



Accreditation in Auslan/ English Interpreting

Information Booklet

This booklet has been developed to assist applicants wishing to obtain accreditation in Auslan (Australian Sign Language) interpreting. It provides an introduction to the methods available to gain accreditation and the processes involved and will help you complete your application.

You should read this booklet carefully.

What is NAATI?

NAATI is the national standards and accreditation body for translators and interpreters in Australia. It is the only agency that issues accreditations for practitioners who wish to work in these professions in Australia.

NAATI's Purpose

NAATI's primary purpose is to strengthen inclusion and participation in Australian society by assisting in meeting the nation's diverse and changing communication needs and expectations, through:

- setting, maintaining and promoting high national standards in translating and interpreting, and
- implementing a national quality-assurance system for credentialing practitioners who meet those standards.

NAATI credentialing provides quality assurance to the clients of translators and interpreters and gives credibility to agencies that employ practitioners who are credentialed appropriately.

About NAATI

The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd (trading as NAATI) is incorporated in Australia under the *Corporations Act 2001*. The company is owned jointly by the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and is governed by a board of directors, who are appointed by the owners. NAATI's main business activities are providing accreditation and other credentialing services for translators and interpreters and related activities. NAATI services are available through offices in every State and Territory of Australia and in New Zealand. The National Office is in Canberra.

NAATI accreditation in interpreting between Auslan (Australian Sign Language) and English is currently available at the following levels

- Paraprofessional Interpreter
- Professional Interpreter

DISTINCTION BETWEEN INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATING

Because Auslan cannot be written, pure translation (defined by NAATI to be entirely in the written mode) is not a skill which is currently accredited by NAATI when dealing with signed languages. It is acknowledged that 'translation' work is being done by interpreters between Auslan and English.

COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH AND FUNCTIONAL HEARING OF CANDIDATES

It is important that interpreters in Auslan have a high level of competence in English as well as in Auslan. In addition, interpreters need to be capable of adjusting to different registers of both languages. Applicants for accreditation as interpreters are expected to have functional hearing sufficient to enable them to function as interpreters in a variety of settings.

DIALECT VARIATION IN AUSLAN

Regional variation in Auslan exists across Australia. Although the Auslan Examiner Panel sets test materials nationally, examiners are aware of and will take into account the regional variations that exist when marking. The examine panel also aims to minimise use of specific regional signs when creating the Auslan/English tests.

ACCREDITATION IN AUSLAN

Currently NAATI Accreditation in Auslan/English interpreting may be obtained in two ways:

- Passing a NAATI accreditation test;
- Successful completion of a course of studies in interpreting at an Australian institution as approved by NAATI

Applications for accreditation testing should be made using the Form A 'Application for Accreditation by Testing' form available from NAATI's website www.naati.com.au.

NAATI APPROVED COURSES

A number of TAFE and University courses in Auslan interpreting are available. For more information please refer to NAATI's website www.naati.com.au.

OVERSEAS QUALIFICATION

Auslan is sign language used in Australia and although it is related to other sign languages used in other parts of the world no NAATI accreditation will be granted on the basis of overseas qualifications in these other signed languages.

ACCREDITATION TEST FORMATS

Auslan/English interpreters should have an awareness of the effects and particular challenges of deafness, in the same way as interpreters in community languages are expected to be aware of the cultural background of the persons for whom they interpret. As well as cultural issues, knowledge of the ethics of interpreting is required. The tests formats take into account the factors outlined above.

PARAPROFESSIONAL INTERPRETER ACCREDITATION TESTING

Eligibility for Testing

To be eligible to sit for NAATI Auslan/English Paraprofessional Interpreter tests, candidates must demonstrate the following:

- Education equivalent to at least four years of Australian secondary education (Year 10); and
- Proficiency in both languages.

In cases where a person's education has been interrupted for any special reasons, these criteria may be waived, or alternative criteria substituted, at the discretion of NAATI.

Test Format

The test takes approximately 40 minutes, including 10 minutes unallocated time to allow for unforeseen delays.

Section 1: Cultural and Social Aspects - (5 marks)

Four questions will be put to the candidate based on the social and cultural aspects of interpreting. The first two questions will be asked in English and should be answered in English. The next two questions are asked in Auslan and should be answered in Auslan.

The questions in this section are designed to assess the extent to which the candidates understand how social and cultural factors and/or socio-political issues affect situations where an interpreter would typically be used.

Section 2: Ethics of the Profession - (5 Marks)

Four questions will be put to the candidate based on the ASLIA Code of Ethics. The first two questions will be asked in English and should be answered in English. The next two questions are asked in Auslan and should be answered in Auslan. The questions will be designed to elicit the candidate's awareness of the ethics of the profession.

Section 3: Dialogue Interpreting - (2 X 45 = 90 marks)

There will be two dialogues of approximately 300 words each between an English speaker and an Auslan signer. The dialogues will be divided into suitable segments, which will not normally exceed 35 words. Dialogue One will be interpreted in the consecutive mode and Dialogue Two will be interpreted in the simultaneous mode.

To achieve a pass in this test, candidates must score a minimum of:

- 2.5/5 for Social/Cultural Aspects questions
- 2.5/5 for Ethics of the Profession questions
- 29/45 for each consecutive/simultaneous interpreting dialogue
- 63/90 for the two consecutive/simultaneous interpreting dialogues
- 70/100 overall

Conduct of Tests

It is not possible to simulate perfectly in a test the conditions under which an interpreter would normally work. Nevertheless, NAATI conducts its tests in a way that is fair and equitable to all candidates. Accordingly, all interpreting tests are conducted from a master recording of the test which is played to the candidate in the presence of a supervisor only, and the candidate's responses are recorded for later marking. Interpreting tests are therefore conducted individually.

The use of dictionaries and other reference aides is not permitted in the Paraprofessional Interpreter tests.

PROFESSIONAL INTERPRETER ACCREDITATION TESTING

Eligibility for testing

To be eligible to sit for NAATI Auslan/English Professional Interpreter test, candidates must have:

- General education to degree or diploma level in any field; OR
- NAATI Accreditation as a Paraprofessional Interpreter in Auslan/English interpreting.

Test Format

The test will take approximately 75 minutes.

Section 1: Community/Legal Interpreting

One Interpreting Dialogue	(25 marks)
2 Social/Cultural Questions	(5 marks)
2 Ethics Questions	(5 marks)
One Sight Translation (related to the dialogue)	(20 marks)
One Auslan to English Monologue	(15 marks)

Section 2: Professional/Academic Interpreting

One Dialogue	(25 marks)
2 Social/Cultural Questions	(5 marks)
2 Ethics Questions	(5 marks)
One English to Auslan Monologue	(15 marks)

The dialogues will be challenging including subject matter such as police interviews, court cross-examinations, counselling, specialist medical terminology, and academic discussions. The monologues will be focussed on topics such as judges' court summations, university presentations rather than conference papers.

There will be no specification of the amount of finger spelling to be incorporated into the test. This will be determined by the text itself and will therefore flow naturally in the presentation.

To achieve a pass in this test, candidates must score a minimum of:

- 35/50 for both interpreting dialogues
- 21/30 for the monologues
- 14/20 for the Sight translation task
- 70/100 for the interpreting parts of the test overall.
- 5/10 for Social/Cultural Aspects questions
- 5/10 for Ethics of the Profession questions

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THE AUSTRALIAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS' ASSOCIATION (ASLIA)

The Australian Sign Language Interpreters' Association (ASLIA) is a non-profit body, and the national peak organisation representing the needs and interests of Auslan/English Interpreters and Deaf (Relay) Interpreters in Australia. The Association is comprised of a national Executive Committee (ASLIA National), a Representative Council and branches in most states and territories. ASLIA has existed in various forms for around 20 years, with a current national membership at approximately 250.

Throughout the last two decades, the formal inclusion of testing for Auslan/English interpreter accreditation within the NAATI framework and the creation of ASLIA have supported the professionalisation of the sign language interpreting sector in Australia.

ASLIA's vision is to seek to lead and promote best practice in sign language interpreting across Australia. To achieve this, ASLIA provides policies and a platform for the views of sign language interpreters throughout the nation on a variety of issues, including: training, on-going professional development, recruitment, working conditions, remuneration, and the provision of services within the sign language interpreting sector. In addition, ASLIA is a member of the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI) and one key aspect of this membership is to support sign language interpreting practitioners in developing countries within the Australasian & Oceania region.

Individuals who gain NAATI Auslan/English accreditation are strongly encouraged to become ASLIA members, to take advantage of on-going professional development, support and advice, as well as many other membership benefits. ASLIA membership is also open to other individuals with an interest in sign language interpreting, for example: students of Auslan and/or Auslan/English interpreting, Deaf (Relay) Interpreters, parents of deaf children, deaf consumers and organisations. For more information about ASLIA membership, visit the ASLIA National website (www.aslia.com.au) and select your state Association for the relevant details.

One obligation of gaining NAATI accreditation is that practitioners will adhere to the professional Code of Ethics; for Auslan/English interpreters, this is the ASLIA Code of Ethics. A summary of the core values in the ASLIA Code of Ethics is presented below.

VALUES UNDERLYING THE ASLIA CODE OF ETHICS & GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

- 1. Professional accountability:** Accepting responsibility for professional decisions and actions.
- 2. Professional competence:** Committing to provide quality professional service throughout one's practice.
- 3. Non-discrimination:** Approaching professional service with respect and cultural sensitivity.
- 4. Integrity in professional relationships:** Dealing honestly and fairly with participants and colleagues.
- 5. Integrity in business practices:** Dealing honestly and ethically in all business practices.

Practitioners are to understand that each of these core values and accompanying sections are to be considered when making ethical and professional decisions in their identity and capacity as an interpreter. These values are of equal weight and importance.

For more detailed information about each of these values and guidelines for applying them to practise, please refer to the ASLIA website www.aslia.com.au.