK) Test*.

Level*	Characteristics of Communication
1	Impossible to understand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not understand questions Attempts at English incomprehensible
2	Nearly impossible to understand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few words are intelligible Speech contains mostly sentence fragments, repetition of vocabulary, and simple phrases
3	Possible to understand, although often repetition is needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major or minor grammatical errors Communication sometimes affected by errors, but speech can generally be understood
4	Easy to understand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errors not unusual, but rarely major Communication generally not affected by errors
5	Communication is effortless <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errors not noticeable and accent not distracting Delivery often has native-like smoothness

*Half scores are acceptable (for example, 4.5)

Evaluation Results

Name of prospective J-1 Scholar: _____

I attest that the J-1 candidate identified above possesses sufficient proficiency in the English language to navigate daily life in the U.S.; obtain assistance if necessary; perform J-1 activities and duties; read and comprehend J-1 program materials; and understand their rights, responsibilities, and protections. Yes No

Select your interview method:

In person on _____
month/day/year

Videoconferencing (e.g. Skype) on _____
month/day/year

Telephone on _____
month/day/year

Name of the Evaluator: _____

Penn Department: _____

Penn Position Title: _____

Email Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____