



Ethical Competency Test Sample Questions and Answers

Knowledge Questions and Answers

Explain Faithfulness of Interpretation according to the ASLIA (Australian Sign Language Interpreters' Association) code of ethics. Provide an example of this in professional practice.

Explanation: Every interpretation should be faithful to the source text. This means that the interpretation includes an adaption to make the form, tone and the deeper meaning of the source text felt in the target language and culture.

Example: If my client were using vulgar language, I would generally not censor it in my interpretation. Each client has the right to express themselves how they wish, and the responsibility to be aware of, and respond to what the other person is saying. Occasionally it is appropriate to clarify that the client using the vulgar language sufficiently understands the role of the interpreter and knows that EVERYTHING will be passed on. For some deaf clients (e.g. a deaf person who has had minimal education being arrested and not understanding that their swearing will be interpreted and viewed negatively by the police) this type of cultural bridging compensates for a lack of world knowledge and/or unintended consequences of their language use.

The AUSIT code of ethics lists 'clarity of role boundaries' as a principle. Explain this phrase according to the code of ethics. Provide an example where a lack of understanding of this can impede a translator or interpreter in his/her professional practice.

Explanation: Clarity of role boundaries means that interpreters and translators should not take on other roles or tasks that are undertaken by other parties involved in an assignment. They should respect the professional boundaries of other workers. They should also not be providing advice or guidance to their clients. If they have other tasks that they must perform because of employment arrangements, they should make it clear when they are doing these tasks and when they are undertaking interpreting or translating. They should explain their role to others who may not understand it.

Example: It is not uncommon for interpreters to be asked to undertake other roles, especially the role of advocate or advisers. If you were asked by a client whether you thought an operation advised by a doctor was beneficial or not, you may find yourself being held accountable if something went wrong. Interpreters need to make it very clear what their role is. This should ideally be undertaken at the beginning of an assignment but may need to be reiterated during an assignment.



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The AUSIT code of ethics lists 'confidentiality' as a principle. Explain this phrase according to the code of ethics, and name two occasions when disclosure would be permissible. Provide an example of a breach of confidentiality being allowed in professional practice.

Explanation: Confidentiality means not discussing or disclosing information that you have acquired during the assignment. Interpreters and translators should also not seek to take advantage of information they have acquired during their work. In the health and high security settings, I may have to disclose information if non-disclosure may result in someone's life being at risk.

Example: I may need to disclose information if I am asked to give evidence in court. The judge may order me to reveal what has been said by the client during an interpreting assignment. Another occasion may be if I was interpreting between say a journalist and an interviewee and both are clear that the information can be revealed to other people, then it would be fine.

Scenario Questions and Answers

You are interpreting for a deaf patient and a psychiatrist. The patient seems rather uncomfortable and does not respond with complete Auslan sentences. You are aware that the answers do not make much sense.

- *Identify the relevant ASLIA principle*
- *Explain how it applies to this scenario*
- *Describe the course of action that you would take*

Principle: Accuracy, Impartiality and Competence.

Explanation: Interpreters are required to pass on all the information without adding or deleting meaning (accuracy) and should not add their personal opinions to the information being relayed (impartiality). They are also required to be honest about their skill level, and competence for different jobs.

Response: As the interpreter in this case, firstly I would ask myself if the client's lack of clarity was definitely because of their mental state, or a lack of competency on my part. If I felt it was the client's issue, I would avoid trying to add information to fill the gaps and make it sound more sense. I would pass on the incomplete and nonsensical information (as this is important information about their state of mind for the psychiatrist to be aware of). However, I would also advise the psychiatrist what I am noticing and what I am doing, as a cultural/ linguistic explanation, so that s/he can factor that into their assessment.



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Scenario Questions and Answers

You are interpreting at an employment agency for a client and his case manager. The case manager hands you an agreement for the job seeker and asks you to translate it on the spot. You are not familiar with some of the terms used in the agreement.

- *Identify the relevant AUSIT principle*
- *Explain how it applies to this scenario*
- *Describe the course of action that you would take*

Principle: Competency

Explanation: If in the course of an interpreting assignment it becomes apparent to an interpreter that expertise beyond their competence is required then they shall inform the client immediately and offer to withdraw from the assignment.

Response: As I don't know the terms used, I would indicate this to the case manager and offer to withdraw from the assignment.

You are interpreting for a deaf person meeting with a mortgage broker to seek advice about a home loan. During the meeting, the broker excuses himself to collect some additional documents from another office. When the broker leaves the room, the deaf person asks you what you think about the advice that has been given and seeks your opinion about which home loan seems like the right one to pick.

- *Identify the relevant ASLIA principle*
- *Explain how it applies to this scenario*
- *Describe the course of action that you would take*

Principle: Scope of Practice.

Explanation: Practitioners should not perform other functions that are outside the scope of the interpreting assignment. They shouldn't provide advice or interject personal opinions.

Response: In this situation I would politely advise the client that I'm only here to interpret between both parties and as such I can't provide any advice on which home loan to choose.



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Scenario Questions and Answers

You have been asked to translate a police document that contains details about a particularly horrific domestic violence crime. As you progress through the document you find certain details of the crime repulsive and you feel that you cannot maintain your objectivity if you continue with the translation.

- *Identify the relevant AUSIT principle*
- *Explain how it applies to this scenario*
- *Describe the course of action that you would take*

Principle: Impartiality

Explanation: As a professional translator one of the main ethical principles is Impartiality. Translators should maintain impartiality in all situations. This means they should not show bias to either the author of the source text or the intended reader of the translation. When impartiality is difficult to maintain translators should notify their clients immediately and offer to withdraw from the assignment or find another acceptable strategy to resolve the issue.

Response: I will notify my client promptly that I am unable to continue the work as I'm unable to be impartial to the assignment. I feel my own personal feelings will interfere with the translation, so I will offer to withdraw from the assignment