

OVERVIEW OF THE

Hawaii Quality Assurance  
System

The HQAS offers qualified sign language interpreters who do not hold national certification an opportunity to obtain credentials valid within and recognized by the State of Hawaii.

The HQAS establishes interpreting and transliterating standards at various skill levels.

The HQAS consists of a written ethics test and a two-part interpreting/transliterating performance test. Materials, processes and training protocols were drawn from the Kansas Quality Assurance Screening, which has been shown to be a valid and reliable testing instrument.

The HQAS+H includes an optional local Hawaii Creole English competency test. The +H accompanies the standard HQAS and designed specifically to assess an interpreter's local language competency with both spoken and sign language styles common in Hawaii, sometimes referred to as Pidgin. Candidates may not take the +H separately or at a later date.

The HQAS is administered using local interpreter evaluators to ensure that test results accurately reflect the candidates' ability to interpret within our local community.

Functional Descriptions of the  
HQAS Credential Levels:

**Level V** is a master level interpreter-transliterator. This interpreter can function expressively and receptively in a majority of situations. A person holding a Level V credential should be pursuing national certification. While no restrictions are indicated, this interpreter demonstrates professional judgment in accepting assignments.

**HOAS V+H** is an interpreter-transliterator who satisfactorily met the requirements for local Hawaii language competency in addition to the requirements defined for the Level V credential.

**Level IV** is an accomplished interpreter-transliterator. This interpreter can function expressively and receptively in most complex and technical situations. A Level IV interpreter may accept assignments for one-on-one and group sessions, as well as workshops and platform assignments. This interpreter is qualified for most medical and dental appointments, and limited legal interpreting including client/lawyer meetings, and traffic or small claims court.

A Level IV interpreter should be pursuing continuing professional education or national certification. A Level IV interpreter should avoid critical medical situations, criminal court and civil court jury trials.

**HOAS IV+H** is an interpreter-transliterator who satisfactorily met the requirements for local Hawaii language competency in addition to the requirements defined for the Level IV credential.

**Level III** is an intermediate level interpreter-transliterator. Level III is the lowest level receiving a credential as a qualified interpreter. This interpreter may accept assignments for many group sessions and workshops and most one-on-one situations.

A Level III interpreter should be actively involved in professional development efforts.

An interpreter holding a Level III credential should not accept assignments for legal, mental health, or critical medical situations.

**HOAS III+H** is an interpreter-transliterator who satisfactorily met the requirements for local Hawaii language competency in addition to the requirements defined for the Level III credential.

**Level II** is an entry-level communication assistant. The Level II communication assistant will be able to interpret during orientation sessions and basic tutoring sessions. A Level II communication assistant may accept assignments where communication can be interpreted consecutively in one on one situations, limited group sessions and workshops; and may accept limited platform assignments when accompanied and supervised by a qualified mentor.

A person holding a Level II credential should not accept assignments for legal, mental health, medical, employment interviews or critical situations of any nature.

**HOAS II+H** is an interpreter-transliterator who satisfactorily met the requirements for local Hawaii language competency in addition to the requirements defined for the Level II credential.

**Level I** is a beginner level candidate. A Level I candidate is not considered qualified for professional assignments. This candidate may provide limited interpreting in low risk situations as an unpaid apprentice when accompanied by a qualified mentor. Further professional development is required prior to reevaluation.

(No credential is issued.)

## Test Process:

A primary goal of the HQAS/HQAS+H is to increase the number of certified and credentialed interpreters available to consumers and agencies in Hawaii.

The HQAS/HQAS+H includes a pre-test workshop to help candidates prepare for the performance test environment. This workshop is offered the day before performance test. All candidates are required to participate in the pre-test workshop.

After the workshop and candidates pass the written ethics test consisting of 50 questions, the performance test will be held on the next day. In the event the candidate fails the required written ethics test, the candidate may retake the written ethics test at the next pre-test workshop.

The HQAS performance test is conducted on videotape in two parts: interpreting and transliterating. Each part of performance test includes sign-to-voice, voice-to-sign, and interactive sections.

The HQAS+H performance test is conducted on videotape. The performance test includes ASL to English/Pidgin and Pidgin to ASL.

Performance tests are scored by a team of trained evaluators including master level interpreters, hearing individuals with experience in teaching English and/or public speaking, and Deaf individuals fluent in American Sign Language.

Results are returned to candidates in 10 - 12 weeks and include a profile that shows their strengths and weaknesses.



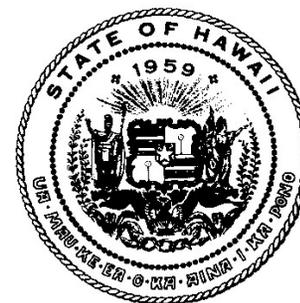
## HQAS Interpreter Code of Ethics

- ✓ The interpreter/transliterator safeguards the confidentiality of all assignment-related information.
- ✓ The interpreter/transliterator shall be dedicated to providing competent interpreting services in a manner befitting a professional.
- ✓ The interpreter/transliterator conveys the content and affect of the communication transmitted using the language most easily understood by the persons involved in the communication/transaction.
- ✓ The interpreter/transliterator uses discretion in accepting assignments based upon language competency and the capacity to maintain impartiality with regard to the setting and/or consumers involved.
- ✓ The interpreter/transliterator should not counsel nor interject personal opinion, but may exercise professional judgement in assessing whether or not communication is being understood and may also inform the consumers involved of available resources when and where it is appropriate.
- ✓ The interpreter/transliterator should pursue further knowledge and maintain competency in interpreting/transliterating skills.
- ✓ The interpreter/transliterator should pursue compensation for services in a professional and reasonable manner.
- ✓ The interpreter/transliterator will strive to maintain the highest professional standards in compliance with the Code of Ethics.

Adopted by the  
Disability and Communication Access Board  
October 19, 2000



# Hawaii Quality Assurance System



Disability and Communication Access Board  
919 Ala Moana Blvd. Room 101  
Honolulu, Hi 96814

(808) 447-1397, Tel/VP  
(808) 586-8121, Tel/TTY  
(808) 586-8129, Fax

<http://www.hawaii.gov/health/dcab>  
kristine.pagano@doh.hawaii.gov  
dcab@doh.hawaii.gov

Neil Abercrombie, Governor  
Loretta J. Fuddy, Director of Health