



GUIDELINES: SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETER ACCREDITATION TESTING

Testing for simultaneous interpreter accreditation takes place on an ad hoc basis in different centres as the need arises. Candidates are required to attend the testing at a particular centre and time.

SATI simultaneous interpreting accreditation is tested through a practical interpreting session. A real-life situation is obviously not possible, but the committee tries to mimic the real situation as closely as possible. The system is refined as and when possible, depending on resources and technological advances.

The test is administered by a SATI representative.

Procedure

- Candidates are tested on the basis of a generalised non-specialist text. The subject matter will vary. Candidates are given the title or subject matter of the text when final details for the testing session are conveyed. They do not see the text beforehand and are not given any other background information.
- The testing session is generally conducted in a meeting room or board room, not in an interpreting booth. There will generally only be one or two other people in the room, for monitoring and equipment operation.
- The candidate sits at a table either with a mike in front of them or using a lapel mike.
- A sound recording of the relevant text is played to the candidate through a laptop computer. The recordings currently used have generally been recorded specially for SATI testing purposes and are not taken from live situations. The aim is in time to use recordings made in situ at conferences or on other occasions.
- The candidate interprets into the mike and the interpreting is recorded onto an MP3 player.
- The interpreting text is 10 to 15 minutes in length.
- After the session, the recording of the candidate's interpreting is integrated with the source recording, copied onto CD and sent to two or more exam markers for assessment. The marking is done on a double-blind basis: candidates are not identified and markers are unknown to one another.
- The markers assess the interpreter's performance on the basis of the criteria listed below.
- Markers are required to give substantiated reasons for failures.
- If the two markers disagree in their result, the recording will be sent to a third marker for a final decision.
- Candidates will be informed whether they have passed or failed and will be given limited feedback.
- Since SATI is reliant on markers' goodwill, the assessment phase unfortunately takes some time. Candidates should expect to wait up to eight weeks for their results. The results and brief feedback are forwarded to the candidate by the SATI office as soon as they are available.

In certain instances assessment of candidates' performance may be done on the spot by a panel of experts. This is, however, not common, except in the case of Sign Language interpreting. Even when the assessment is done on the spot, candidates will not be informed of the outcome at that time.

As in the case of written accreditation exams, it is important that to bear in mind that this examination is intended to test **COMPETENCE**, not potential. Markers take this into account when assessing candidates. Passing a candidate indicates to clients that they are capable of high-quality conference interpreting. Passing a candidate who is not up to scratch will not only damage their reputation but also call the Institute's accreditation system into disrepute. The final test in all accreditation exams is: Would you as a client be satisfied and happy to pay for work of this quality?

Criteria

The following are the criteria according to which candidates' performance is assessed:

1. **ACCURACY AND COHERENCE OF MESSAGE** (sense conveyed fully, names, dates, figures, etc. transferred accurately, ability to deverbilise the message, i.e. not to interpret literally)
2. **TL VOCABULARY AND REGISTER** (vocabulary, terminology, register appropriate to subject matter)
3. **TL GRAMMAR, IDIOM AND PURITY** (tenses, concord, syntax, use of prepositions of mother-tongue-speaker quality)
4. **INTERPRETING TECHNIQUE** (fluency of delivery, e.g. little or no hesitation or backtracking; ability to vary *decalage* ("following distance"); voice quality, e.g. voice and breath control, distance from microphone; booth behaviour, e.g. professional handling of documents and equipment, no irritating habits)

Markers are required to give reasons for their findings. A pass mark of 80% on each criterion applies to interpreter accreditation.