LICS Certification Scheme

LICS Certified
Community Interpreting Service Provider

Foreword

Community interpreting is bidirectional interpreting that takes place in the course of communication among speakers of different languages.

The context is the provision of public services such as healthcare or community services and in settings such as government agencies, community centres, legal settings, educational institutions, and social services.

Other terms have been used to describe community interpreting such as "public service interpreting", "cultural interpreting", "dialogue interpreting", "institutional interpreting, "liaison interpreting" and "ad hoc interpreting".

However, community interpreting remains the most widely accepted term at international level.

1   Scope

This certification scheme specifies criteria and a procedure employed by Certification Bodies under the auspices of the Language Industry Certification System to certify services of community interpreting service providers (CISP).

This certification scheme is based on the requirements of the following standard:

- National Standard Guide for Community Interpreting Services, published by the Healthcare Interpretation Network – HIN. Toronto, Canada. First Edition. November 2007.[1]

Certification is based on the principles of ISO Guide 65; the terms and conditions of the LICS apply.

This certification scheme does not apply to the certification of court-interpreters.

2   Application

2.1 The applicant shall file an application using the form provided by the certification body.

2.2 The applicant shall appoint a contact person for the certification process.

2.3 The application shall specify the desired scope of certification in terms of business sites to be covered.

2.4 Together with the application the applicant provide documentation on the services to be certified. This documentation shall contain the following:

– the general features of the company of the applicant, including its name and the address(es) of its physical location(s) where services are provided,

– description of the structure of the applicant, including company profile, any specializations, etc.

– average number (related to the past 12 months) of community interpreters employed by the applicant

– average number of jobs handled per month (related to the past 12 months)

– information concerning all outsourced processes, subcontractors etc. used by the applicant that will affect conformity to criteria in Annex A.

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3   Audit

3.1 The audit shall be carried out by a Lead Auditor. A Lead Auditor is a formally trained and qualified auditor who has in-depth knowledge of this certification scheme and experience with the business of interpretation services.

3.2 The audit shall be carried out in accordance with the criteria given in Annex A.

3.3 The audit shall comprise the following elements:

- review of records and documentation of the procedures of the ISP

- review of records and documentation of interpretation jobs conducted by the ISP

- review of records and documentation of interpreters database and selection procedure for interpreters

- interviews with ISPs personnel in charge of tasks relevant to the certification criteria

- interviews with interpreters (on site and/or by means of telephone interviews)

- interviews with clients (on site and/or by means of telephone interviews)

3.4 At the end of the audit, the Lead Auditor or the audit team (if applicable) will analyse all information and audit evidence gathered during the audits to review the audit findings and agree on the audit conclusions. In case the audit is conducted by an audit team, decisions on audit conclusions shall be taken unanimously.

3.5 During the concluding meeting with the responsible management of the applicant, the Lead Auditor will present the audit conclusions to the applicant and will specify further steps to be taken.

3.6 The information provided by the Lead Auditor (or the audit team) to the certification body for the certification decision will include, as a minimum:

- the audit report(s),

- comments on the nonconformities and, where applicable, the correction and corrective actions taken by the client,

- a recommendation whether or not to grant certification, together with any conditions or observations.

4   Issuing the certificate

4.1 Based on the audit conclusions and the recommendation of the Lead Auditor the certification body will decide on the issue of the certificate. A positive assessment of the audit pursuant to clause 3 is the prerequisite for the issuing of the certificate.

4.2 The certificate is valid for a period of 6 years subject that the conditions to maintain the certificates are met by the certificate holder.

5   Surveillance activities

5.1 In order to maintain the certificate, surveillance audits shall be carried out on a 2-year cycle.

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5.2 Surveillance audits are on-site audits. The purpose of the surveillance audits(s) is for the certification body to maintain confidence that the certified ISP continues to fulfil the requirements of this certification scheme between recertification audits. The surveillance audit(s) programme shall include, at least the following items:

a) recruitment of interpreters,

b) sample checking of competence of interpreters,

c) sample checking of interpretation jobs,

d) a review of actions taken on nonconformities identified and recommendations given during the previous audit,

e) review of any changes introduced by the ISP affecting the compliance with the criteria of this certification scheme, and

f) use of marks and/or any other reference to certification.

6   Re-certification

In order to extend the validity of the certificate, a re-certification audit in accordance with clause 3 shall be conducted.

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Annex A Certification criteria

A.1 Interpreter's qualifications

National Standard Guide for Community Interpreting Services, Clause 5 "Interpreter's Qualifications"

A.1.1 The interpreting service provider (ISP) has a documented procedure in place to select competent and qualified community interpreters that ensure that community interpreters employed have the following competencies:

- Interpreting competence

- Linguistic Competence

- Research and technical competence.

A.1.2 Community interpreters employed by the ISP are able to demonstrate their competencies through the following:

a) Post secondary education, preferably a recognized degree of at least three years duration in translation or interpretation or a related field.

b) Interpreting training/education by a recognized academic institution.

c) Successful completion of a Language proficiency test recognized by academic and/or public institutions

d) Documented experience in the field.

A.1.3 In the event that the above cannot be met, the ISP:

- uses professionally skilled, competent interpreters who are otherwise qualified by education, training and experience to carry out the assignment successfully and

- properly monitors, assess and modify on an ongoing basis the interpreter's status based upon performance.

A.2 Clients / ISP relationship

National Standard Guide for Community Interpreting Services, Clause 6 "Responsibilities of clients"

A.2.1   The ISP has a documented procedure in place that requests the client to inform the ISP of any known risks and provide any advice, protection and safety measures generally available to participants in the interpreted event. The interpreter shall never be forced to enter a situation that poses a risk to his/her health and well being.

A.2.2   The ISP requests the client to subscribe to respect the Standards of Practice and Ethical Principles[2] at all times.

A.2.3   The ISP requests the client to provide as much information as possible about the requested assignment such as background and parallel texts and speaker's notes in order to assist the interpreter in researching the subject and familiarizing him/herself with the subject. Any related documentation, previously translated files or glossaries related to the case are essential to the successful completion of the assignment.

A.2.4   The ISP provides the client with the following advise:

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[2] See National Standard Guide for Community Interpreting Services, Annex I.

- to book additional time beyond that required in a non-interpreted encounter,

- to avoid long, complex sentences, the use of slang, idiomatic expressions, highly technical vocabulary or jargon,

- to speak clearly and at a moderate pace,

- to talk directly to the LEP/LFP party, not to the interpreter,

- never to ask the interpreter for his/her opinion,

- for long assignments, to provide breaks at appropriate intervals since accuracy declines with time,

- to pause frequently to allow the interpreter to render all the information,

- to be aware of non-verbal communication,

- to encourage the interpreter to request clarification as required,

- to provide an adequate working environment,

- always to attempt to ensure the proper mode of interpreting is used (consecutive or simultaneous).

A.3 Responsibilities of Interpreting Service Providers – ISP

National Standard Guide for Community Interpreting Services, Clause 7 "Responsibilities of Interpreting Service Providers"

A.3.1 The ISPs ensures that the competencies required of interpreters employed are maintained and updated.

A.3.2 Responsibilities to the client

A.3.2.1 The ISP ensures all interpreters hired or contracted are qualified professionals capable of performing the specified task.

A.3.2.2 The ISP discloses the interpreter's qualifications to the client especially if the interpreter available does not meet the requirements for the specific setting.

A.3.2.3 The ISP briefs the client on how to work effectively with interpreters.

A.3.2.4 The ISP informs the client promptly if an interpreter is not available in the requested language.

A.3.2.5 The ISP provides the client with a detailed Client-ISP agreement specifying pricing, terms, policies and procedures for interpreting assignments.

A.3.3 Responsibilities to the Interpreter

A.3.3.1 The ISP provides the interpreter with detailed information about the assignment. This includes:

   a) requesting context/materials/documentation from the client, as applicable,

   b) providing any glossaries or resources available,

   c) providing administrative details such as complete address, contact information, etc.

A.3.3.2 The ISP ensures proper working conditions for the interpreter. This includes:

   a) promoting an adequate working environment,

   b) briefing the client about the interpreter's needs,

   c) providing the required number of interpreters or team of interpreters if applicable.

A.3.3.3 The ISP pays within a reasonable timeframe and/or according to established agreement between the parties.

A.3.3.4 The ISP clearly establishes and documents terms and conditions of the working relationship with interpreters.

A.4. Role and responsibilities of interpreters

National Standard Guide for Community Interpreting Services, Clause 8 "Role and Responsibilities of Interpreters"

A.4.1 The ISP ensures that the interpreter is introduced and advised on his/her roles and responsibilities. The role of the interpreter is to facilitate verbal communication by conveying as faithfully[3] as possible a message between two parties who do not share a common language.

A.4.2 The ISP ensures that the interpreters employed meet the following requirements:

- follow the standards of practice and ethical principles at all times,
- accept only those interpreting assignments that he/she is able to perform at the highest professional level,
- participate in professional development activities whenever possible,
- acquire the proper terminology and enhance his/her knowledge by creating and updating terminology files,
- maintain and improve his/her linguistic competencies,
- the interpreter is able to understand and convey cultural nuances without assuming the role of advocate or cultural broker.

A.4.3 The ISP requests interpreters assigned to:

- ask for information in advance regarding the nature of his/her assignment in order to be able to research and adequately prepare for it,
- properly introduce himself or herself to all parties and explain the role of the interpreter,
- strictly comply with scheduled / booked time,
- maintain professional appearance and behavior,
- follow the protocols, terms and procedures established / agreed upon with the ISP.

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[3] "Faithfully" is defined as interpretation that preserves the meaning of the message, without omissions, additions or alterations.