



**COURT REPORTERS BOARD**  
OF CALIFORNIA

REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL COURT REPORTERS ASSOCIATION  
REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL REPORTER  
ONLINE SKILLS TEST AND WRITTEN KNOWLEDGE TEST

STATE OF CALIFORNIA



DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS



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This report is mandated by California Business and Professions (B&P) Code § 139 and by DCA Licensure Examination Validation Policy OPES 18-02.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Licensing boards and bureaus within the California Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) are required to ensure that examination programs used in California licensure comply with psychometric and legal standards. To become a licensed court reporter in California, a candidate must have the requisite education and experience and pass three California examinations:

1. The Dictation Examination
2. The English Examination
3. The Professional Practice Examination

The Court Reporters Board of California requested that DCA's Office of Professional Examination Services (OPES) complete a comprehensive review of the Registered Professional Reporter Online Skills Test (SKT) and Written Knowledge Test (WKT), which are developed by the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA). OPES performed this review to evaluate the SKT and WKT to be considered for court reporter licensure reciprocity in California.

OPES, in collaboration with the Court Reporters Board of California, reviewed documentation of the NCRA's occupational analysis (OA) of the registered professional reporter profession conducted in 2017–18. This documentation was provided by NCRA in the *National Court Reporters Association Registered Professional Reporter Exam Job Task Analysis Report* (NCRA OA, 2018). In addition, OPES also reviewed other NCRA documents regarding practices and procedures used to develop and validate the SKT and WKT. OPES performed a comprehensive evaluation of the documents to determine whether the following SKT and WKT program components met professional guidelines and technical standards: (a) OA, (b) examination development, (c) passing scores and passing rates, (d) test administration, (e) examination scoring and performance, and (f) test security procedures. OPES and the Court Reporters Board of California exchanged follow-up emails and held meetings with NCRA representatives to clarify processes.

For the WKT, OPES found that the procedures used to establish and support the validity and defensibility of the components listed above appear to meet professional guidelines and technical standards outlined in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (2014) (*Standards*) and in California Business and Professions (B&P) Code § 139. Importantly, the WKT is linked to the 2018 NCRA OA, which provided the basis for the WKT examination outline or blueprint (see Table 3 on page 25).

For the SKT, however, OPES found that the procedures used to establish and support the validity and defensibility of the components listed above do not fully meet professional guidelines and technical standards. This is primarily because there is no OA linked to the SKT, and therefore no examination outline for the SKT. To fully comply with the *Standards* and B&P Code § 139, OPES recommends that NCRA conduct a comprehensive OA of the court reporter profession that can be linked to both the SKT and the WKT.

In addition to reviewing documents provided by NCRA, OPES convened a workshop of California licensed court reporters in May 2021. The court reporters served as subject matter experts (SMEs) and reviewed the SKT and WKT. The SMEs were selected to represent the profession in terms of geographic location and experience. The review had two purposes:

1. Compare the content of the WKT blueprint with the content of the examination outlines of the English Examination and the Professional Practice Examination, which both resulted from the *Occupational Analysis of the Certified Shorthand Reporter Profession* conducted by OPES in 2017 (California OA, 2017).
2. Compare the format of the SKT with the format of the Dictation Examination. Because the SKT is not linked to an OA, the SMEs could not compare the content of the SKT with the content of the examination outline of the Dictation Examination. Instead, the SMEs compared key features of the two examinations, including number of voices, test length, allowed errors, number of words transcribed, words per minute, and time allowed to transcribe notes. The goal of the format comparison was to determine whether the SKT adequately assesses the skills required for entry-level practice in California.

During this workshop, the SMEs first compared the formats of the SKT and the Dictation Examination. Next, the SMEs compared the examination content of the WKT with the tasks and knowledge statements from the California examination outlines. The SMEs performed a linkage study to identify whether there were areas of California court reporting practice that are not measured by the WKT.

The results of the format comparison indicated that the format of the SKT was not sufficiently parallel to the format of the Dictation Examination. For example, the Dictation Examination has 4-voice recording, and the SKT has 2-voice recording; the Dictation Examination has 10 minutes of continuous writing, and the SKT has 5 minutes of continuous writing; and the Dictation Examination requires a higher accuracy rate for passing than does the SKT. The SMEs concluded that the SKT does not adequately measure the skills required for entry-level court reporter practice in California, e.g., that entry-level court reporters in California should be tested using 4-voice recording and 10 minutes of continuous writing at a higher accuracy rate.

The results of the linkage study indicated that the tasks and knowledge statements included in the English Examination outline were fully assessed by the WKT; however, only 31% of the tasks and 41% of the knowledge statements included in the Professional Practice Examination outline were assessed by the WKT. As a result, the SMEs concluded that the WKT does not adequately assess the knowledge required for entry-level court reporter practice in California.

Based on the SMEs' findings regarding the SKT and WKT, OPES determined that the SKT and WKT are not sufficiently parallel to the California examinations to be considered for reciprocity at this time.

Given the findings regarding the SKT and WKT, OPES recommends that the Court Reporters Board of California (Board) continue to require the California Dictation, English, and

Professional Practice Examinations. OPES supports the Board's continued exploration of NCRA examinations and other examinations for reciprocity. OPES recommends that the Board conduct another review when NCRA completes the next Registered Professional Reporter OA.