



**ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES INTERPRETES DE CONFERENCE
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONFERENCE INTERPRETERS**

10, avenue de Sécheron
CH-1202 Genève
Tel: +41 22 908 15 40
Fax: +41 22 732 41 51
E-mail: aiic@compuserve.com
Internet: <http://www.aiic.net>

ADVICE TO STUDENTS WISHING TO BECOME{PRIVATE } CONFERENCE INTERPRETERS

We live in an age of communications. International contacts are increasing, and all over the world people from different backgrounds and cultures, speaking different languages, meet increasingly often to discuss issues of all kinds — economic, political, legal, cultural, technical. For true communication to exist, people must be able to make their points in their own language, secure in the knowledge that not only can they be understood but also that they will be able to understand the statements made by others.

Conference interpreters are needed for this to happen. Their role is to act as a cross-cultural link, facilitating multilingual communication.

But what exactly is conference interpretation? How is it practised? How does one become an interpreter? These are some of the questions which this booklet sets out to answer.

1. What is conference interpretation?

To interpret a speech is not to translate it word for word. To interpret a speech from its source language is to transfer its semantic, connotative and aesthetic content into another language, using the lexical, syntactic and stylistic resources of the second, or "target" language for that purpose. To interpret is first and foremost to understand the intended message perfectly. It can then be "detached" from the words used to convey it in the original and reconstituted, in all its subtlety, in words of the target language. Interpreting is a constant to-ing and fro-ing between different ways of thinking and cultural universes.

There are two modes of interpreting:

- simultaneous interpretation: the interpreter sits in a booth, in front of a microphone, listens through headphones to the incoming message in the source language and communicates it over the microphone to whoever is listening in the target language. In other words, simultaneous interpretation is an intensive information processing task and in a six-hour working day the interpreter will "process" the equivalent of about 65 typewritten pages.
- consecutive interpretation: the interpreter sits at the conference table with the delegates, listening to whomever is speaking in the source language and making notes as the speech progresses. When the speaker has finished, the interpreter reproduces (consecutively) the message in the target language, in its entirety and as though s/he were making the original speech.

Whereas simultaneous interpretation is advisable for meetings in which a number of languages are spoken and with a large number of participants or in the media, consecutive interpretation is often more suitable for smaller meetings which are technical or confidential, or for formal occasions such as banquets and official visits, where two or a maximum of three languages are being used.

2. The interpreter's professional status

A conference interpreter can be self-employed (free lance) or employed as a permanent or staff interpreter by a national or international organization in the public or the private sector. There are pros and cons to each of these professional statuses.

Depending on language combination, a freelance has considerable freedom of choice and greater mobility: the interpreter's working life can be organized according to preference, accepting or refusing offers of work. Certain language combinations may involve more travel than others. As a freelance, the interpreter works for a range of organizations, public and private, is likely to cover a wide variety of topics and to come into contact with very diverse groups. An interpreter's reputation rests on the quality of her/his work. Such a reputation takes a number of years to establish but once solidly established, colleagues and organizations will call on that person.

A very important consideration in any freelance's career is the choice of location from which the interpreter operates, which in turn will depend on her/his language combination. The large international organizations tend increasingly to recruit locally — at a time of tight budgets, costs, including travel allowances, must be contained. So an interpreter with a language combination of interest to the European Union will have more chance of getting work if based in Brussels than if located in Geneva or Rome.

The staff interpreter, on the other hand, has a steady job and the various benefits that go with it. Having only one employer s/he becomes part of a group and can become involved in the organization's activities. Life as a staff interpreter is more predictable.

This notwithstanding, it should be clearly understood that being a freelance or a staff interpreter is not simply a matter of choice. The great majority of conference interpreters work free lance; becoming a staff or permanent interpreter depends on a variety of factors, language combination being one. Even so, it is a fact that interpreters may and do change status — permanents become freelancers and vice versa. In the interpreting teams of international organizations, the two work side by side without distinction, a fact that is a defining feature of the profession. Both kinds of interpreters share the same responsibility, regardless of status, seniority or gender.

3. Conference interpreting and working languages

On the preceding pages the term "language combination" has been used several times. The term refers to the languages an interpreter uses professionally. These 'working' languages can be further subdivided into 'active' and 'passive' languages. Below a fuller description is provided of the different terms, following the aiic classification of A, B and C languages.

Active languages:

Active languages are those languages into which the interpreter works.

An active language can be one of two kinds:

A language: the interpreter's mother tongue (or another language strictly equivalent to a mother tongue), into which s/he interprets from all other working languages, generally in the two modes of interpretation, simultaneous and consecutive. aiic members are expected to have at least one A language.

B language: a language into which the interpreter works from one or more of her/his other languages and which, although not a mother tongue, is a language of which s/he has perfect command. Some interpreters work into B languages in only one of the two modes of interpretation.

In principle, an interpreter's main active language is the mother tongue - the language in which the interpreter was formally educated and feels completely at ease. An active language which is not the interpreter's mother tongue can only be acquired after years of hard work and frequent stays in a country of that language. Usually, however, the second active language reaches a satisfactory standard only after many years of practice and is more suited to interpretation of technical discussions where lexical accuracy is more important than style or very discrete shades of meaning. It is customary only to work into the second active language out of the mother tongue.

The very rare case of true bilinguals, i.e. people whose personal circumstances have resulted in their having two "mother tongues", is the exception that proves the rule. Bilingual interpreters are much in demand, especially if they can offer a third language.

Passive languages:

Passive languages are those languages of which the interpreter has complete understanding and from which s/he interprets. These are what interpreters call their C languages, according to aiic classification.

Working languages and language combinations

Using the information provided above as a basis, let us take an example of an interpreter with three working languages — English, French and Russian. By classifying them as A, B and C languages respectively we have that interpreter's language combination. This means that this particular interpreter may be employed to work from Russian and French into English, as well as from English into French.

The concept of 'working language' also obtains for international organizations and meetings or similar events in which participants from different countries come together. This second meaning of the term designates the languages in which the organization or body conducts its business, and hence, the languages which delegates or participants use to communicate.

4. The market: useful active and passive languages

4.1. Language combinations

From a practical point of view, what are the useful active and passive languages?

There is no absolute, definitive answer to this question. The situation is constantly changing and very often the response will depend upon where the interpreter is based and what areas s/he chooses to work in. Some languages, while not being very sought after in international conferences, may be useful for visiting delegations or negotiations, either at government or corporate level.

This general remark notwithstanding, certain patterns and trends can be discerned, both concerning language combinations and institutional and private markets.

4.1.1. Active languages

In Western Europe, English, French and German are much in demand in both the governmental and non-governmental sectors. In the European Union institutions, there are 11 official languages (the above three, plus Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish), and some combinations of these 11 languages are particularly sought after. Other language combinations such as French and English into Spanish, Portuguese or Italian are of less interest, unless the interpreter can also offer a third, preferably Germanic, passive language.

Looked at from a global viewpoint the languages for which there is substantial demand seem to be the following (shown in alphabetical order and not in order of decreasing importance): Arabic, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian and Spanish. Chinese is becoming increasingly important but only very few non-Chinese interpreters have it as a working language. The same is true of Japanese, a language very much in demand but only used as an active language by Japanese interpreters. To this should be added the fact that in quite a few countries (particularly those with emerging economies) a bilingual market has sprung up around the national language, for the main part in combination with English.

4.1.2. Passive languages

In a highly competitive market situation, a knowledge of a lesser-known language is likely to improve an interpreter's prospects of getting work. This is particularly true of the European institutions with regard to Portuguese, Greek, Dutch, and the Scandinavian languages.

In the case of some conference languages, such as Arabic, Chinese and Japanese, interpreters working into that language also provide the "return" into, as a general rule, English or French ("return" means that the interpreter works not only into her/his active language but also back from that language into another from the same booth). They must therefore be able to work both ways. For that reason there is currently very little demand for these languages as purely passive languages.

It need hardly be added that nowadays English is to all intents and purposes a must as a working language for any interpreter. At international congresses, whether organized by international institutions or other bodies, it is the means of expression used by a good many of the participants, either as a mother tongue or as a medium of expression.

4.1.3. Recent trends concerning working languages

It goes without saying that trends in the use of working languages are inevitably determined by political and economic developments in a continually changing world. By way of illustration, with the opening up of Central and Eastern Europe, the number of intergovernmental conferences and private congresses using the languages of that part of the world has risen. Both NATO and the OECD, for example, recruit interpreters with Russian and when organizations like the Council of Europe meet in one of the countries of Central Europe, a booth covering the language of that country is normally provided.

4.2. The market for interpreting

How large, in terms of interpretation "volume", are the different segments of the interpreting market? On the basis of what has already been said, it will be readily understood that it is again difficult to provide an exact and valid answer to this question that will not soon be outdated. The situation changes according to countries and markets. For instance, the UN system is currently in the throes of a fairly serious crisis; the European institutions have ever-

changing needs; private or non-governmental markets in Europe are subject to the same vagaries as the economic system as a whole. These general points should be borne in mind when reading the following pages.

Some indication of the present situation is set out below, the languages being shown in alphabetical order and not in order of importance — which would be difficult to establish anyway, particularly if attempting to discriminate between active and passive use of any given language.

4.2.1. Institutional markets/international organizations

There follows a necessarily limited list of large international organizations, grouped together by continent. Each institution is followed by a list of its official languages. Not all of those languages are necessarily used at all meetings. Another point to be borne in mind is that international organizations are grouped into larger “systems” i.e. the UN system, the co-ordinated institutions sector, the European Union institutions. Each system has its own official languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish in the case of the UNO; English and French in the coordinated institutions (CE, ESA, OECD, NATO, WEU); Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish for the European Union institutions.

AFRICA:	
ADB (African Development Bank), Abidjan	
<i>English, French</i>	
ECA (Economic Commission for Africa), Addis-Ababa	<i>UNO</i>
<i>English, French (occasionally Spanish)</i>	
HABITAT (United Nations Division for Human Habitat), Nairobi	<i>UNO</i>
<i>Arabic, English, French, Russian, Spanish</i>	
OAU (Organization of African Unity), Addis-Ababa	
<i>Arabic, English, French</i>	
UNEP (United Nations Environment Program), Nairobi	<i>UNO</i>
<i>Arabic, English, French, Russian, Spanish</i>	
AMERICAS:	
ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), Santiago de Chile	<i>UNO</i>
<i>English, French, Spanish</i>	
IADB (Interamerican Development Bank), Washington	
<i>English, French, Portuguese, Spanish</i>	
ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization), Montreal	
<i>English, French, Russian, Spanish (also Arabic and Chinese)</i>	
IMF (International Monetary Fund), Washington	
<i>Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish</i>	

INTELSAT (International Telecommunications Satellite Organization), Washington <i>English, French, Spanish</i>	
OAS (Organization of American States), Washington <i>English, French, Portuguese, Spanish</i>	
PAHO (Pan American Health Organization), Washington <i>English, Spanish (also French and Portuguese)</i>	
UNO (United Nations Organization), New York <i>Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish</i>	
ASIA:	
ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), Bangkok <i>Chinese, English, French, Russian</i>	<i>UNO</i>
SPC (South Pacific Commission), Noumea <i>English, French</i>	
EUROPE:	
CE (Council of Europe), Strasbourg <i>English, French (sometimes Dutch, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish and, occasionally, Eastern European languages)</i>	<i>Coordinated institutions</i>
CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research), Geneva <i>English, French</i>	
CEU (Commission of the European Union), Brussels <i>Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish</i>	<i>EU</i>
CICR (International Red Cross Committee), Geneva <i>French (Arabic, English, Farsi, German, Spanish)</i>	
ECJ (European Court of Justice), Luxembourg <i>Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish</i>	<i>EU</i>
EP (European Parliament), Luxembourg, Brussels and Strasbourg <i>Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish</i>	<i>EU</i>
EPO (European Patent Office), Munich	

<i>English, French, German</i>	
ESA (European Space Agency), Paris	<i>Coordinated institutions</i>
<i>English, French, German and sometimes Italian</i>	
EUROCONTROL, Brussels	
<i>English, French, German, and sometimes Dutch, Greek, Hungarian, Portuguese, Turkish, Spanish, Italian and a Scandinavian booth</i>	
FAO (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization), Rome	<i>UNO</i>
<i>Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish</i>	
IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency), Vienna	<i>UNO</i>
<i>Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish</i>	
IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development), Rome	<i>UNO</i>
<i>Arabic, English, French, Spanish</i>	
ILO (International Labour Office), Geneva	<i>UNO</i>
<i>Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Russian, Spanish</i>	
IMO (International Maritime Organization), London	<i>UNO</i>
<i>Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish</i>	
ITU (International Telecommunications Union), Geneva	<i>UNO</i>
<i>Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish</i>	
NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), Brussels	<i>Coordinated institutions</i>
<i>English, French (Russian)</i>	
OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), Paris	
<i>English, French</i>	<i>Coordinated institutions</i>
OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), Vienna	
<i>English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian</i>	
UNESCO (United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization), Paris	<i>UNO</i>
<i>Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish</i>	
UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization), Vienna	
<i>Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish</i>	<i>UNO</i>
UNO (United Nations Organization), Geneva, Vienna	<i>UNO</i>
<i>Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish</i>	
UPU (Universal Postal Union), Berne	
<i>Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish</i>	
WCU (World Customs Union), Brussels	
<i>English, French, sometimes Arabic, Russian and Spanish</i>	

WEU (Western European Union), Brussels, Paris	
<i>English, French (occasionally Dutch, German, Italian, Spanish)</i>	
WHO (World Health Organization), Geneva	<i>UNO</i>
<i>Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish</i>	
WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization), Geneva	<i>UNO</i>
<i>Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish</i>	
WMO (World Meteorological Organization), Geneva	<i>UNO</i>
<i>Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish</i>	
WTO (World Tourism Organization), Madrid	
<i>English, French, Russian, Spanish</i>	
WTO (World Trade Organization), Geneva	
<i>English, French, Spanish</i>	

4.2.2. The private sector; national and public institutions

In many countries, there exists an interpretation market for the national language plus English. The other languages most in demand depend on the markets and the circuit.

Thus, in Europe language demand varies a great deal and is very diversified. In Africa demand is mainly for English, French with sometimes Arabic, Portuguese, and more rarely Spanish. In the Asia-Pacific region English, Chinese, Spanish, French, Japanese are the most sought-after languages, with sometimes German, Korean and Russian. The emerging countries are equally emerging in the sense that their national languages are gradually coming onto the interpretation scene as working languages (this is particularly the case with Thai and Indonesian). In the Americas, there is a demand for Chinese, French, Portuguese and Japanese, in addition to English and Spanish.

Additionally, when a meeting is held in a country where the language spoken is not one of the official conference languages, there may be a requirement for interpretation into and out of that language.

As mentioned previously, these enumerations are given by way of example only; they are by no means exhaustive and are subject to change.

Anybody contemplating training as a conference interpreter would therefore be well advised to consult a practising interpreter before starting a course.

5. Becoming a conference interpreter

5.1. Knowledge and aptitudes

There are those who claim that one does not become a conference interpreter, that it is a gift that can be perfected, but, if it is not there, the best training in the world will be to no avail ("interpreters are born not made").

The truth is that anybody intending to train as an interpreter needs knowledge and aptitude. It goes without saying

that sound language skills and a broad knowledge base are also pre-requisites.

Knowledge

- complete mastery of the active (target) language(s), i.e. the language(s) into which the interpreter works;
- in-depth knowledge of the passive (source) languages, i.e. languages from which the interpreter works;
- university degree or equivalent;
- sound general knowledge and understanding of current affairs.

Aptitudes

- ability to analyse and construe facts; intuition;
- speed of reaction and ability to adapt without delay to speakers, situations and subjects;
- powers of concentration;
- above average physical and nervous staying-power;
- pleasant voice and public-speaking skills;
- high degree of intellectual curiosity;
- intellectual integrity;
- tact and diplomacy.

Let us look at each requirement in more detail:

- complete mastery of the active language(s) is essential if the original speech is to be reproduced in the target language with all its nuances, whatever the subject, level of technical complexity and style. This implies a broad vocabulary base as well as the ability to express oneself accurately and with ease in a variety of registers.

- in-depth knowledge of the passive languages will, for example, enable an interpreter to understand the English of an American, a Japanese or an African. In both the active and passive languages, an interpreter must be able to draw on a large number of synonyms, idiomatic expressions, proverbs and quotations.

- university degree or equivalent: the intellectual training and maturity acquired by a university education is the best way of preparing for interpreting as a profession. A language degree is not necessarily the best training for interpretation. Degrees in law, economics, etc. are useful provided that the candidate knows her/his working languages well enough. Interpreting techniques *per se* can be acquired later. But only those candidates with the required aptitudes are likely to benefit from formal training in interpreting.

- the ability to analyse information and construe meaning; intuition are essential. When interpreters work, they have to analyse everything that they are hearing, and to internalize it so that they can re-express what they have understood

for the listeners in another language and another culture. This means that the ability to analyse information and construe meaning, as well as using their intuition to anticipate what the speaker is going to say, is invaluable.

- speed of reaction and ability to adapt without delay to speakers, situations and subjects. When recruited for a conference, the interpreter often has only limited time in which to prepare for the meeting, with or without documents. This means that the essentials of the subject, very often a previously unfamiliar one, have to be grasped rapidly, including the technical terms, so that they can be used appropriately. Each new speaker may be an unknown quantity to the interpreter who consequently has each time to adapt instantaneously to a different accent, to the pace and style of each individual.

- powers of concentration. The very high level of concentration required to perform the operations involved in simultaneous interpretation has to be kept constant. A lapse in concentration and both the interpreter as well as those listening to the interpreter may lose the thread of the argument. The interpreter must be able to sustain this high level of concentration for about half an hour before a colleague takes over. In simultaneous interpretation there are always at least two interpreters per booth. Staying power is certainly something that can be increased with practice, but it should be an initial quality to be looked for in the prospective interpreter.

- pleasant voice and public-speaking skills. An interpreter must be a clear and lively speaker and despite working under pressure, an interpreter's delivery must remain smooth and the voice pleasant so as to prevent the listeners' attention from slackening.

- the interpreter's high degree of intellectual curiosity means that s/he will be able to follow the participants without difficulty, particularly references to current economic, political or social affairs. Thanks to extensive general knowledge, the interpreter will be able to place a speaker's utterance in its general context.

- under no circumstances does the interpreter depart from the strictest intellectual integrity.

- lastly, an interpreter needs tact and diplomacy to deal with difficult situations (misunderstandings, tension) and to know how to behave in relation to the delegates, regardless of their attitude towards the interpreter.

These qualities are not exercised independently of one another as and when needed, but come together to constitute a whole, i.e. a professional interpretation. A genuine interpreter identifies closely with the speaker and while interpreting will adopt the speaker's point of view. This is particularly apparent in consecutive interpretation but whatever the mode of interpretation, an interpreter's finest reward is to see the audience laughing at the witticisms of the original, albeit in another language, responding to the rhetorical effects of the speaker, nodding in agreement or shaking their heads in disagreement, in other words acting as though the speaker and the interpreter were one and the same person.

All this brings us to the heart of the matter. If one believes that one has all the qualities mentioned in the foregoing pages, how does one become a conference interpreter?

5.2. Schools and training

There are a large number of courses and schools around the world which offer young people who have completed their secondary school studies a course of language studies to become "translator-interpreters". Much of the syllabus is in fact taken up with language learning, taught in a more accessible way than in a conventional academic setting. Additionally, the syllabus usually includes a number of more general courses (economics, history, politics, sociology, etc.) which extend the students' general knowledge and prepare them for careers in a number of areas, e.g. executive secretaries, public relations, travel industry, teaching, journalism, translation, and sometimes conference interpreting.

However, as early as 1970, at a symposium organized by UNESCO, organizations in the UN system arrived at the

conclusion that "the training programs that best meet the needs of the major employers of interpreters are those which seek, in a relatively short period of time, to teach postgraduate students already possessing the requisite language skills, the techniques of translation and interpretation".

This reflects two postulates which have always been fundamental to the stance taken by the International Association of Conference Interpreters (aiic):

- candidates to interpreter training courses must have achieved the requisite level of language competence in all their working languages before being admitted to training;
- interpreter training shall be at least at undergraduate but preferably at postgraduate level.

Additionally, in order that trainees actually hear their various languages being used, it is recommended that training courses admit students having a variety of mother tongues.

In the light of its experience over the past 50-odd years in interpreter training, the aiic Training Committee has drawn up a list of ten points which set out its basic training criteria.

1. Applicants to courses in Conference Interpretation should have a university degree (three years of higher education) or equivalent training.
2. An oral selection process is essential for proper assessment of the general knowledge and aptitude for interpretation of prospective candidates.
 - a) In the case of a course lasting for one academic year, the selection process should take place before the beginning of the course.
 - b) In the case of those courses lasting for more than one academic year, the selection process should take place preferably before the beginning of the course, or else before the course is one-third complete.
3. The course syllabus and curriculum as well as language combinations offered should reflect market requirements.
4. Training in both consecutive and simultaneous interpretation should be included in the programme.
5. The syllabus shall include professional ethics and practice.
6. The syllabus for consecutive and simultaneous interpretation should be designed, directed and taught by practising conference interpreters, preferably aiic members.
7. The target language of any given course on the syllabus should be the corresponding tutor's A language.
8. At the final examination, failure to pass any one of the simultaneous or consecutive interpretation tests should be eliminatory. In the event of a resit, all parts of the final examination should be attempted.
9. The Diploma Examining Board should be made up of tutors having taught on the course and external examiners who are practising conference interpreters, preferably aiic members. They should have the right to vote.
10. The Conference Interpreter's Diploma must clearly state the language combination of the diplomate: i.e. which are the active and which are the passive languages for which the Diploma has been awarded.

Let us take a closer look at these criteria. The oral entrance tests which each candidate must pass should be conducted by a panel of professional conference interpreters. They can not only judge the candidate's aptitude for an interpreting career but also will know whether the language combination offered is one for which there exists any demand. If this is not the case, members of the panel will be able to give advice on what might be done to improve the candidate's chances of becoming a conference interpreter.

It is equally essential that the course be designed and taught by practising conference interpreters since they provide not only knowledge but also know-how. The interpreters' experience and reputation provide the essential interface between training and the profession. As a result of hands-on knowledge of the major institutional employers of interpreters and a solid reputation, as well as knowledge of the interpreting markets in general, they are in a position to provide newly qualified interpreters with the backing they need as they start out on their careers.

The syllabus should be devoted primarily to teaching the techniques of interpretation. This training should match actual conference conditions as closely as possible (meeting-rooms with booths of recent design, actual conference speeches, live audience, etc.) and should therefore be entrusted to experienced practising conference interpreters. Future interpreters trained under such conditions go out into the professional world knowing what is expected of them and able to provide it. The reputation of a course rests on the quality of its graduates.

The final examination must be taken before a panel of examiners constituted not only by the interpreters teaching on the course but also by external examiners who represent the international organizations (the potential employers of the new graduates) and conference interpreters who cover the range of languages offered by the examinees. In this way new graduates make contact with future employers and are also ensured of an objective professional assessment of their abilities.

The final diploma document must separately identify the active and passive languages in which the graduate is deemed to have achieved a professional standard of performance so as to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding.

As stated at the beginning of this section, there are a large number of schools and courses which claim to train interpreters but which are, in fact, first and foremost language schools. To assist would-be interpreters in their choice, the aiic Training Committee has undertaken an evaluation of interpreter training courses, based on the criteria already mentioned on previous pages.

A distinction has been drawn between those courses which train candidates for the full range of interpreting markets and those which cover a more limited set of languages. In the latter case, we list the languages.

- Courses for which no particular languages are mentioned, admit students with a variety of mother tongues.
- Courses which meet all or virtually all of the criteria set out above have been awarded three stars.
- Those with two stars meet most of the criteria.
- Those with one star only partially meet the criteria.
- Courses which do not meet the criteria or for which the Training Committee has not been able to obtain enough information, do not appear in the enclosed list.

In some cases, the regulations governing higher education in a country make it impossible for a course to meet all the criteria.

This list is updated regularly and the aiic Training Committee would like to thank you in advance for any comments or additional information you may send to the aiic Secretariat in Geneva.

6. Getting started as an interpreter

Most interpreters around the world are members of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (aiic) which represents them internationally and defends their interests.

Currently, the Association has more than 3,000 members based in more than 60 countries. The aiic Yearbook, which is published annually, contains their names, addresses and language combinations, and is used by most of the major employers of interpreters as a recruiting guide.

This brochure being an aiic publication, you will not be surprised to find it encouraging interpreters to apply for membership of the Association as they start out on their interpreting careers.

The first step is to obtain an application form from the Secretariat in Geneva and for would-be members to ask aiic interpreters with whom they worked at their first two or three conferences, to sign the form, stating that the candidate is working as a conference interpreter. This does not in any way commit the signatories as to the quality of the candidate's work, but it does mean that the candidate undertakes to respect the Code of Professional Ethics and Professional Standards. In return it enables her/his name and language combination to be published on a list of candidate-members. The list is circulated to all members and enables the candidate to become known.

By the time the candidate has completed 200 days of work in compliance with the conditions set out in the Code of Professional Ethics and Professional Standards, s/he will doubtless have worked with a large number of aiic members and can ask five of them for their sponsorship to full membership. They will need to be members of at least five years' standing and have the right language combination. In agreeing to act as sponsor, the member is guaranteeing that to the best of her/his knowledge, the candidate has the necessary professional experience and respects the rules of the Association. aiic's rules for sponsorship of language combinations are quite complicated but are set out clearly in the application form that the Secretariat sends upon request. Once the application forms are complete, the CACL (Committee on Admissions and Language Combinations) will publish the candidate's name on a list which appears in the aiic Bulletin. If the application is not challenged within 120 days of publication, the candidate automatically becomes a full member.

The aiic Training Committee hopes that these few pages will be useful to people interested in a career in interpretation. We would encourage you to get in touch with the Association's Secretariat if further information is needed.

Annex

Conference interpreting training courses by country in order of compliance with the aiic criteria.


This list only shows courses which meet some (*), most (**), all or almost all (***) of the training criteria set out in the brochure. The Training Committee decided not to include courses which did not meet the minimum criteria, or else courses for which it felt it had too little relevant information or where training was not intended solely in conference interpreting.

A distinction has been made between courses which train interpreters for a broad range of interpretation markets and those offering a more restricted range of languages. In the latter case, we have listed the languages. Courses for which there is no indication of the languages covered provide training for interpreters with a variety of mother tongues.

This list is updated regularly on the basis of information received by the Training Committee in the form, *inter alia*, of replies to a questionnaire, course prospectuses, as well as any information students, graduates, colleagues, teachers and employers of interpreters may communicate to us.

Australia

** Department of Asian Languages and Studies
University of Queensland
Brisbane, Queensland 4072


 English-Japanese both ways only. MA degree plus NAATI accreditation recognised as being equivalent to professional qualifications.

Austria

* Institut für Übersetzer- und Dolmetscherausbildung der Universität Wien
Gymnasiumstrasse 50
A-1190 Vienna


 Regulations make it impossible to comply with some of the criteria. Primarily for German mother tongue. Classification valid for English-French-German.

* Institut für Übersetzer- und Dolmetscherausbildung der Universität Graz
Merangasse 70
A- 8010 Graz


 Regulations make it impossible to comply with some of the criteria. Primarily for German mother tongue.

Belgium


* Hoger Instituut voor Vertalers en Tolken
Schildersstraat 41
B-2000 Antwerpen

 Regulations make it impossible to comply with some of the criteria. Solely for Dutch mother tongue.

* Institut Supérieur de Traducteurs et d'Interprètes
Rue Joseph Hazard 34
B-1180 Bruxelles

 Regulations make it impossible to comply with some of the criteria. Mainly for French mother tongue.

* Ecole d'interprètes internationaux, Université de Mons
Avenue du Champ de Mars
B-7000 Mons

 Regulations make it impossible to comply with some of the criteria. Mainly for French mother tongue.


Cameroon

** Advanced School of Translators and Interpreters
P.O. Box 63
Buea, South West Province
Republic of Cameroon

 English-French both ways only.

Denmark

*** Center for Konferencetolkning
1 København
Dalgas Have 15
DK-2000 Frederiksberg

 Mainly for Danish mother tongue. Training focuses on the needs of the European Union.

Finland

** Center for Translation and Interpreting
University of Turku
Tykistökatu 4
FIN-20520 Turku


France

*** ESIT
Université Paris III
Centre Universitaire Dauphine
F-75116 Paris


** ISIT
21, rue d'Assas
F-75006 Paris

Germany

* Fachbereich angewandte Sprachwissenschaft
An Hochschule 2
D-76711 Germersheim


 Regulations make it impossible to comply with some of the criteria. Mainly for German mother tongue.

* Institut für Übersetzen und Dolmetschen
der Universität Heidelberg
Plöck 57 A
D-69117 Heidelberg

 Regulations make it impossible to comply with some of the criteria. Mainly for German mother

tongue.

- * Sprachen- und Dolmetscher Institut München
Amalienstrasse 73
D-80799 Munich

 Non-graduate training. Mainly for German mother tongue.


Israel

- ** Bar Ilan University Department of Translation and Interpretation
52900 Ramat Gan

 Mainly for Hebrew mother tongue.

Italy

- * Scuola Superiore de Lingue Moderne per Interpreti e Traduttori
Università di Trieste
Via D'Alviano 15/1
I-34144 Trieste

 Regulations make it impossible to comply with some of the criteria. Mainly for Italian mother tongue.

- * Scuola Superiore per Interprete e Traduttori del Comune di Milano
Piazzale G. Cantore 10
I-20213 Milano

 Mainly for Italian mother tongue.

Korea

- * Hankuk University of Foreign Studies
Graduate School of Interpretation and Translation
270 Imun-dong
Dongdaemun-gu
Seoul 130-791



For Korean mother tongue

Lebanon

Ecole de traducteurs et interprètes
Université St. Joseph de Beyrouth
B.P. 175-208
Beyrouth



Solely for students having Arabic mother tongue plus English and French (with requirement also to be able to interpret from Arabic into one of these two).

Portugal

Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas
Universidade do Minho
Largo do Paço
4719 Braga



Mainly for Portuguese mother tongue. Training focuses on the needs of the European Union.

Spain

**
Universidad de la Laguna
Calle Molinos de Agua s/n
E-38207 La Laguna
Tenerife

Sweden

Tolk-Och Översättarinstitutet
Konferenstolkutbildningen
Stockholms Universitet
S-106 91 Stockholm

Switzerland

Ecole de traduction et d'interprétation de l'Université de Genève
102 boulevard Carl-Vogt


CH-1211 Genève 4

* Dolmetscherschule Zürich
Thurgauerstrasse 56
CH-8050 Zürich

 Primarily for German mother tongue.

Taiwan

** (GITIS) Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation Studies
Conference Interpretation Section, Fu Jen University
Hsinchuang 242
Taipei

 English-Chinese (Mandarin) or Japanese-English both ways.

United Kingdom

** Postgraduate Diploma in Conference Interpreting Techniques
University of Westminster
9-18 Euston Centre
GB-London NW1 3ET

United States

** Monterey Institute of International Studies
425 van Buren Street
Monterey, CA 93940

** Division of Translation and Interpretation
Georgetown University
Box 571053
Washington, DC 20057-1053