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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level*</th>
<th>Characteristics of Communication</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Impossible to understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Does not understand questions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Attempts at English incomprehensible</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nearly impossible to understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Few words are intelligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Speech contains mostly sentence fragments, repetition of vocabulary, and simple phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Possible to understand, although often repetition is needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Major or minor grammatical errors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communication sometimes affected by errors, but speech can generally be understood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Easy to understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Errors not unusual, but rarely major</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communication generally not affected by errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Communication is effortless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Errors not noticeable and accent not distracting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Delivery often has native-like smoothness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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 ____________

☐ Videoconferencing (e.g. Skype) on ____________

☐ Telephone on ____________

Name of the Evaluator: __________________________________________________________

Penn Department: ______________________________________________________________

Penn Position Title: _____________________________________________________________

Email Address: _________________________________

Signature: _________________________________ Date: _____________________________