**What is the OPECS?**

If you are applying for a co-op work term and your first language is not English, you may be asked to take the test of Oral Proficiency in English Communicative Settings (OPECS) as part of your application process. OPECS is designed to measure your ability to use English in the workplace.

**Information and Registration**

Students who must take the OPECS test will be notified and sent the link to the registration form.

Upon registration students will receive confirmation and information on test preparation.

Once a student passes the OPECS test, they will not be required to take the test again for any future co-op work terms.

For more information contact the Co-op Office, located in suite 1400 of the Technology and Training Center at Carleton University, or [Co-opprogram@carleton.ca](mailto:Co-opprogram@carleton.ca) or 613-520-4331.

**General Features of the OPECS**

The OPECS test is:

- a tape-mediated test of workplace English
- approximately 30 minutes long
- has four tasks, which represent the ways in which employees must understand and speak in English in the workplace

The four tasks on the OPECS test is a range of communicative abilities, including the ability to:

- develop and present a prepared speech on a familiar topic, which is both comprehensible and well-organized
- communicate key information to a colleague
- paraphrase and summarize important information
- respond appropriately to questions
- find and communicate related information
- express an informed opinion

**What will my OPECS Result Mean?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If your OPECS result is...</th>
<th>Your result indicates that you...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2-3</td>
<td>need considerable work on your English communication skills in order to be considered for the work co-op program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Not recommended</td>
<td>need some additional work on your English communication skills and are unable to enter the work co-op program this term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+ Borderline, but Recommended</td>
<td>have sufficient English communication skills to work in a co-op work placement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>have effective English communication skills to work in a co-op work placement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Score Report**

You will receive a Score Report which consists of a summary of your performance and a recommendation (see above).
The OPECS Assessment is a test of English communication in the workplace. For this test, you will listen to, take notes or read information and provide spoken responses to each of the test tasks. All of your responses will be recorded and marked by trained raters. This booklet includes an OPECS sample test. Practice tapes are available from the Co-op Office.

Preparing For Task 1

**TASK 1** of the OPECS test evaluates your ability to organize and deliver a prepared talk (see the attached sample test for the Task 1 questions to prepare).

You should prepare your talk before the test.

- You will have two minutes to record the answer, so prepare enough information to speak for two minutes.
- Do not try to include so much information that you feel like you have to speak very quickly. Remember to speak clearly.
- Practice your answers aloud and time yourself. The more you practice, the more fluent you will become.

**Remember:** You cannot have any notes with you when you are taking this test.

Preparing For Task 2

**TASK 2, PART 1** evaluates your ability to express your own opinion. You will hear the comments made by two colleagues who are discussing the information presented in the first part of Task 2. Then, you will be asked to provide your own opinion. You will have 30 seconds to express your own opinion.

- You will have 20 seconds to quickly scan your Task 2 notes before responding.
- The prompt for your response is: "What do you think?" Make sure to begin your answer after this prompt, but wait for the beep.

Preparing For Task 3

**TASK 3** evaluates your ability to find information in a written document and to answer questions.

- Prior to the test become familiar with the formats of memos, proposals, and other office-generated paperwork.
- During the test, scan the document and underline or circle key words, dates, and figures.
- Listen for key words in the questions that are asked. These include, but are not limited to who, what, when, where, why, and how, as well as key lexical items from the text and their synonyms.
- Respond clearly to each of the questions asked. Remember only begin speaking when the beep sounds. Stop talking when you hear the word stop, or you may not hear the next question.

Preparing For Task 4

**TASK 4** evaluates your ability to relate information in a memorandum to information recorded on a telephone message. You will be asked to verify or change information on the memo, and then to inform a colleague of the changes.

- Prior to the test, become familiar with the appearance of an office memo.
- During the test, scan the information in the memo, highlighting any important information.
- While listening to the telephone message, make any necessary changes to the memo. This will help you to remember the changes.
- When the beep sounds, you will have 2 minutes to explain the changes to your colleague.