

Information on Interpreting and Translating

Many refugees consider using their language skills to look for work in interpreting and/or translating. Some people consider this as a long term career. Some people consider it as a way to find a job in the short term. It is wise to carefully consider your skills and motivations to do this before embarking on finding a job in it. It usually requires at least voluntary experience first in order to gain references and familiarity with doing the work in the UK.

Do I need specific interpreting or translating qualifications to find work in translating or interpreting?

It is possible to find **Interpreting** (ie spoken language-language work) work using your multilingual skills, either with or without specialist Interpreting training. Of course the more experience and contacts you develop, the more work you may find. Many employers will require qualifications before you can apply. **The Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) is the key qualification.** Also the Advanced Community Interpreting Certificate.

A candidate applying for a **translating** (ie written language-language) position should usually have a **Diploma in Translation** from the Institute of Linguists.

(Feb 2010 from www.prospects.ac.uk)

http://www.prospects.ac.uk/p/types_of_job/interpreter_entry_requirements.jsp

Interpreter: Entry requirements

This area of work is open to all graduates with a high level of language knowledge. For most, this will mean a degree in one of the following subjects:

- modern languages;
- translation and interpreting;
- modern languages and interpreting.

Entry is also possible, however, for graduates who have an unrelated degree, but who have the required language skills. Specialist knowledge in science, engineering, the environment, business, economics, law, or politics can be helpful, as interpreters work for a wide range of clients and understanding specialist vocabulary and concepts to a high level is essential.

This area of work is open to people with an HND/foundation degree in one of the above subjects, although you will need to progress to degree-level study and/or a diploma in interpreting in order to enter the profession. Entry without a degree or

HND/foundation degree is unlikely **except where practitioners have come to interpreting through life experience, for example, a bilingual upbringing, residence abroad or regular work with speakers of a second language.**

A postgraduate diploma or Masters in interpreting techniques is usually expected. Some courses focus on particular aspects of interpreting, but there are options which also develop complementary skills, such as translation. These courses are run in several institutions, both full time and part time.

Pre-entry experience is not essential but, if you want to work as a professional interpreter, you will need to show evidence of the following:

- an excellent command of English and other language/s into which you may interpret;
- fluency in at least two, and ideally more, additional languages;
- a good memory and the ability to learn fast;
- the skills to interact well with people and work as part of a team;
- the ability to use discretion and maintain confidentiality;
- flexibility to deal calmly with the unexpected and sometimes difficult situations;
- dedication and commitment;
- knowledge of current affairs, politics and different cultures.

In addition, conference and court interpreters must be confident about speaking in public and have a clear and pleasant speaking voice.

While building a network of contacts and developing experience, some interpreters offer their services voluntarily. They may also do this in the later stages of their career, if it is financially viable to do so. **Interpreters will often use speculative applications in order to approach agencies when seeking work.**

Competition is fierce particularly amongst the major European languages. **If you do not have professional interpreting qualifications, you may still find informal work as an interpreter if you are fluent, or almost fluent, in more than one language, but rates of pay will be lower than those for professionally qualified interpreters**

Interpreter: Training

Whilst a relevant first and/or postgraduate interpreting degree or diploma provides the required academic training, many of the core practical skills needed in interpreting are gained on the job.

In order to ensure a certain standard of professionalism, full membership of the main professional bodies requires references, successful completion of tests and experience. For example, membership of the [Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence \(AIIC\)](#) requires 150 days' experience and the [Institute of Translation and Interpreting \(ITI\)](#) requires 200, usually freelance. Gaining this practical experience can be challenging and may take several years to achieve.

The Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) is a qualifying examination for membership of the [National Register of Public Service Interpreters \(NRPSI\)](#) for those working in the context of public services, such as court hearings, police interviews, other legal contexts, health and government-related services. The DPSI can be taken through the [Chartered Institute of Linguists \(IoL\)](#) .

Keeping up to date with developments in your particular area of work is vital, particularly in business and industry. The key professional bodies provide training courses and networking opportunities to support continuing professional development (CPD). The ITI interpreters' network, for example, offers support and training on subjects such as note-taking skills, marketing and networking. Intensive courses are available through the IoL to enable interpreters to build up their professional skills in areas including conference and court interpreting.

Interpreter: Contacts and resources

Jobs and work

- [Aquarius Directory of Translators and Interpreters](#)
- [Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence \(AIIC\)](#)
- [Asylum and Immigration Tribunal](#)
- [Chartered Institute of Linguists \(IoL\)](#)
- [Civil Service Jobs Online](#)
- [Court of Justice of the European Communities](#)
- [Directorate General for Interpretation](#)
- [European Central Bank](#)
- [eu-careers](#)
- [European Commission](#)
- [European Personnel Selection Office \(EPSO\)](#)
- [European Union \(EU\)](#)
- [Find-A-Linguist](#)
- [Home Office](#)
- [Institute of Translation and Interpreting \(ITI\)](#)
- [Languages Work](#)
- [Ministry of Defence \(MoD\)](#)

- [National Register of Public Service Interpreters \(NRPSI\)](#)
- [North Atlantic Treaty Organisation \(NATO\)](#)
- [Association of Police and Court Interpreters](#)
- [Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters](#)
- [The European Commission \(Representation in the UK\)](#)
- [UK Border Agency \(UKBA\)](#)
- [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation \(UNESCO\)](#)

Translator: Training

The [Institute of Translation and Interpreting \(ITI\)](#) offers short courses and workshops aimed at developing the business, linguistic and technological skills of translators. Many translators become members of the ITI. There are several levels of membership but becoming a qualified member is a mark of professional recognition. For this level of membership, you would usually need:

- a minimum of three to five years' full-time experience (or a correspondingly longer period part-time);
- a successful assessment of work or a pass in the ITI Membership Examination.

Membership of the [Chartered Institute of Linguists \(IoL\)](#) may also be helpful and can provide professional recognition as well as the opportunity to network at events, seminars and conferences.

Full-time employed translators may choose to work towards the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) **Level 7 Diploma in Translation**, awarded by the IoL.

Translator: Contacts and resources

Jobs and Work

- [Association of Translation Companies \(ATC\)](#) - use their list of members for translation agencies' contact details
- [Association of Welsh Translators and Interpreters](#)
- [Chartered Institute of Linguists \(IoL\)](#) - also the awarding body for professional qualifications
- [Civil Service Jobs Online](#)
- [Directorate General for Translation \(DGT\)](#)
- [EU Careers](#)

- [European Commission](#)
- [European Commission Traineeships Office \(Bureau de Stages\)](#)
- [European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities](#)
- [European Personnel Selection Office \(EPSO\)](#)
- [European Society for Translation Studies](#)
- [European Union \(EU\)](#)
- [Find-A-Linguist](#)
- [GCHQ Careers](#)
- [Institute of Translation and Interpreting \(ITI\)](#) - also offers training and workshops
- [International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)](#)
- [International Federation of Translators](#) - also a good source of news about translation-related issues
- [Lingo24 - Translation Industry Career Guide](#)
- [Literary Translation](#)
- [MI5 Careers](#)
- [National Union of Professional Interpreters and Translators \(NUPIT\)](#)
- [North Atlantic Treaty Organisation \(NATO\)](#)
- [North-West Translators' Network](#) - support, training and networking for translators in the north-west of England
- [Translators Association of the Society of Authors](#)
- [United Nations \(UN\)](#)
- [Yellow Pages](#)

Examples of large agencies:

Large agencies have contracts with government agencies. For example, with the Department for Work and Pensions, the Inland Revenues, HM Court Service, the probation Service, Local authorities as well as private organisations.

- **Language Line Services Ltd UK**

Their qualifications and experience requirements for Translating
<http://www.languageline.co.uk/page/TQ/>

About Interpreting
<http://www.languageline.co.uk/page/ganda/>

- **The Bigword Group**

Large public service translating and interpreting company

<http://www.thebigword.com/client/ukgov/en/index.html>

Information about their translators and interpreters

<http://www.thebigword.com/client/ukgov/en/quality.html>

- **Language Point**

Large public service translating and interpreting company

www.languagepoint.co.uk

Information about their services

<http://www.languagepoint.co.uk/information.html>

- **Language Empire**

Public service translating and interpreting company

<http://www.language-empire.com/>

- **LCB Services,**

Public service translating and interpreting company

www.lcbervices.com/language

Information about their services

<http://www.lcbervices.com/language.html>

- **Language Shop** covering East London area

<http://www.languageshop.org/>

Also check your Local Authority website for local translating services.

- **Praxis Interpreting Services** (Refugee and Migrants agency)

http://www.praxis.org.uk/index.php?page=2_24