

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
Department of Communication
ORAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCY EXAMINATION

For additional information and scheduled exam dates, visit the Department of Communication web page at <http://www.comm.niu.edu/comm/coms100/occe.shtml>

Any student is eligible to take the Oral Communication Competency Exam prior to enrolling in COMS 100. The exam consists of two parts, and students must pass both parts to waive the core competency requirement. Part I assesses competence in listening. Part II assesses competence in speaking. Students must pass Part I to be eligible to take Part II. Depending on demand the exam is offered three times each semester.

Students who fail Part I, or pass Part I and fail Part II, will automatically fail the OCCE. Students failing the OCCE must enroll in a COMS 100 course in order to meet NIU graduation requirements. Students can take the OCCE only one time and cannot retake any portion of the exam. Students are not permitted to appeal the results of the exam.

Passing a competency examination fulfills the requirement for the core competency but gives no credit (i.e., it reduces the required number of hours in general education but does not reduce the number of hours required for a degree.)

In order to take the exam, the students must currently be enrolled at NIU.

STUDENTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN COMS 100, WHO HAVE TAKEN COMS 100, OR WHO HAVE TAKEN THE OCCE EXAM ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO TAKE THE EXAM!!!!

In addition, students planning to take the OCCE exam are advised to take the exam **AT LEAST one year before graduating from NIU**. If students fail the OCCE, arrangements must be made to take a COMS 100 course in order to meet graduation requirements.

Students taking Part I of the OCCE are required to do the following:

- **Students who wish to take the Oral Communication Competency Exam need to access the application at http://www.comm.niu.edu/comm/coms100/OCCE_signup_form.pdf , download the OCCE sign-up sheet and return it to Watson Hall 209 at least one full week prior to the desired exam date. On-site registration is not allowed.**
- **Bring an NIU student photo ID or an acceptable substitute to Part I. Students without an appropriate form of photo ID will not be permitted to take Part I.**
- **Bring a #2 pencil for taking of the exam.**
- **Arrive 15 minutes early for Part I in order to sign in and complete necessary forms.**
- **PLEASE NOTE: Students who do not show up to take Part I on the date identified on the sign-up sheet must REAPPLY to take the exam on another date.**
- **PLEASE NOTE: Students who arrive late to take Part I (after the exam has started), will **NOT** be allowed to take the exam at that time and will need to REAPPLY to take the exam on another date.**

Additional Information Regarding Eligibility

Although any student is welcome to take the exam, students who meet one of the following criteria should be encouraged by their academic advisors to take the exam: 1) students with a 24 or higher on the English part of the ACT; 2) students who have excelled (e.g., grade of A in a rigorous high school speech class) (e.g., a full semester course that included numerous graded speaking assignments, an "honors" course, etc.); 3) students who have excelled in high school forensics (e.g., debaters or oratory champions); 4) transfer students who have successfully completed communication courses that did not transfer to NIU as equivalent to COMS 100.

Additional Information Regarding the Exam

Part I is a listening skills test containing 40 multiple-choice questions. The exam will take approximately 40 minutes to complete. The exam (including instructions, sample question, stimuli, and questions) is on videotape. Students view and listen to a variety of communication exchanges and are asked questions about those exchanges.

For Part II, students must prepare and present a 6-8 minute extemporaneous persuasive speech. Students are provided a copy of the rating form used to assess the speech along with a list of topic areas and audiences from which to choose prior to presenting the speech. Students are rated by a panel of COMS 100 faculty. Following the speech, each student is asked a series of brief questions about the speech. The student's oral answers to those questions are also rated. Excluding approximately a week of preparation time that the student may use as he or she sees fit, Part II takes 10 minutes to complete. Students should not prepare PowerPoint or similar presentations to accompany their speeches.

PART II MUST BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO THE NEXT SCHEDULED EXAMINATION DATE!!!!

Any questions should be directed to Tim Pierce at 815-753-6999.