

RESPONSES TO THE PROPOSED NAATI CERTIFICATION SCHEME DESIGN (RELEASED DECEMBER 2016)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge and thank our valuable cohort of members who have provided valuable input in the process of preparing this submission.

A. GENERAL FEEDBACK RE CERTIFICATION FOR AUSLAN/ENGLISH INTERPRETERS AND DEAF INTERPRETERS

Firstly, congratulations to NAATI for developing a Certification system that requires those wishing to enter and up skill in the profession, clear and appropriate prerequisites and pathways.

It is a great improvement on candidates merely sitting for one test with no explicit expectations that they will have a body of knowledge or minimum set of skills and attributes.

It is always preferable for people entering a profession to study at an appropriate level and this new scheme falls short of mandating qualifications, which is disappointing to some.

However, the current prerequisites and tests do at least have some minimum requirements i.e. the language competency, inter cultural competency and ethical competency tests and training modules that applicants must complete as a minimum pathway.

WHAT IS NEEDED:

There is no document to clarify where current accreditations align with the proposed Certification system or outlining how interpreters who hold current accreditation will transition into the new scheme.

This means interpreters need answers to questions such as:

Question 1: Will interpreters and translators holding current accreditation be expected to sit the new tests when the scheme is implemented?

Question 2: Will a Paraprofessional and Professional level accreditation be accepted as a pathway pre-requisite for the Provisionally Certified and Certified Interpreters?

Question 3: In the new system, will there be a minimum number of years at the Provisionally Certified level before an interpreter must upgrade to the Certified level?

RECOMMENDATIONS:

RECOMMENDATION 1: A transition document clearly outlining where the current accreditation aligns with the new system and the transition arrangements between the current and new system.

RECOMMENDATION 2: A preamble to the new system summarising the new resources to be used for prerequisites e.g. English and LOTE tests, and when they will be ready. Clarity on which LOTE will have language tests prepared by 2018.

B. OTHER ISSUES FOR AUSLAN AND DEAF INTERPRETERS

Question 4: Will the English Language, Auslan, intercultural and ethical tests be accessible for Deaf interpreters?

Question 5: Will the language test in Auslan (which will need to be developed by specialists) be ready by 2018?

C. PATHWAYS FEEDBACK

Prerequisites for Provisionally Certified Interpreter

All pathways prerequisites are appropriate and are a positive step, especially to give currently unaccredited educational interpreters a pathway to certification.

Prerequisites for Certified Interpreter

All pathways are appropriate generally with two observations:

- i) As queried above, will current paraprofessional accreditation be accepted as a prerequisite?
- ii) For interpreting practitioners of the English-Auslan pair, currently there are only 2 academic qualifications available as a pathway – Melbourne’s RMIT Diploma in Interpreting and Macquarie University’s Graduate Diploma of Auslan-English Interpreting.

Geographically and due to time constraints, it is difficult for Auslan interpreters to commit themselves to limited and visual based language course offerings, unlike other spoken/aural languages which may be available and more easily accessible online. Additionally, there are higher academic qualifications that can be studied to gain language competence in spoken languages, which are currently unavailable for Auslan. The current pathway options fall short of NAATI's proposed qualification of Advanced Diploma or higher.

Prerequisites for Certified Interpreter: Specialisation

On the whole, all pathways are appropriate, with provisions to be made for the following specialisations:

- i) Deaf Interpreters – while they perform an essential role in working with Deaf people with limited English vocabulary and comprehension, assignments are not as frequent as the more mainstream English-Auslan settings. A lesser quantity and/or a longer qualifying period needs to be afforded to Deaf Interpreters as a viable pathway.
- ii) Deafblind Interpreters – in the absence of formal qualifications for Deafblind interpreting, provision needs to be made for Deafblind interpreters to draw on a minimum of 3 years' experience in recognition of their specialisation.

Prerequisites for Certified Conference Interpreter

All pathways are appropriate generally with an observation, which is repeated from above:

- i) For interpreting practitioners of the English-Auslan pair, currently there are only 2 academic qualifications available as a pathway – Melbourne's RMIT Diploma in Interpreting and Macquarie University's Graduate Diploma of Auslan-English Interpreting.

Geographically and due to time constraints, it is difficult for Auslan interpreters to commit themselves to limited and visual based language course offerings, unlike other spoken/aural languages which may be available and more easily accessible online. Additionally, there are higher academic qualifications that can be studied to gain language competence in spoken languages, which are currently unavailable for Auslan. The current pathway options fall short of NAATI's proposed qualification of Advanced Diploma or higher.

Note: The tests in the new system are more appropriate and relevant for the Auslan field than the present system which requires interpreters to interpret only into their L1 or native language. As there are a limited number of interpreters who have Auslan as their native language, this is counterproductive for the field where most Deaf people want to access conferences that are delivered in English. So, the current system restricts the number of interpreters able to gain conference level accreditation in the English to Auslan direction.

RECOMMENDATION:

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Auslan/English Interpreters can attain both directions (even if assessed separately) even if Auslan is not their "L1".

D. SPECIFIC FEEDBACK RE TESTS:

CERTIFIED INTERPRETER

The test will be in both language directions. Each test will consist of seven tasks

- a. One telephone dialogue interpreting (consecutive mode) role play

The above test is not as relevant for the Auslan-English language pair as other languages.

Suggested replacing this Task 1 with an Auslan to English long simultaneous task which interpreters are expected to do for Auslan community needs.

- b. Face-to-face dialogue interpreting (consecutive mode) role plays
- c. Face-to-face dialogue interpreting (simultaneous mode) role play

In the Deaf community, interpreters usually use the simultaneous mode, although it is important that interpreters can use the consecutive mode for more complex language or high demand situations e.g. legal or mental health. Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) will be more commonly used from now on so it makes sense to require interpreters to manage interpreting in this mode.

For the Auslan/English interpreter test, suggestion is to have TWO simultaneous dialogues, with ONE a VRI task, and ONE consecutive dialogue

- d. Two Sight Translations, one from the Language Other than English (LOTE) into English and one English into LOTE

This test is appropriate for Auslan interpreters.

- e. One long consecutive task (English into LOTE) of an information session.

This should be in the simultaneous mode for Auslan/English, and as suggested above, there should also be one long simultaneous task from Auslan to English of an information session.

It could be called 'monologue interpreting task (short simultaneous)' see below re suggestion for nomenclature.

Question 6: How many minutes is the monologue interpreting task (short simultaneous) or long consecutive task (English into LOTE)?

All interpreting tasks will be based on real-life exchanges as encountered by non-English speakers in everyday life situations at the level of experts communicating with an educated but non-specialist audience, e.g. a doctor-patient consultation at a medical centre, a client applying for a business loan at a bank, enquiry about an insurance claim. Tasks will cover different domains and at least one assessment task will relate to a topic in the health domain and one in the legal domain. Approximate length – 1.5 hours.

This is good, but if done live, role-players would have to be trained not to adjust their speed or clarity of language delivery to accommodate the interpreter.

The length of time for the test is 1.5 hrs. An Auslan/English interpreter usually has a tandem for assignments of this length. For any interpreter, this is a demanding length of time to concentrate so breaks should be included.

Suggested that information for preparation be given for the monologue tasks in relation to the setting, clients and topic.

The nomenclature for the 'long consecutive task' does not match the meaning of the task for Auslan/English interpreters. If this was changed to 'monologue interpreting task (long consecutive)' or 'monologue interpreting task (long simultaneous)' then it could be used for all languages.

E. PROVISIONALLY CERTIFIED INTERPRETER

TEST FORMAT

The test will be in both language directions. Each test will consist of three tasks.

1. One telephone dialogue interpreting (consecutive mode) role play

For Auslan /English interpreters it would be more relevant to have an 'informative' monologue (short simultaneous). Again, this should be face to face as telephone interpreting not relevant for Auslan/English Interpreters. Task from English to Auslan (e.g. education, Centrelink/government or workplace) as this is the type of work done and expected of interpreters at this level.

2. Two face-to-face dialogue interpreting (consecutive mode) – role plays.

Suggested for Auslan/English interpreters: one simultaneous e.g. education and one consecutive, e.g. medical)

Each dialogue will relate to different domains and will be based on real-life exchanges as encountered by non-English speakers in everyday life situations in non-specialised and noncomplex contexts, e.g. enquiry about a library system, enquiry about government services for new immigrants, a customer purchasing a car Approximate length – 40 minutes.

This is good, but if done live, role players would have to be trained not to adjust their speed or clarity of language delivery to accommodate the interpreter. This often happens naturally when Deaf people are used in test situations.