



Descriptors for Interpreter Certifications

An **interpreter** transfers a spoken or signed message from one language (the source language) into a spoken or signed message in another language (the target language) for the purpose of communication between people who do not share the same language.

NAATI's certification system is designed to evaluate whether an individual is competent to practise as an interpreter as defined above. It does this by setting minimum standards of performance across a number of areas of competency. Individuals who demonstrate that they meet these standards are awarded NAATI certification. This gives assurance to both the users and the interpreting service provider that the interpreter has the necessary competencies to carry out the interpreting task.

NAATI's system consists of the following two categories:

- **Certified** includes Certified Provisional Interpreter, Certified Interpreter, Certified Specialist Interpreter (available for Health and Legal) and Certified Conference Interpreter. These certifications are typically available between English and a LOTE (Language Other Than English) for which NAATI assesses all significant competencies directly and objectively. Commensurate with the level of certification, interpreters work in certain typical domains, situations and interpreting modes.
- **Recognised Practising** is available between English and a LOTE for which NAATI currently does not offer certification testing, e.g. for emerging or low demand languages. NAATI directly assesses Language Competency (English or Auslan), Intercultural Competency and Ethical Competency, but is only able to indirectly confirm other competencies through evidence of work experience. In the absence of interpreters with certification for a language, Recognised Practising Interpreters may be asked to interpret in the same domains, situations and interpreting modes as certified interpreters.

The Descriptors for Interpreter Certifications outlined below have been developed for the purpose of NAATI Certification. They outline the expected minimum standard of performance interpreters display across the competencies required for professional practice, while taking into account the characteristics of interpreters' work environments.

The descriptors assist potential candidates for certification and users of interpreting services to gain a general understanding of expected interpreter competencies. The descriptors are not intended to reflect the complexity of the certification system.



Descriptors for Interpreter Certifications

	Certified Conference Interpreter	Certified Specialist Interpreter - Health or Legal	Certified Interpreter	Certified Provisional Interpreter	Recognised Practising Interpreter
Transfer Competency	Transfers highly complex, specialised messages from a source language into a target language using spoken or signed language that accurately reflects the meaning.	Transfers complex, specialised messages in a health or legal domain from a source language into a target language using spoken or signed language that accurately reflects the meaning.	Transfers complex, non-specialised messages from a source language into a target language using spoken or signed language that accurately reflects the meaning.	Transfers non-complex, non-specialised messages from a source language into a target language using spoken or signed language that accurately reflects the meaning.	This competency is indirectly confirmed.
Language Competency	Comprehends and produces two languages (spoken or signed, and written) in specialised domains, appropriately using specialised and complex language including technical expressions and jargon.	Comprehends and produces two languages (spoken or signed, and written) in the health or legal domain, appropriately using specialised and complex language and commonly and uncommonly used expressions.	Comprehends and produces two languages (spoken or signed, and written) in a variety of complex situations/contexts, appropriately using complex, but non-specialised language and commonly and uncommonly used expressions.	Comprehends and produces two languages (spoken or signed) in a variety of non-complex situations/contexts, appropriately using non-complex and non-specialised language and commonly used expressions.	Comprehends and produces spoken English or Auslan (for deaf interpreters) in a variety of non-complex situations/contexts, appropriately using non-complex and non-specialised language and commonly used expressions. LOTE proficiency is indirectly confirmed.
Intercultural Competency	Understands in detail how culture and language interact in specialised contexts, identifies all significant and nuanced culturally-specific information in spoken or signed language, is able to apply this to the interpreting task and account for its use.	Understands in detail how culture and language interact in a health or legal domain, identifies significant and nuanced culturally-specific information in spoken or signed language, and is able to apply this to the interpreting task.	Understands how culture and language interact, identifies significant and nuanced culturally-specific information in spoken or signed language, and is able to apply this to the interpreting task.	Understands how culture and language interact, identifies significant culturally-specific information in spoken or signed language, and is able to apply this to the interpreting task.	Understands how culture and language interact, identifies significant culturally-specific information in spoken or signed language, and is able to apply this to the interpreting task.



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Thematic Competency	<p>Knows about and understands a broad range of complex and specialised contexts, topics and current events at an advanced level, i.e. at the level of experts speaking or signing to an expert audience.</p> <p><i>See typical domain and situation types at the end of this table.</i></p>	<p>Knows about and understands complex, specialised health or legal contexts, topics and relevant current events at an advanced level, and may interpret for a specialist audience.</p> <p><i>See typical domain and situation types at the end of this table.</i></p>	<p>Knows about and understands a broad range of complex but non-specialised contexts, topics and current events, including where specialists in a domain speak or sign with a non-specialist audience.</p> <p><i>See typical domain and situation types at the end of this table.</i></p>	<p>Knows about and understands a broad range of non-complex, non-specialised contexts, topics and current events, including where specialists in a domain speak or sign with a non-specialist audience.</p> <p><i>See typical domain and situation types at the end of this table.</i></p>	<p>This competency is indirectly confirmed.</p> <p><i>See typical domain and situation types at the end of this table.</i></p>
Ethical Competency	<p>Has full and detailed knowledge and understanding of the relevant code of Ethics, and is able to apply this to situations in interpreting practice, client interactions and other professional activities.</p>	<p>Has full and detailed knowledge and understanding of the relevant code of Ethics, and is able to apply this to situations in interpreting practice, client interactions and other professional activities.</p>	<p>Has full and detailed knowledge and understanding of the relevant code of Ethics, and is able to apply this to situations in interpreting practice, client interactions and other professional activities.</p>	<p>Has full and detailed knowledge and understanding of the relevant code of Ethics, and is able to apply this to situations in interpreting practice, client interactions and other professional activities.</p>	<p>Has full and detailed knowledge and understanding of the relevant code of Ethics, and is able to apply this to situations in interpreting practice, client interactions and other professional activities.</p>
Research Competency	<p>Can use a variety of tools and methods to search for information, including highly specialist resources in a variety of domains, and is able to extract and manage specialised and complex information from research and apply it to the interpreting process.</p>	<p>Can use a variety of tools and methods to search for information, including highly specialist resources in the health or legal domain, and is able to extract and manage specialised and complex information from research and apply it to the interpreting process.</p>	<p>Can use a variety of tools and methods to search for information, including some specialist resources, and is able to extract and manage complex information from research and apply it to the interpreting process.</p>	<p>Can use some tools and methods to search for information and is able to extract and manage non-complex, non-specialised information from research and apply it to the interpreting process.</p>	<p>This competency is indirectly confirmed.</p>
Service Provision Competency	<p>Operates in the interpreting industry and manages interactions with clients and other interpreters to provide services.</p>	<p>Operates in the interpreting industry and manages interactions with clients and other interpreters to provide services.</p>	<p>Operates in the interpreting industry and manages interactions with clients to provide services.</p>	<p>Operates in the interpreting industry and manages interactions with clients to provide services.</p>	<p>Operates in the interpreting industry and manages interactions with clients to provide services.</p>



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Technological Competency	Knows and is able to use technology required for conference interpreting, including interpreting from a booth.	Knows and is able to use technology required for interpreting processes in the health or legal domain, including telephone interpreting, video and onscreen interpreting.	Knows and is able to use technology required for interpreting processes, including telephone interpreting, video and onscreen interpreting.	Knows and is able to use basic technology required for interpreting processes, i.e. telephone interpreting.	This competency is indirectly confirmed.
Typical Domain and Situation Types	<p>Speeches and presentations at high-level international exchanges, such as international conferences, summits, meetings and negotiations (e.g. UN summits, NAATI meetings, bilateral treaty negotiations). For signed languages this may include national conferences, summits, meetings and negotiations (e.g. Commonwealth government conferences).</p> <p>Typical domains include legal, technology, science, health, commerce, economy, diplomacy, politics.</p>	<p>Dialogues, speeches and presentations in the domain of specialisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health (e.g. clinician-patient consultation in a mental health or specialist medical situation) - Legal (e.g. during court proceedings) 	All situations in which a Certified Provisional Interpreter interprets, and dialogues, speeches and presentations in community interpreting settings including health (e.g. a clinician-patient consultation at a medical centre), legal (e.g. a client seeking a solicitor's advice), community (e.g. a speech at a community council meeting), immigration/settlement (e.g. visa issues at an airport), education (e.g. during school lessons), social services (e.g. discussion about alleged welfare fraud), financial (e.g. a client applying for a loan), housing (e.g. dispute at a tenancy tribunal), business (e.g. at a business meeting), employment (e.g. dispute about breach of employment contract), insurance (e.g. making an insurance claim), consumer affairs (e.g. enquiry about consumer rights).	Dialogues in community interpreting settings including health (e.g. a general medical consultation), legal (e.g. a witness describing an accident to a police officer), community (e.g. registering a car at a government service desk), immigration/settlement (e.g. enquiry about government services for new immigrants), education (e.g. a teacher-parent interview at a school), social services (e.g. enquiry about parental payments at a government office), financial (e.g. opening a bank account), housing (e.g. a request for repair work), business (e.g. customer purchasing a car), employment (e.g. enquiry about jobs at an employment agency), insurance (e.g. enquiry about car insurance with an insurance provider), consumer affairs (e.g. complaint about a product).	In the absence of interpreter certification for a language, Recognised Practising Interpreters may be asked to interpret in the same types of situations as certified interpreters.



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Typical Interpreting Modes	Spoken languages - Simultaneous (booth) - Consecutive (monologue) Signed languages - Simultaneous (monologue) - Consecutive (monologue)	Spoken languages - Consecutive (dialogue) - Sight translation - Simultaneous (dialogue) - Consecutive (monologue) Signed languages - Consecutive (dialogue) - Simultaneous (dialogue) - Sight translation - Simultaneous (monologue)	Spoken languages - Consecutive (dialogue) - Sight translation - Simultaneous (monologue) - Consecutive (monologue) Signed languages - Consecutive (dialogue) - Simultaneous (dialogue) - Sight translation - Simultaneous (monologue)	Spoken languages - Consecutive (dialogue) Signed languages - Simultaneous (dialogue) - Simultaneous (monologue)	In the absence of interpreter certification for a language, Recognised Practising Interpreters may be asked to interpret in the same modes as certified interpreters.