Oral Skills and Reading Proficiency in the Latin Curriculum
Plan of Oral Exam for Certifying Latin Teachers[1]

Part I. Listening Comprehension

A) dictātiō

The candidate will hear a taped passage of Latin read three times (once at normal speed, then slowly, and finally at normal speed again) and will be asked to transcribe the passage on the answer sheet provided.

Exam preparation guidelines: A passage of original Latin prose 25 words long. No Greek names should be used.

B) lēctiō

The candidate will hear a taped passage of Latin read three times (once at normal speed, then slowly, and finally at normal speed again) and will be asked to answer five multiple-choice questions on the passage.

Exam preparation guidelines: An easy narrative passage of moderate length (10-20 lines). The passage does not need to be original Latin, but should use classical Latin grammar and vocabulary. Five multiple-choice comprehension questions written in English to test aural comprehension of the passage.

Part II. Oral Interview

A) Prepared Poetry Recitation

The candidate will be asked to read aloud a short prepared passage of Latin poetry. The recitation will be evaluated based on communicative competence (intelligibility), correct pronunciation of vowels and consonants, proper stress (word accent), and rhythm.

Exam preparation guidelines: A passage of original hexameter verse 80-100 words long. Macrons should be marked.

B) Unseen Prose Recitation

The candidate will be asked to read aloud a short passage of narrative prose in Latin which he or she will be given thirty minutes prior to the oral interview. The recitation will be evaluated as explained in (A) above.

Exam preparation guidelines: A readily-comprehensible passage of narrative prose 80-100 words long. The passage does not need to be original Latin, but should use classical Latin grammar and vocabulary. Macrons should be marked.

---

[1] 1989. TCA Oral Latin Committee. *This was a proposal for a possible oral exam if certification required it. The oral exam, for better or worse, was waived for Latin. However, this document is an excellent guide of what a well-trained Latin teacher should be able to do.*

C) Interrogata

The candidate will ask the examiner five comprehension questions in Latin based on the passage read for (B) above, using at least five different question words. Then, the examiner will ask five questions, which the candidate will answer. Two attempts to answer each question will be allowed.

Exam preparation guidelines: A set of sample comprehension questions (15-20), using a variety of question words, would be prepared over the IIB passage. This set of sample questions will be for the examiner to use during the oral interview.

Part IIA. Oral Reading – Poetry. Points will be given as follows:

Communicative Competense (Phrasing and Expression) 0   30   45   60
Mechanics of Pronunciation[2]
          Vowel quality and quantity
          Consonant quality
          Rhythm & meter[3]   40 points total

Part IIB. Oral Reading – Prose. Points will be given as follows:

Communicative Competense (Phrasing and Expression) 0   30   45   60
Mechanics of Pronunciation
          Vowel quality and quantity
          Consonant quality
          Word Accent (Rhythm)   40 points total

For any word with one or more errors in vowel quality, consonant quality, or rhythm and meter, ½ point will be deducted from the 40 point total.

For repeated, specific errors, such as:
- failure to pronounce double consonants
- mispronunciation of "r" or of "gn"
- repeated mispronunciation of a single word (such as anglicizing *Hercules* or mangling *spelunca*)
- incorrect word accent on imperfect tense verbs (e.g. *haˈbēbat* rather than *habēˈbat*)
- failure to elide (poetry only)

a maximum of 1 point total will be deducted, regardless of how many times a specific error is repeated. *Note*: Whether to count an error in a word as one of a set of repeated, specific errors or as an isolated error will be within the discretion of the graders of the exam.

---

[2] The recommendations of W.S. Allen, *Vox Latina*, Cambridge University Press will be used as the standard for correct pronunciation.

[3] Owing to the diversity of scholarly opinion as to how dactylic hexameter should be interpretted orally, the present examination will be graded according to the following guidelines:
1. Both syllable quantity and natural word accent must be observed.
2. In view of the controversy surrounding the notion of "ictus," it will not figure into the grading of the exam.