How to Take an NCRA Skills Test

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1. Purchase

1) Purchase your online skills test at NCRA.org/testing.
2) Make sure your equipment meets the minimum technical requirements.

2. Prepare

Log in to Realtime Coach™ (RTC)

Go to myrealtimecoach.com, and log in, following the instructions in your confirmation email. The email contains your log in information for the NCRA tests. Please do not create a new account. If you create a new account, it will not have your NCRA tests.

NOTE: If you already have an RTC username, but it’s not your NCRA member number, you’ll have a second RTC login created for testing with your NCRA number. If you would rather have a single login for practice and testing, please contact RTC with your NCRA member number.

Purchase NCRA Cert Prep (Optional)

To purchase NCRA Cert Prep, click Play > Certification Prep.

Get ready to test

1) Connect your writer to your computer.
2) Turn on your writer.
3) Place your writer in Test Mode. If you are unsure how to do this, contact the manufacturer.
4) Make sure your external web cam is connected and functioning.
5) Make sure your microphone is connected and functioning.
6) Plug your headphones in, and make sure they're functioning (Practice and test with the same headphones).
7) Open your CAT software, and start a new translation.
8) In Test > NCRA Certification Test Center, click a practice test thumbnail.

Practice the Testing Process

1) Review the word list and enter the words into your job dictionary.
2) Click Play to start the one-minute warm-up, and write the warm-up.
3) Toggle to your CAT file, and write a few strokes to confirm that you still have a realtime feed from your writer.
4) Go to RTC. Click Play to start the test, and write the test. (NOTE: setting up a realtime feed to RTC is not needed, and is therefore optional.)
5) Go back to your CAT file, and close it (saving, if prompted).
6) Go to RTC. Click Attach Notes, and select your steno notes file.
7) If you are taking a transcription test (RPR or RMR), go back to your CAT software. Transcribe your test, and close your transcript (saving if prompted). If you are taking a realtime test (CRR, CRC), skip this step.
8) Go to RTC. Click Attach Transcript, and select your transcript file.
9) Go back to your CAT software. Re-open your CAT file. Highlight only the exam portion of your final transcript (no warm-up text, headers, footers, page numbers, etc.), and press CTRL+C to copy your transcript.

CaseCATalyst Users:
When copying and pasting, unconfirmed EZ Choice conflicts will appear in the original conflict form. Once you confirm an EZ Choice selected conflict, it will be pasted as normal text. To confirm all the EZ Choice selected conflicts at one time, use Resolve All Chosen Conflicts from the Special Edit menu.

StenoCAT® Users:
Before copy/pasting, be sure to:
- Accept conflicts by going to Tools > Accept Conflicts
- Accept fields by going to Tools > Accept Defined Fields

10) Go to RTC. Click in the My Transcript box, and press CTRL+V to paste your final transcript.
11) At the end of a real test, you will be able to click “Get Estimated Score” to receive your preliminary score.

Schedule a Proctored Practice
1) Log in to myRealtimeCoach.com.
2) Click Test > NCRA Certification Test Center.
3) Click Schedule/Take a Proctored Practice.
4) A new browser tab will load ProctorU.com. If you have no other tests scheduled, you will be prompted to click New Exam.
5) Click on New Exam to schedule your practice test.
6) Select your desired skills test from the Exam dropdown menu. Make sure it says Practice Test, not one with – REAL TEST in its name.
7) Select your preferred date.
8) Select your preferred time.
9) After scheduling your exam, you will see a countdown for your scheduled exam time.
10) Make sure you take your proctored practice test in the same environment and using the same equipment as you plan for your actual test in order to verify you meet the minimum technical requirements.
11) Remember that while you may do practice tests as many times as you would like without a proctor, you will have no more than two practice opportunities with a proctor. We recommend you do not schedule your proctored practice and actual exam back-to-back should you encounter any issues with your equipment that need to be addressed before your actual exam. You should successfully complete a proctored practice exam before taking your actual exam.

Take a Proctored Practice Test
1) On the day of your practice test, click Schedule/Take a Proctored Practice Test.
2) A new browser tab will load ProctorU.com. Note the countdown timer at the bottom of the My Exams page.
3) At the appointment time, click Take it Now!
4) Download and run the ProctorU applet.
5) Once you have connected your screen to the proctor, the proctor connects the two-way video and audio connection.  
6) As prompted by the proctor, show your photo ID.  
7) As prompted by the proctor, take your authentication quiz. If this is your first time testing, you will also be asked to leave a keystroke sample. If you have done this step before, the authentication quiz will be omitted and only the *keystroke recognition will be administered. 
8) As prompted by the proctor, pan your camera to show your testing area. 
9) After checking your photo ID and the security of your testing environment, your proctor will guide you back to this NCRA Certification Test Center to take your test. 
10) Click the icon to load your practice test, and take the practice test with the proctor.

* The keystroke biometric is a behavioral biometric of that uses the manner and rhythm in which an individual types characters on a keyboard or keypad. The keystroke rhythms of a user are measured to develop a unique biometric template of the user's typing pattern for future authentication.

3. Test

Schedule Your Test

1) Log in to myRealtimeCoach.com.
2) Click Test > NCRA Certification Test Center.
3) Check the box under Step 1. Purchase and Step 3. Test.
4) Click Schedule my Test. A new browser tab will load ProctorU.com.
5) Click New Exam, and schedule your actual test just as you did your practice test.  

** Please allow sufficient time to complete your test. NCRA recommends two hours for transcription tests and one hour for realtime tests. The authentication process and camera equipment check with a proctor will take approximately 30 minutes before you can start your test. You should allow up to two hours for a transcription exam or an hour for a realtime exam.

Get ready to test

1) Connect your writer to your computer.  
2) Turn on your writer.  
3) Place your writer in Test Mode (if available). If you are unsure how to do this, contact the manufacturer. 
4) Temporarily disable any automatic cloud backup or storage features within your CAT software. Instructions for CaseCATalyst Users Disabling Cloud Backup 
5) Make sure your external web cam is connected and functioning.  
6) Make sure your microphone is connected and functioning.  
7) Plug in your headphones, and make sure they work (practice and test with same headphones).  
8) Open your CAT software, and start a new translation.
9) Important note about the proctor process:

During each appointment, you will interact with multiple proctors. Your first proctor will launch your exam session by verifying your identity and checking your equipment, and may transfer you to a technician if there are any issues. The second proctor will watch the session while you take your exam. Please do not be alarmed when you submit your exam and the proctor is a different individual.

Take Your Test

1) Log in to myRealtimeCoach.com.  
2) Click Test > NCRA Certification Test Center.
3) **Check the box** under Step 1. Purchase and Step 3. Test.
4) Click **Take my Test**, and complete the testing process, just as you've practiced, with a proctor.

**After the Test**

5) Allow proctor to clear your computer clipboard.
6) Delete all test files from your writer.
7) Delete all test files from your CAT software and computer (including Recycle Bin and any Cloud backup).
8) Shred any test documents you printed, including paper notes.
9) Receive your certified final score from NCRA within seven business days of taking your exam.

### Appendix A: Technical Requirements

**Computer, Web Browser, and Internet Connection:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Recommended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Screen Resolution</strong></td>
<td>640x480 resolution</td>
<td>1280x720 resolution (or more)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating System</strong></td>
<td>Windows Vista</td>
<td>Windows 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RAM</strong></td>
<td>1024 MB</td>
<td>2GB (or more)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Web Browser</strong></td>
<td>Chrome (latest), Firefox (latest)</td>
<td>Chrome (latest), Firefox (latest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internet Download Speed</strong></td>
<td>.768 Mbps</td>
<td>1.5 Mbps (or more)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internet Upload Speed</strong></td>
<td>.384 Mbps</td>
<td>1 Mbps (or more)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note: If you are testing with a Mac you must contact testing@ncra.org as soon as you register for special instructions.**

**Webcam:**

Candidates will be required to present a full view of their face while testing. NCRA requires an external webcam for testing. Built-in webcams on laptops or monitors will not be allowed. Cameras with bendable necks or other external web cameras are recommended, so the proctor can ask the candidate to move the camera around at different angles. External web cameras are readily available for purchase online or in stores.

**Other Requirements:**

1) Test your equipment
2) Headphones (to connect to your computer and listen to the test). Bluetooth headphones are NOT allowed.
3) Microphone (your computer and/or web camera might have a built-in microphone).
4) Shredder and printer (RPR and RMR exams only, for those using paper notes or wishing to print anything out).

**Hardware and Software Not Supported:**

1) Google Chromebooks
2) Android tablets (Nexus 7, etc.)
3) iOS tablets (iPad, iPad mini, etc.)
4) Windows 10 in S mode
5) Microsoft Surface RT
6) Linux operating systems

**ProctorU System Check**

Once you feel your setup meets the minimum technical requirements detailed in this section, please perform the ProctorU System Check.

**Appendix B: Attaching Files**

Attaching your notes and transcript files is similar to attaching a photo to an email. Do the following:

1) In RTC, click **Attach Notes** or **Attach Transcript**.
2) Navigate to the place on your computer where the file is saved and select your file.
3) Click **Open**.

**NOTE:** You will have **three minutes** to attach your notes file (watch the timer). This is plenty of time if you know where your file is. Make sure you are comfortable with finding your files before test day.

For realtime tests (CRR, and CRC), you will have **five minutes** to upload your transcript file. For transcription tests (RPR and RMR) you will have **75 minutes** to transcribe and upload your transcript file.

Each CAT program has a default location where it saves your notes and transcript files, as follows:

- **CaseCATalyst**
  - Default location: C: drive > CAT4 > USR > [your name].
  - Notes file: ends in .sgstn
  - Transcript file: ends in .sgngl

- **DigitalCAT**:
  - Default location: C: drive > Documents > digitalCAT > Transcripts.
  - Notes file: ends in .trn
  - Transcript file: ends in .trn

**NOTE:** Your transcript file must have a different name than your notes file.

- **Eclipse**:
  - Default location: C: drive > Users > My Documents > Eclipse > [your name] > [your name].
  - Notes file: ends in .not
  - Transcript file: ends in .ecl

- **Winner (ProCAT)**:
  - Default location: C: drive > Winner > [your user]
  - Notes file: ends in .stn
  - Transcript file: ends in .trp

- **StenoCAT®**:
  - Default location: C: drive > My Documents > [USERNAME] > JOBS
  - Notes file: ends in .trn
  - Transcript file: ends in .trn

**NOTE:** Your transcript file must have a different name than your notes file.
• **Plover:** Before scheduling your test, please contact testing@ncra.org for special accommodations.

## Appendix C: Detailed Test Process (with Screen Shots)

### Schedule Your Test

1) Log in to myRealtimeCoach.com.
2) Click **Test > NCRA Certification Test Center.**
3) **Check the box** under Step 1. Purchase and Step 3. Test.
4) Click **Schedule my Test.** (Or click **Schedule/Take a Proctored Practice** for a practice test.) Both will go to the same scheduling page, so make sure you select the correct test/practice test.

![NCRA Certification Test Center](image)

5) A new browser tab will load **ProctorU.com.** If you have no other tests scheduled, you will select **Schedule New Session.**

**Important Note:** During each appointment, you will interact with multiple proctors. Your first proctor will launch your exam session by verifying your identity and checking your equipment, and may transfer you to a technician if there are any issues. The second proctor will watch the session while you take your exam. Please do not be alarmed when you submit your exam and the proctor is a different individual.
7) Confirm the institution (NCRA), select **Online Testing**, select the test you wish to take (makes sure to select the correct test/practice test), and click the **Find Session** button.

8) Select a **date and time**.
9) Select from the list of available days/times closest to your preference.

10) Click the **Schedule** button to confirm the date/time:
11) Receive confirmation of date/time:

Remember that while you may do practice tests as many times as you would like without a proctor, you will have no more than two practice opportunities with a proctor. You may wish to take this opportunity to Test Your Equipment prior to your proctored practice or test.
Take a Test

1) On the day of your test, click Take my Test. (For a practice test, click Schedule/Take a Proctored Practice.)
2) Check the box under Step 1. Purchase and Step 3. Test.
3) Download and run the ProctorU applet.
4) Here is the downloaded applet, which connects your screen to the proctor.

5) Once you have connected your screen to the proctor, the proctor connects the two-way video and audio connection.

6) As prompted by the proctor, show your photo ID. A photo of your face is kept on file to help authenticate your identity.

7) As prompted by the proctor, take your authentication quiz. Questions are based on publicly available information about you. If this is your first time testing, you will also be asked to leave a keystroke sample. If you have done this step before, the authentication quiz will be omitted and only the keystroke recognition will be administered.
As prompted by the proctor, pan your camera to show your testing area.

8) After checking your photo ID and the security of your testing environment, your proctor will guide you back to this NCRA Certification Test Center to take your test.

9) Click the appropriate icon to load your test or practice test, and take the test with the proctor.

Get Ready to Test

1) Connect your writer to your computer.
2) Turn on your writer.
3) Place your writer in Test Mode. If you are unsure how to do this, contact the manufacturer.
4) Make sure your external web cam is connected and functioning.
5) Make sure your microphone is connected and functioning.
6) Plug in your headphones, and make sure they work (practice and test with same headphones).
7) Open your CAT software, and start a new translation.
8) In **Test > NCRA Certification Test Center**, click on the appropriate test or practice test.

**Take Your Test**

1) Review the word list and enter the words into your job dictionary.

2) Click **Play** to start the one-minute warm-up, and write the warm-up.

3) Toggle to your CAT file, and write a few strokes to confirm that you still have a realtime feed from your writer.

4) Go to RTC. When you are ready, click **Play** to start the test, and write the test. **(NOTE:** setting up a realtime feed to RTC is not needed, and is therefore optional.)
5) Go back to your CAT file, and close it (saving, if prompted).

6) Go to RTC, and click Attach Notes. **NOTE:** You must attach your notes before your three-minute timer finishes counting down.

Navigate to the place on your computer where you’ve just saved your CAT file. Select your steno notes file, then select Open.
You’ll see a message in RTC indicating that your notes file has been successfully attached. If you accidentally selected the wrong file, click the Re-Attach link, and attach the correct file.

7) If you are taking a transcription test (RPR or RMR), go back to your CAT software. Transcribe your test, and close your transcript (saving if prompted). If you are taking a realtime test (CRR, CRC), skip this step.

8) Go to RTC. Click Attach Transcript, and select your transcript file.

9) Go back to your CAT software. Re-open your CAT file. Highlight only the exam portion of your final transcript (no warm-up text, headers, footers, page numbers, etc.), and press CTRL+C to copy your transcript.

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StenoCAT® Users:
Before copy/pasting, be sure and:
• Accept conflicts by going to Tools > Accept Conflicts
• Accept fields by going to Tools > Accept Defined Fields

10) Go to RTC. Click in the RTC My Transcript box, and press CTRL+V to paste your final transcript.

11) Click Get Estimated Score.

After the Test

1) Allow proctor to clear your computer clipboard.
2) Delete all test files from your writer.
3) Delete all test files from your CAT software and computer (including Recycle Bin).
4) Shred any test documents you printed, including paper notes.
5) Receive your certified final score from NCRA via email within seven business days of taking your exam.