

# AUSIT Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct

*November 2012 edition*

## Plain English Version for Aboriginal Interpreters

Lauren Campbell, AIS, 19 July 2016.

### 1. Professional conduct

Interpreters must follow the rules and behave professionally

- 1.1. You must be honest, reliable and responsible at all times
- 1.2. You must prepare yourself before the job  
*Know the names of the people you are working with, where you are going and what it is about*
- 1.3. If you accept a job, you must do it, unless there is a good reason  
*Let people know as soon as possible if you can't do the job.*
- 1.4. Be on-time for jobs, or let people know if you are running late.
- 1.5. Do not boss clients around or make them do things for you
- 1.6. Do not ask people for money or gifts or accept any  
*Only your official pay for the job*

### 2. Confidentiality

Interpreters must maintain confidentiality. They keep information from jobs a secret and do not tell anyone.

- 2.1. You have to keep information confidential, don't tell anyone. This is a strict rule.
- 2.2. If you are working in a team, you can share information within your team, but all the team must keep information confidential.
- 2.3. You can't try to use information from jobs for your own good.
- 2.4. You may be able to share information if the clients give permission or the law says you have to.

### 3. Competence

Interpreters only do jobs they have the skills to do, in the languages they are trained and assessed in.

- 3.1. If you accept a job, you are saying that you have the skills to do that job.
- 3.2. When you accept jobs, you should be familiar with the context, how the workplace works, specialised words and jargon of the area  
*If it is a new area for you, you should request orientation and support*
- 3.3. If the professional or client asks about your qualifications, you must tell them  
*This might be NAATI accreditation, registration with AIS, training you have done*
- 3.4. If you realise during a job that it is too difficult for you, or you don't speak the right language/dialect, you must tell the professional straight away. Offer to withdraw from the job and try to get another interpreter, or find another way to help communicate.
- 3.5. If it turns out that the job is for a different language to the booking, you can only continue with the job if you speak the required language

### 4. Impartiality

Interpreters are impartial during all jobs. They do not take sides.

- 4.1. You must be professional and not get involved in the situation
- 4.2. If you have strong beliefs about something related to the job, and that might stop you from interpreting impartially, you must not accept the job. If the job has started, offer to withdraw from the job.
- 4.3. You are not responsible for what the client or professional says.
- 4.4. You must not say your opinion during a job, even if they ask you.
- 4.5. You must tell the professional if there is a conflict of interest – with family or other interests

- 4.6. Be honest if you are recommending another business you are involved in. Tell them you are involved.

## 5. Accuracy

Interpreters use their professional judgement to transfer the meaning of the message accurately

- 5.1. You must interpret all messages accurately. Accurate means the full message, not changing it or leaving anything out, interpreting the meaning and intent of what the speaker said. Interpret accurately using the skills you have learned in training.
- 5.2. Don't change, add or leave out any of the content or intent of the source message.
- 5.3. If you make a mistake, quickly try to fix it.
- 5.4. Ask speakers to repeat, rephrase or explain if anything is unclear, so you can interpret accurately.

## 6. Clarity of role boundaries

Interpreters are clear about their role as interpreters.

- 6.1. If you are doing an interpreting job, don't advocate or give advice.
- 6.2. Respect professional boundaries of other workers.  
*Don't ask others to do things that aren't their job.*
- 6.3. If you think someone doesn't understand your role as interpreter, explain it clearly so everyone understands.
- 6.4. Know the difference between professional and personal conversations, and make sure clients know the difference. It is your responsibility to set professional boundaries during the job.  
*This means you need to be clear with family about your role as interpreter when you are working.*

## 7. Maintain professional relationships

Interpreters are responsible for the quality of their work. Interpreters make sure they get a briefing, are well set up to interpret and explain their role as interpreter.

- 7.1. You must follow all these rules – if you are working for an interpreting service or working for yourself.
- 7.2. If you are working for yourself, be honest and transparent.
- 7.3. If you work for an interpreting service, work as hard as you would for yourself
- 7.4. Ask for a briefing from the professional before the job and ask to see documents that you will need to know about.
- 7.5. Try to set up the office or area so you can interpret well. Check if you need headphones or technology, that the space is quiet, that there is no risk to you, that you have a seat and water if necessary.
- 7.6. If a workplace says you have to follow the AUSIT Code of Ethics, that means that workplace should help make sure you are briefed, given documents and well set up (7.4 and 7.5).

## 8. Professional development (always becoming a better interpreter)

Interpreters continue to develop their professional knowledge and skills.

- 8.1. For the whole time you are working as an interpreter, you need to keep learning new skills and knowledge.
- 8.2. You need to keep up to date with the languages and cultures you interpret for  
*This means both sides – English and Language.*
- 8.3. Help other interpreters develop and support people running PD for interpreters.
- 8.4. Keep up to date with discussions and changes in the interpreting world to help yourself improve as an interpreter.

## 9. Professional solidarity

Interpreters respect and support each other. We are all responsible for the reputation of interpreters as being trustworthy and professional.

- 9.1. Help and support each other as interpreters, and to build the reputation of interpreting as a profession.
- 9.2. If you have a problem or argument with another interpreter, work together professionally to solve the problem.
- 9.3. AUSIT members who can't resolve problems with other members should take it to the National Council.

## **Conduct issues for Interpreters**

Int1 – You must prepare yourself for the job, make sure you get a briefing, ask for necessary documents and keep those documents confidential.

### **Completeness in interpreting**

Int2 – Your job is to make sure everyone understands what is said by everyone in a meeting, so you must interpret accurately and completely everything that is said.

Int3 – You must interpret in the first person.

Int4 – You must use the same emotions as the speaker when you interpret what they said – don't make the message softer or stronger. In jobs like court or psychometric assessments, you must interpret or convey incoherence (when it doesn't make sense), hesitations and unclear statements.

Int5 – If the speaker tells a lie, you must interpret the lie accurately.

### **Relations with other parties and the interpreting role in dialogue situations**

Int6 – In dialogue interpreting, remind participants to talk directly to each other, not the interpreter.

Int7 – In meeting interpreting, if you aren't interpreting aloud for everyone to hear, whisper interpret for those who need it, to make sure everyone understands (so everyone is 'linguistically present').

Int8 – If you ask for repeats, rephrasing or explanation, inform all participants what it is you are doing.

Int9 – In emergencies when there isn't enough time for briefing and preparation, or there are safety and security issues, let the professional know.

Int10 – Inform participants of any side comments or if the client tries to have a private conversation with you. In business or inter-governmental (international) meetings when you are booked particularly for one side, you can interpret the other sides comments.

Int11 – Different people in a meeting might have different expectations of interpreters. You must explain your role and stay impartial.

When you are waiting during a job (eg, in foyer of court) and have conversations with the client, be careful that you only talk about light things, nothing personal or about the job. Anything said during these conversations is confidential.

*(AIS prefer that you don't leave yourself in a situation where you have these conversations).*

Int12 – If there is an enquiry or the court summons you, you must tell them what qualifications you have as an interpreter and talk about the accuracy of your interpreting. You might have to talk about your linguistic choices (which words you chose to use and why). Don't give an opinion about the participants understanding of the messages - this is for the participants to decide, not you.

### **Remote interpreting**

Int13 – You must learn about new technology for interpreting, including phone, video and internet interpreting, and other recording devices. If you do interpreting with this technology, know why it is

used and how to interpret well using it. Organisations that use these technologies should write protocols and brief interpreters on how to use them.

**Specific institutional settings of interpreting work**

Int14 – If you have a job where you do other things as well as interpreting, be clear when you are doing the role of interpreter and when you switch to your other role.

Int15 – if you work somewhere with special duty of care or security rules, such as health and high security (like prisons and detention), follow your workplace rules and combine them with the interpreter code of ethics.