Oral Proficiency Interview

Information for MSSU seniors preparing to take the Oral Proficiency Assessment for graduation with a BA/BSE degree
What is the OPI?

According to ACTFL...

- The OPI is a global assessment that measures language holistically by determining patterns of strength and weakness.
- It is interactive, adaptive and learner-centered.
- The OPI score is standardized and is recognized nationally.
- Your OPI sample is blind-double rated by a certified ACTFL OPI tester.
What isn’t the OPI?

- The OPI **does not** address how, when or where someone learns a language.
- It is **not** an achievement test.
- It is **not** tied to any specific classes or instructional method.
- A student’s score is based on the ACTFL scale and therefore you **are not** compared to other speakers.
Structure of the OPI

- A speech sample must be ratable = you must speak as much as possible
  - The interviewer will need to establish what you can and cannot do consistently.
  - It is likely that at some point you will not be able to respond to a particular question as a measure of what you are not able to do – and that’s OK!
- The OPI is conducted in a conversational format.
The Phases of the OPI

O Introduction – the interviewer will try to find out your likes, past experiences and other information that can be used in questions later.
O Questions asked will determine what you can express and what you can’t express well.
  O A role-play will be introduced at some point.
  O Role-plays are situational or transactional, meaning you will take the role of a person who needs to accomplish a task or a transaction. It is likely the interviewer will try to put obstacles in your way to see how you navigate problems.
O Closing – thanks and have a great day...
How long do I have to talk?

- Generally, the more you speak, the more likely your score will truly measure your speaking ability. DON’T BE SHY!
- Generally in a person to person interview, the longer the interview, the higher the rated score since the interviewer is looking for a set of oral skills that you can’t manage to express.
  - Some interviews with beginning speakers last only a few minutes while more advanced students’ interviews will last more than 30 minutes
- The OPIc (the computerized assessment most often used at MSSU) is generally about 45 minutes.
OPIc

- The OPIc (the oral interview using a computer) is the method most often chosen by students at MSSU to meet the Oral Proficiency Requirement.

- However, a student could arrange for an OPI phone interview, rather than the OPIc.

- The OPIc is available on demand, so you can make your appointment when it is convenient for you.

- The OPI or OPIc is required for majors, but is also encouraged for minors.

- Cost: $65/OPIc
  - The Department pays 51% of the OPIc fee for majors the first time it is taken.
  - Student cost for the OPIc: $32 for majors
  - Student cost for the OPIc: $65 for minors/2nd try for majors
  - Student cost for the OPI on the phone: $125
Observations from a student who took the OPIc in January

- Pick only a few items with which you are familiar when asked about your hobbies as these are the topics of the questions later on.
- You can repeat the question twice.
- Try to give an answer to every question.
- The accent is not difficult to understand.
- You’ll probably get fatigued after about 30 minutes, but keep talking!
How and when?

O Students should contact Nancy Ellis, the FL Department Secretary, to make the OPI appointment. 417-625-3125 / WH 353

O Students should take the OPI when their speaking skills are at their best, i.e. after a study abroad experience or after a conversation class.

O Graduating seniors should take the OPI no later than March (for May/July graduates) or October (for December graduates).

O Students may re-take the OPI, but must wait 90 calendar days before another attempt.
One last thing...

- Don’t forget that this is a nationally recognized and standardized assessment of your speaking ability rated by an impartial third party.
- It takes between 7 & 10 days for your results to be processed and scored.
- After your interview when you receive your OPI rating, you should make sure to put it on your resumé!

Bonne chance! / Viel Glück! / ¡Buena suerte!