

Questions and Answers for the NAD-RID National Interpreter Certification (NIC) Knowledge, Interview and Performance Tests

Based on questions asked by interested parties recently, we have compiled a listing of questions and answers with regard to the new NAD-RID National Interpreter Certification tests. If there are any other questions you have regarding the NAD-RID NIC tests or if you have further questions with regard to these, please reference the question number, if applicable, and direct them to Lori Frison at nts@rid.org, via phone at 703/838-0030, ext. 207, or via mail to:

RID
333 Commerce Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

We hope this information is helpful to you.

1.

Q. Does the new test have hearing and deaf raters?

A. Yes. This information can be found on page 6 of the interview and performance candidate bulletin.

2.

Q. What are the certification levels?

A. There are three possible levels for those who pass the written, interview and performance tests, each are considered “certified:” 1) NIC; 2) NIC Advanced; and 3) NIC Master. This information can be found on page 6 of the interview and performance candidate bulletin.

3.

Q. Has equivalency been established between the NAD, RID and NIC tests?

A. No. It is possible this could be done in the future, but it would likely be at least several years. A database of results would need to be established and the results would have to be deemed psychometrically valid and reliable to do so.

4.

Q. How will the test be able to check for interpreting and transliterating at the same time?

A. The Content Experts developed scenarios that account for these areas, since both are among the tasks illuminated in the rating criterion. This information can be found on pages 7, and 12 – 14 of the interview and performance candidate bulletin.

5.

Q. What is the difference between the NCI and NIC?

A. The NCI is the National Council on Interpreting, which is the committee that has worked with the approval of the NAD and RID Boards of Directors on developing the test. The NIC is the National Interpreter Certification test itself. This information can be found on page 1 of the interview and performance candidate bulletin.

6.

Q. What is the required test response – sign, spoken?

A. The responses in the interview segment of the test can be in ASL, transliteration or total communication modalities, but you may not use your voice only to respond to the questions. This information can be found on page 6 of the interview and performance candidate bulletin. The performance portion will note the principles involved in each segment before it begins. This information can be found on page 6 of the interview and performance candidate bulletin.

7.

Q. Will there still be a five year time period for those who took the RID Generalist Written Test to take the CI and/or CT Performance Test?

A. While psychometric standards do allow for a new test to supercede an existing test, the RID Board of Directors recognizes that wording that was used up to the time of the final national administration of the RID Generalist Written Test in December of 2003 was such that it is understandable for members to believe that they would be able to take the CI and/or CT Performance Tests for a period of five years from passing the RID Generalist Written Test. Accordingly, RID will allow candidates for certification to take the CI and CT tests until December 31, 2008. No further CI and/or CT Performance testing will occur after that date. Anyone eligible for those tests should be aware that there are limited slots for testing. Failure to secure a slot and test within the allotted timeframe will not be accepted as a reason for extension of one's candidacy for certification.

8.

Q. Can we stop the test tape to go back during the test? Supposed we misunderstood or were nervous?

A. The test materials are on a DVD. It will not allow you to go back.

9.

Q. It seems like the test is a long time to sit in front of a television screen. Is there the possibility for bathroom breaks or the like?

A. There is time between the interview and performance sections for such.

10.

Q. Is there a plan to separate NAD and RID from the testing process and make it independent?

A. There has long been the desire to separate RID from the testing administration process and to establish an autonomous testing body. NAD and RID, through the NIC test, also hope for this separation.

At one point in the mid-1990s, RID investigated the costs for an outside entity to administer the written test. At that time, the costs to just administer the written test were over \$800,000. RID as an association barely had revenues for the entire fiscal year at that time in those amounts.

At this point, the costs for an outside testing entity to administer the test are so astronomical as to make the test unaffordable with the current levels of volume. Volume would have to increase exponentially in order to make it feasible to do so. From time to time, NAD and RID will certainly review the issue again to determine the feasibility of doing so.

11.

Q. Who has taken the pilot test?

A. A broad range of individuals, covering a wide range in each of the areas of experiences, membership, membership categories, diversity, and gender were tested during the pilot phase.

Pilot testing is an effort to see how the testing product works and to work out any bugs in the testing product as needed. From pilot testers, we already have ascertained what was needed in order to make changes to the testing materials and those changes have been effected on the testing tapes that have been sent to testing sites. There were several areas where we have added materials to the test tapes that clarify the testing process and more clearly define what is being looked for.

Results of pilot testing are intrinsically optional for individuals since there may well be results reported which would not have occurred if needed changes were in place. This is why pilot testing was offered free to individuals. They were, in effect, 'guinea pigs' for the process.

12.

Q. What happens to persons who are close to their five year window and have not passed the RID CI and/or CT Performance Tests yet?

A. Due to extensive times required to report CI and/or CT Performance Test results, the RID Board of Directors recently passed a motion that extends the period of candidacy for individuals currently in the system by six months. Once test reporting times are reduced, that motion will likely be rescinded.

However, the reporting times for the NIC Interview and Performance Tests are very low at this point and we anticipate them staying low. Individuals who have passed the RID Generalist Written Test have the option of moving over to the NIC Interview and Performance Tests without additional cost.

13.

Q. Are raters the same or different for the interview and performance segments of the NIC test?

A. All raters except the hearing raters have been trained to do both the interview and performance segments of the NIC test. The hearing rater does not rate the interview section. This information can also be found on page 6 of the interview and performance candidate bulletin.

14.

Q. What are the anticipated results reporting times for the NIC Interview and Performance Tests?

A. We anticipate the results being reported well before the current standard of 120 days and even before the old standard of 90 days. The rater pool for the NIC Interview and Performance test far exceeds any RID had in the past with any of its tests.

15.

Q. Will the pilot testing results be published in the VIEWS?

A. The pilot testing results will likely be folded into the overall results that are reported each year. It is not likely that pilot testing results will be separately reported. As noted before, pilot testing is an effort to see how the testing product works and to work out any bugs in the testing product as needed. From pilot testers, we already have ascertained what was needed in order to make changes to the testing materials and those changes have been effected on the testing tapes that have been sent to testing sites. There were several areas where we have added materials to the test tapes that clarify the testing process and more clearly define what is being looked for.

Results of pilot testing are intrinsically optional for individuals since there may well be results reported which would not have occurred if needed changes were in place. This is why pilot testing was offered free to individuals. They were, in effect, 'guinea pigs' for the process.

The results of pilot testing, just as is the case for regular testing, however, are being monitored. Should the psychometricians feel there exists a cause for concern, these will be addressed at the earliest possible time.

We also anticipate posting validity and reliability statistics in the future.

16.

Q. What do "certified" and "master" levels look like? Are there different testing materials for each level?

A. Testing materials stay the same for each level. For the interview portion, raters are trained to identify decision-making skills that meet or exceed basic professional standards. For the performance portion, they are trained to identify interpreting and transliterating performances that meet or exceed basic professional standards. Those candidates whose performances are at or exceed that standard are awarded certification. Those who pass as Certified have shown basic professional-level interpreting/transliterating skills. Those who pass Certified Advanced have scored within the standard range on the interview portion and high on the performance portion of the examination. Those awarded the Certified Master scored high on both the interview and performance portions of the test. This information can be found on page 6 of the interview and performance candidate bulletin.

17.

Q. What is the waiting period to retest?

A. Candidates are allowed to retake the test after a waiting period of six (6) months from the date they took the performance test. This information can be found on page 17 of the interview and performance candidate bulletin.

18.

Q. What if someone takes the test and gets a “lower” level?

A. As long as a member fulfills all requirements to maintain their certification, a member is entitled to the highest level of certification which they have earned.

19.

Q. Are there different versions of the written test? Do you track which test is taken?

A. There are currently two versions of the written test available via computer testing and one version available in paper-and-pencil format. Those failing the paper-and-pencil version of the NIC Knowledge (written) Test must wait six months from the date of test administration before they may retake the exam, while those taking the computer-based version must wait three months between testing opportunities. This information can be found on page 5 of the knowledge candidate bulletin.

20.

Q. How much does the test cost?

A. The introductory member price for the new knowledge portion of the test, which includes the cost of computer-based testing is set at \$225, which includes the nonrefundable application fee. If a member does not wish to take advantage of computer-based testing, then the applicant can deduct \$50 from the cost.

The computer-based testing involves a contract with a vendor who supplies the testing slots around the nation. If there are any changes in computer-based testing costs, those costs will be passed on to testers.

The introductory member price for the combined Interview and Performance Test is \$325, which includes the nonrefundable application fee.

If a person chose to not take advantage of computer-based testing, then the current projections would have the cost at \$500, which is almost \$100 less than if one took the old RID Generalist Written Test and the CI and CT Performance Tests.

21.

Q. Are there written criteria to explain the expectations for the various levels? Can you prepare for a higher level of retesting?

A. For the interview portion, raters are trained to identify decision-making skills that meet or exceed basic professional standards. For the performance portion, they are trained to identify interpreting and transliterating performances that meet or exceed basic professional standards. Those candidates whose performances are at or exceed that standard are awarded certification.

Those who pass as Certified have shown basic professional-level interpreting/transliterating skills. Those who pass Certified Advanced have scored within

the standard range on the interview portion and high on the performance portion of the examination. Those awarded the Certified Master scored high on both the interview and performance portions of the test. This information can be found on page 6 of the interview and performance candidate bulletin.

22.

Q. Can CEUs transfer from the NIC test to RID certification?

A. Current RID certified members who earn the NIC certification will have the option, as they do now, to continue with their current CEU cycle, or to adopt a new four year cycle. A letter is mailed to all newly certified individuals which offers them the opportunity to make the change. Members must send in the form that comes with the letter if they wish to do so. The cycle will not change unless members turn in that form.

Currently, NAD certified individuals are maintaining two separate CEU records. The Professional Development Committee is considering if there is the feasibility of dropping the requirement to maintain two separate records.

23.

Q. Do you need the NIC Master level certification to be eligible for specialty certificates?

A. No. All NIC certification levels are eligible to take the specialty tests.

24.

Q. Do current RID certified members need a degree to take the NIC test?

A. Not at this time.

25.

Q. Will we need a degree after 2008 to take the test?

A. In 2008, persons who are hearing that wish to take the NIC Interview and Performance Test must have a minimum of an associate's degree. In 2012, the minimum requirement will be a bachelor's degree for persons who are hearing. Also in 2012, persons who are deaf that wish to take the NIC Interview and Performance Test must have a minimum of an associate's degree. In 2016, the minimum requirement will be a bachelor's degree for persons who are deaf.

26.

Q. I have a question regarding the new NAD-RID NIC Test. I currently hold my CT and I have been trying to decide if I should take the CI or just take the new test.

If we will be required to take the new test to be considered a "currently" certified interpreter, I will wait and take the new test. In other words, will the CI and CT go the way of CSC... considered out of date? Is there any estimate to the time frame this would happen in?

Also, has it been decided what the new certification will be called?

A. Members who are currently certified will not be required to take the new test. As long as you abide by the rules and regulations of the Ethical Practices System and the Certification Maintenance Program and any other noted requirements, you will continue to be considered a certified member.

The new NAD-RID National Interpreter Certification test will no doubt be considered the most up to date and progressive certification. There is the possibility that all former certifications may be 'grandfathered' into the new system, but that likely would be several years down the line.

27.

Q. I would like to make sure that evaluators are trained and in sufficient supply before the new testing process begins. I would like to see a short turnaround time for test takers to get their results. I think the current long waiting period for results is poor for morale and unprofessional. The new system should have the evaluation procedure planned in advance to make for a smooth process.

A. We agree with you on the results time period. Certification tests are normally updated every few years. RID, in the past, has had several rater trainings, at which time a large contingency of new raters as well as current raters were retrained and became a part of the rater pool. RID has been at a point for several years where we have been waiting for the NCI to finish test development on the new test. In the meantime, increased testing continued while the normal and expected attrition among RID raters continued to occur as raters move on to other things, etc.

As you may know, the unfortunate budgetary situation which affected virtually all states also affected the second half of a state grant which would have finished the NIC test development. It was extremely difficult for the NCI to find money to finish the test development effort. RID came to a point in which it could wait no longer and had to make a decision to either go through the entire, lengthy process of revising the CI and CT performance tests, which would include rater training, or we needed to see a date set for the completion of the new NIC certification. Fortunately, the NCI was able to find the funds necessary to complete the work via contributions from RID. In the spring of 2005, the NCI expended almost \$150,000 for rater training, and we trained far more raters than we ever have before, which should result in turnaround times that are far, far better than is the case now.

28.

Q. If I take the new NIC test and fail, will I lose my current certification?

A. No, as long as you continue to meet the requirements of your certifying body (NAD and/or RID) to maintain your certification, which includes the requirements of the Certification Maintenance Program (CMP) and the Ethical Practices System (EPS), then your current certification will remain valid. Even if you do not take the new test, as long as you meet those requirements, your current certification will remain valid henceforth. There are no plans to take away anyone's certification.

29.

Q. I am currently certified. Do I need to take the new NIC Knowledge Test or can I move directly to the Interview and Performance portions?

A. Current certified individuals can move directly to the interview and performance portions of the test.

30.

Q. What are my options as far as testing is concerned?

A. In an effort to alleviate the ongoing problems of CI and CT performance test results delay, RID will extend to current candidates for certification, i.e. those who have passed the RID Generalist Written Test (GWT), the option to take the new NAD-RID National Interpreter Certification (NIC) at no extra cost from taking the CI or CT test. This affords members the following options:

1) Those who have passed the GWT and who are in the midst of their five year timeline can move to the new NIC Interview and Performance test for the price of \$225 rather than the current introductory price of \$325 for members. Those wishing to do so should note that they passed the GWT on their NIC application.

2) Individuals who are currently signed up for the CI or CT Performance test will have the option of moving to the NIC Interview and Performance test at no extra cost as well. They should also fill out a new NIC Interview and Performance test application, send no money and indicate that they wish to move to this testing venue.

3) Current RID or NAD certified members who wish to take the new NIC Interview and Performance test may also do so at the current CI and CT price of \$225. This would also need to be noted on the NIC Interview and Performance test application.

4) Individuals who have taken the CI and/or CT and have not passed may take the new NIC Interview and Performance test at the CI or CT retake fee of \$195 rather than the posted rate of \$275 for the new NIC test. This would also need to be noted on the NIC Interview and Performance test application.

5) Individuals who are signed up for both the CI and CT performance tests may take the new NIC Interview and Performance test at the full introductory rate of \$325. The additional funds remaining may be credited to the individual's account and used for membership dues or for other RID fees and services as the member wishes. No funds will be reimbursed. This would also need to be noted on the NIC Interview and Performance test application.

In each case, members would need to fill out an NIC Interview and Performance test application and record the option they wish to take. Letters or other communications should not be sent without an NIC Interview and Performance application addressed to the National Testing System department.

This is a limited time offer until the unacceptable results reporting delays for the CI and CT performance tests are alleviated.

Other approaches are being considered in response to the ongoing lengthy reporting times for the CI and CT performance tests. As members may recall, there have been a number of articles in VIEWS and information on the web site which recognize the lengthy delay in reporting results from the CI and CT performance tests. This is not likely to abate until the new NIC Interview and Performance tests begin, since there will be rater training this spring for those tests. At the beginning of February, a huge number of applicants for rater training were already in with many more expected by the deadline of March 1. We anticipate training a large number of raters for this test and anticipate the reporting period required for it will be short, much less than the target date of 120 days and the actual reporting time of six months or more at this point for the CI and CT performance tests.

Members testing this summer under the new NIC test should get their results earlier than those testing in the spring with the CI and CT performance tests.

We hope members will take advantage of these options and lessen the amount of tests still coming in for the CI and CT, thereby lessening the reporting time of results due to the small pool of raters left.

31.

Q. What have the pass rates been to date for the NAD-RID NIC Knowledge Test?

A. The pass rate to date has been much higher for the NIC written test than the old RID Generalist Written Test. Furthermore, the pass rate for the computer-based testing venue of the old RID Generalist Written Test was higher than for those taking the pencil and paper version. Results will be monitored to see if this phenomenon continues with the computer-based version of the new NIC Knowledge test.

32.

Q. How is rater reliability ensured for the NAD-RID NIC test?

A. The psychometricians have several methods to ensure rater reliability. One is to have the master raters (the individuals who trained the raters) to, from time to time, rate a tape. That tape then become a test tape. They are then sent to each rater in the midst of a full shipment of tapes to be rated over a designated period of time. The raters do not know the tape is a test tape. The ratings of each individual rater are then reviewed vis-à-vis the master rater ratings. If the rater's scores are within a designated level, then all is well. If they are not, then other activities are undertaken, including but not limited to, a second verification test rating, notification of areas where the rater is beyond the designated ranges, remedial training, probationary status, and ultimately, if results remain unsatisfactory, the rater can be released from additional rating.

33.

Q. How can I better prepare for the test?

A. The new NAD-RID NIC test is a new paradigm. It is not like the RID CI and/or CT tests in many ways. Individuals approaching the test in that manner may not do well. All test takers should examine and pay close attention to the candidate bulletins and fully understand the test format and the rating criterion. Tasks are enumerated as well as

numerous knowledge and skill statements which illustrate exactly what the raters will be looking for. Additionally, there is an extensive listing of materials relevant to the development of the test. Testers should be familiar with the material covered in the listings. Testers who do not consider each of these areas fully and seriously risk not doing well on the test.

Practice materials are in the final stages of development. We believe those materials will be extremely helpful to test takers. When they are available, announcements will be made in *VIEWS*, on the web site, and through various listservs.

As more and more people take the test, individuals will start holding preparation workshops on the test. This is what happened with the RID CI and CT tests. It did not happen overnight. Again, it will take time, but it is normal. RID did not develop that type of activity for the CI and the CT in the past. It is unlikely that RID will do so now.

Other Questions

If there are any questions you have regarding the NAD-RID NIC tests, please direct them to Lori Frison at nts@rid.org, via phone at 703/838-0030, ext. 207, or via mail to:

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