



Deaf Interpreter Recognition

INFORMATION BOOKLET

This booklet has been developed to assist applicants who wish to obtain recognition as a deaf interpreter. It provides an introduction to the process involved and will help you complete your application. **You should read this booklet carefully.**

WHO WE ARE

NAATI is a company that is jointly owned by the nine governments of Australia. We are governed by a Board of Directors, who are appointed by the owners.

Our mission, as outlined in the NAATI Constitution, is to set and maintain high national standards in translating and interpreting to enable the existence of a pool of accredited translators and interpreters responsive to the changing needs and demography of the Australian community.

NAATI services are available through any of our offices located across Australia.

WHAT WE DO

Some people get confused about what NAATI is and what we do. Essentially, NAATI is a standards organisation responsible for setting, maintaining and promoting high professional standards.

Our core focus is issuing accreditations for practitioners who wish to work as translators and interpreters in Australia.

Our aim is to be a respected and recognised global leader in the provision of certification services for translators and interpreters, providing quality services and being responsive to the individuals and organisations which benefit from NAATI's services.

NAATI's work enhances the translation and interpreting industry's competitiveness and contributes to a community demand for everyone to be able to communicate and interact with each other.

INTRODUCTION

NAATI recognition as a Deaf Interpreter (DI) may be obtained for the specialised interpreting and translation that DIs perform. Recognition is granted on the basis of a direct application to NAATI with the required evidence and paperwork. It is an acknowledgement that at the time of the award the candidate had recent and regular experience as a translator and/or interpreter with no defined skill level.

Recognition is only granted in languages of low community demand where NAATI does not offer accreditation testing. Should the demand for these services increase to a sufficient level, NAATI will consider establishing testing and accredit practitioners.

What is a Deaf Interpreter (DI)*?

A DI is an individual who is usually deaf, fluent in Auslan, written English and may have additional familiarity with a foreign sign language or pidgin. DIs may work in tandem with Auslan-English interpreters and can provide a unique language or communication bridge for deaf individuals whose communication mode cannot be adequately accessed by a standard Auslan-English interpreter.

A DI is a native, or native-like user of Auslan and understands the complex cultural experience of growing up deaf. A DI is able to adapt their sign language style to accommodate the broad variety of Auslan users and users of gestural pidgins, or a sign language mixing strategy that may incorporate some features of Auslan.

** The term DI may also be known as a Deaf Relay Interpreter (DRI). Either term typically refers to a Deaf person who has been trained to work as a specialised interpreter.*

How do Deaf Interpreters work with Auslan-English interpreters?

In a DI/hearing interpreter situation, the DI transmits sign language or visual gestural message content between a deaf person and an Auslan-English interpreter. The hearing interpreter then transmits sign language and English messages between the DI and a hearing person who does not know any sign language.

This process involves more than just message relay. Each interpreter receives the message in one communication mode processes it linguistically and culturally, then passes it on in the appropriate target language.

Situations that require a Deaf Interpreter

Individuals benefit from a specialised DI when they are deaf and:

- Use idiosyncratic non-standard signs or gestures such as those commonly referred to as *home signs* which are unique to a family or original village community.
- Have a cognitive disability (mild to severe) or multiple disabilities that compromise communication and result in dysfluency.
- Are linguistically and/or socially isolated with limited conventional language proficiency.
- Deaf and blind or deaf with low vision, using tactile or visually modified sign language.

- Use signs particular to a given region, ethnic or age group that are inaccessible by other qualified interpreters, e.g. Indigenous deaf people.
- Are experiencing complex trust issues where cultural sensitivity/comfort factor is paramount, e.g. trauma counselling.
- Use a foreign sign language and there are no accredited or qualified foreign sign language interpreters available.
- Are users of a pidgin or contact variety of sign languages or a common international lingua franca known as *International Sign* (I.S.).

Why are most Deaf Interpreters deaf?

Anecdotally deaf people are experienced in relying on visual cues for most communication. They are better equipped to discern idiosyncratic gestures/signs and understand the meaning of different signs out of context that a deaf person who is not a fluent Auslan user may use.

THE RECOGNITION PROCESS



If there are problems with your application, NAATI will contact you as soon as possible. If your assessment is successful you will receive a letter of recognition. All letters are sent by regular post.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications for DI recognition are made using *Form DIR - Application for NAATI Deaf Interpreter Recognition* and requires evidence to meet the following three criteria:

1. Proficiency in Auslan

As demonstrated by one of the following:

- Evidence that the applicant has completed the majority of their primary and secondary education (up to year 12) where Auslan, or English and Auslan, were the languages of instruction. The evidence must show the number of years completed (not just that education to a particular year, year 12 for example, has been completed); **or**
- A letter from one of the following organisations confirming the applicant's membership in the local deaf community and fluency in Auslan:
 1. Deaf Society of New South Wales
 2. Deaf Services Queensland
 3. Royal South Australian Deaf Society (Deaf CanDo)
 4. Tasmanian Deaf Society (TasDeaf)
 5. Victorian Deaf Society (VicDeaf)
 6. Western Australian Deaf Society (WADeaf)
- Completion of a diploma in Auslan teaching; **or**
- Current NAATI Auslan-English accreditation at the Paraprofessional level or above.

2. Completion of a short training course

For recognition to be granted candidates must complete a NAATI endorsed deaf interpreting course or workshop program.

The minimum standard for acceptable introductory interpreter training courses is 15 hours of face-to-face training including DI-specific theory and practice, the *ASLIA Code of Ethics* and practical components. NAATI will work on an ongoing basis with ASLIA to ensure there is an accessible pathway to recognition through acceptable training.

If you are unsure of whether a course or workshop program will meet NAATI's criteria please contact the NAATI National Office. The training course or workshop program should be completed prior to submitting an application, and the evidence of completion needs to be included with the application form.

3. Work experience

Applicants must have work experience as a translator and/or interpreter. They must provide evidence of this in the form of at least two work reference letters which must meet the following criteria:

- They must be issued by different employers and/or organisations.
- At least one reference must be from an interpreting service provider, where the applicant has been contracted, employed or engaged in DI duties for at least three months.
- Each reference must demonstrate that the applicant has completed some work in the language and each skill for which they are applying for recognition. This may include pro bono work.
- The references must demonstrate that the work experience is current, regular and ongoing, i.e. each reference must cover a period of at least three months. At least one reference must cover the three months immediately preceding the application. Other references may cover work experience that has been completed no more than six months ago.
- Each reference letter must be on the organisation's letterhead and be signed and dated by an individual authorised to provide this reference on behalf of the organisation.
- Each reference must be in the format set out in the application form (see sections 6A and 6B).

NAATI will consider reference letters from organisations, including volunteer organisations, as long as the reference letter meets the criteria outlined above.

Languages in which recognition is awarded

Five language combinations or areas of competency have been identified for awarding DI recognition. The aim is to inform provider agencies and clients about the types of work different DIs have experience working in. These areas include:

- a) Auslan/Non-Conventional Sign Language (NCSL) - Interpreting between Auslan and a sign language that is idiosyncratic or non-conventional.
- b) Written English/Non-Conventional Sign Language (NCSL) - Sight translation from written English forms or documents into sign language that is idiosyncratic or non-conventional.
- c) Auslan/Adapted Sign Language - Interpreting between Auslan and a visually adapted or tactile form of sign language used by DeafBlind or Deaf persons with low-vision.
- d) Written English/Auslan - Sight translation from written English forms or documents into Auslan.
- e) Auslan/Conventional Sign Language - Interpreting between Auslan and a standardised foreign sign language (i.e. BSL, JSL, ASL, etc).

For each of the combinations (A to E) above, the interpreter needs to provide two referee reports for work specifically referencing that the applicant has worked in that combination. This may mean providing more than two referee reports in total.

Individuals who have completed previously offered training

NAATI is aware that there are individuals who have completed DI training previously. Individuals who can provide evidence of one of the following will be exempted from some of the requirements:

1. Passing the DI assessment run as part of the *ASLIA/NABS Deaf Relay Interpreter Certification Project (DRICP)* which ran in 2007-2008. (exempt from proficiency in Auslan and completion of short training course requirements)
2. Completion of the short DI training course run by TAFE NSW (Petersham) in 2008. (exempt from the completion of a training course requirement)
3. Completion of the year-long Central Metropolitan College of TAFE (Western Australia) Diploma of Interpreting run in 2001 which included DI specific training. (exempt from proficiency in Auslan and completion of short training course requirements)
4. Completion of the Certificate IV in Auslan or Diploma of Auslan offered by the Deaf Education Network in 2010. (exempt from the completion of a training course requirement)

Should applicants have completed other DI specific training and/or assessment please contact the NAATI National Office to consider whether any exemptions to the recognition process should apply.

REVALIDATION

Any NAATI recognition issued is automatically part of the revalidation system. This means the recognition will be valid for a period of three years. To retain the recognition after this time, the recognised individual must meet the revalidation requirements for work practice and professional development. For more information refer to the revalidation section at www.naati.com.au.

If testing for a language is established, NAATI will phase out recognition for the language. This means that NAATI will no longer accept applications for revalidation of a recognition in the language, and recognitions that have been awarded will expire.

CERTIFIED COPIES AND TRANSLATIONS OF DOCUMENTS

You will be required to provide certified true copies of documents as part of the application process. This means that applicants should collect and organise all their relevant documentation before they lodge or send in their application.

Where documents are not in English, you must provide a certified copy of the original language document plus an **original** English translation of the document (please note that copies of the translation will not be accepted). Normally this translation must be carried out by a NAATI accredited translator.

The signature, name, and NAATI number of the translator must be provided on every page of the English language version, preferably as part of the NAATI translator stamp.

Should access to a NAATI accredited translator be an issue, please contact our National Office at info@naati.com.au and NAATI will consider your circumstances and whether a translation completed by another party would be acceptable.

So who can certify my application documents?

If you live in Australia, your documents must be certified by a **Justice of the Peace**.

If you live outside of Australia, your documents must be certified by a **Notary Public** or an authorised officer of an Australian overseas diplomatic mission.

NAATI will not accept certified copies and translations of documents provided by persons with a conflict of interest, for example where the person certifying or translating a document is a relative or acts as a migration agent for the applicant.

If your current legal name is not the same as that on your documents, you must provide evidence of your name change.

All submitted documents that are copies of original documents must be certified.

Please do not send original documents (except original translations of non-English language documents), as we do not return these.

Processing of your application will be delayed if you send incorrect or improperly certified documents.

NAATI PRIVACY POLICY

NAATI is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information. We adhere to the *Australian Privacy Principles* contained within the *Privacy Act 1988* which regulate how organisations may collect, use, disclose and store personal information and how individuals may access and correct personal information held about them.

NAATI's *Privacy Policy* is intended to inform people who deal with NAATI, particularly applicants for NAATI products and services, about:

- The kind of personal information that NAATI may gather;
- How that information may be used;
- How that information may be shared or disclosed;
- The choices individuals have regarding NAATI's use of their personal information; and
- How individuals may correct personal information held by NAATI about them.

For more information please see www.naati.com.au.