**Background**

In recognition of the central role that Language Service Providers (LSPs) play in the Australian Translation/Interpreting industry, the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) has reflected on ways of working more closely with LSPs. One way of ensuring that LSPs uphold the values of AUSIT is by committing to comply with the standards set out for practitioners and choosing to become AUSIT Industry Affiliates.

This document adapts the AUSIT Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct (CECC), as far as it is relevant, to AUSIT Industry Affiliates. This is intended as a guide to the way that AUSIT Industry Affiliates work with T&I practitioners to uphold the AUSIT CECC. Further, this document contains a list of industry-specific guidelines relevant to AUSIT Industry Affiliates as they inform and advance the delivery of quality translation and interpreting services.

BEST PRACTICES

FOR AUSIT Industry Affiliates - Language Service Providers

WORKING WITH TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS IN AUSTRALIA

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**[Scope](#bookmark0" \o "Current Document)**

This Best Practices document for LSPs working with translators and interpreters in Australia consists of recommendations made by the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT). They have been prepared by AUSIT’s Ethics and Professional Practice Committee for use by Australian LSPs in general, and AUSIT Industry Affiliates in particular. This document has been designed to enhance industry support for the AUSIT CECC for translating and interpreting practitioners.

Compliance with these practices is designed to achieve optimal outcomes for all parties as it is acknowledged that individual practitioners, LSPs and AUSIT, as the national professional association, share in the responsibility to build ethical practices whilst providing effective language services for the translating and interpreting industry.

**Part 1: AUSIT Industry Affiliates supporting the AUSIT Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct**

# Professional Conduct

* 1. LSPs take concrete steps to provide practitioners with a full and complete job briefing in advance of every assignment. This allows practitioners to undertake appropriate preparation for all assignments.
	2. Where no briefing has been provided (or where the briefing provided has been inadequate) LSPs respond appropriately to enquiries for additional information from practitioners. This may include contacting the client for further information where necessary and/or requested by T&I practitioners. Appropriate preparation for assignments is a hallmark of practitioners’ professional conduct in assignments.

*Ethical and conduct issues specific to interpreters*

* 1. LSPs make appropriate inquiries from clients and provide, as part of the assignment brief, relevant information to interpreters such as the names of clients and associated parties in advance of the assignment. This may include family members who will also be in attendance and/or other parties (e.g. lawyer-client meetings). This enables interpreters to comply with the requirement to disclose any conflict of interest in a timely manner. Further, supplying the names of clients as part of the brief allows a different interpreter to be sourced where necessary without causing delays to the client.

* 1. Where names of clients and associated parties are not provided to interpreters in advance, the interpreter may not be in a position to discover a potential conflict of interest until the day and time of the assignment itself. In such a situation, the LSP does not penalise the interpreter for failure to disclose this in advance. (See also Section 4 below.)

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# [Confidentiality](#bookmark0)

* 1. LSPs support practitioners who maintain confidentiality.
	2. Where the same LSP assigns multiple practitioners to the same client, interpreters and translators are permitted to discuss with each other details relevant to the assignment for the sole purpose of optimising their ability to satisfactorily complete the assignment. LSPs facilitate contact between practitioners in order to achieve this goal.

# [Competence](#bookmark0)

* 1. LSPs keep records of practitioners’ qualifications and achievements and establish priority lists in order to prioritise the allocation of assignments to practitioners according to their level of certification or higher credentials available. In order to do this, LSPs take into account academic qualifications, NAATI certification level and other relevant information.
	2. LSPs keep up-to-date information about practitioners’ level of training and qualifications specific to translation and interpreting, level of NAATI certification, length of experience working in the T&I sector, preferred fields of work and level and areas of PD engagement. Where possible, LSPs allocate assignments to translators and interpreters with expertise or experience in the area/field to which the assignment relates.
	3. LSPs monitor the performance level of translators and interpreters such that issues identified by translators and interpreters or issues identified by clients are recorded to better inform LSPs’ prioritisation of assignments to specific practitioners.
	4. Related to the principle of professional conduct contained in section 1 above and the requirement for translators and interpreters to display this, it is important that to assure a translator’s or interpreter’s competence, LSPs provide information on the subject matter to them in advance of the assignment as part of the assignment brief, along with suitable reference material and background information. This allows translators and interpreters to comply with the requirement of only accepting work which they are

competent to perform, and allow a different practitioner to be sourced where necessary without causing delays to the client.

* 1. If it becomes apparent during the course of an assignment that expertise beyond the practitioner’s competence is required, LSPs work with the practitioner and clients to resolve the situation. Where it becomes apparent only after the acceptance or commencement of the assignment that a competence level beyond that of the translator or interpreter is required, translators or interpreters who identify this are not penalised for doing so.

*Ethical and conduct issues specific to interpreters*

* 1. Where there is a significant discrepancy between the information provided in a briefing and the level of competence required to complete an assignment, if the interpreter subsequently requests to withdraw from an assignment the LSPs do not penalise the interpreter for doing so.

# [Impartiality](#bookmark0)

* 1. LSPs encourage translators or interpreters who believe that they are unable to maintain impartiality to convey this to all clients who are part of the assignment. Translators and interpreters consider the consequences of their inability to maintain impartiality on their own ability to continue in the assignment. They also acknowledge the responses from all other clients who are part of the assignment in relation to the translator’s or interpreter’s inability to maintain impartiality. Where possible, LSPs work with translators and interpreters to suggest a course of actions to address situations where impartiality may not be maintained.
	2. Where an inadequate or no briefing has been provided to the translator or interpreter in advance, and the situation could not have been known beforehand, the practitioner is not penalised for requesting to withdraw from an assignment.
	3. LSPs do not penalise interpreters and translators who disclose a potential conflict of interest. This situation applies to a potential conflict of interest, a perceived conflict of interest, or an actual conflict of interest.

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# Accuracy

* 1. The transfer of a source message without omission, addition or distortion is a key principle of ethical practice. LSPs that become aware that a brief requires a departure from this principle provide a clear explanation why this is required and how this is to be operationalised. This includes informing other key stakeholders, i.e. consumers of translation/interpreting services, of the departure from this principle.

*Ethical and conduct issues specific to translators*

* 1. LSPs provide time frames for assignments so that translators have sufficient time to research and complete a translation to ensure its accuracy.
	2. When an LSP client requests changes in a translation, LSPs give translators complete flexibility to decide whether to implement any of the requested changes to the translation. Where translators are unable to make the requested edits without compromising accuracy or other aspects of the text’s integrity, LSPs support the translator’s stance. LSPs do not penalise translators for making ethical decisions in respect of their practice. LSPs pay translators in full for all assignments completed where accuracy and quality are maintained, regardless of client satisfaction or payment. This recognises that the contract to perform the translation is between the translator and the LSP, not between the translator and the client.

# [Clarity of role boundaries](#bookmark0)

* 1. LSPs do not expect interpreters and translators to offer advocacy, guidance or advice as part of their interpreting or translating duties. Where additional tasks are required to be performed, this is made clear in the assignment brief. Additional tasks allocated to an interpreter or translator and/or additional roles allocated to them, e.g. business interpreter *and* local guide, commercial translator *and* text writer providing localisation, is made clear to all parties concerned. Further, LSPs adequately and fair compensate practitioners for any additional task or work required.

*Ethical and conduct issues specific to translators*

* 1. LSPs adequately brief translators on any client transcreation needs in addition to standard translation requirements. This includes any situations such as when the translator is permitted to amend or modify the target text in order to maintain cultural

sensitivity, even if doing so would ordinarily be considered a breach of the principle of accuracy, or similar situations.

# Maintaining professional relationships

* 1. LSPs maintain professional standards when working with interpreters and translators.
	2. LSPs support interpreters who seek to secure appropriate working conditions outlined and do not penalise interpreters and translators for attempting to secure a satisfactory physical environment.

*Ethical and conduct issues specific to interpreters*

* 1. LSPs make inquiries from their clients in relation to the physical environment for interpreters to perform their duties at the time when a booking is made with the view of obtaining the best possible working conditions for interpreters. This may include arranging the supply of devices and aids which participants typically require for hearing and speaking, such as appropriate physical arrangements for confidentiality, provision of appropriate seating, security measures in cases of physical risk, or appropriate standard booths for conference interpreting. It also includes working with interpreters to ensure that when they work in remote assignments, they are located in a quiet space without the presence of others to maintain confidentiality.
	2. LSPs ensure that all interpreter bookings contain sufficient time for scheduling reasonable breaks to avoid interpreter fatigue. Where it is known in advance that breaks will be unable to be appropriately scheduled, LSPs raise this with their clients as part of the working conditions of interpreters and suggest to their clients booking multiple interpreters to enable practitioners to provide high quality interpreting that is not affected by interpreter fatigue.
	3. LSPs seek feedback from interpreters regarding working conditions at institutional locations. LSPs maintain a register of feedback so that they can adequately brief interpreters in advance of future assignments, or request adaptations to be made by the client when making the booking.
	4. Where interpreters report that their impartiality may be difficult to maintain due to the distressing nature of an assignment that may also include vicarious or secondary trauma, LSPs ensure that counselling services (e.g. EAP) are made available to practitioners.

# [Professional](#bookmark0) development

* 1. LSPs take active steps to encourage practitioners to undertake professional development activities.
	2. LSPs require translators and interpreters to provide information on their PD training (including successful completion thereof).
	3. LSPs prioritise the allocation of assignments to practitioners who provide evidence that they are regularly undertaking continuous professional development activities.
	4. LSPs take steps to provide mentorship program to practitioners in languages which lack experienced practitioners in a particular area. This allows practitioners to gain experience under the mentorship of a learned colleague and permit them to ask questions without breaching any of the requirements to maintain confidentiality.

# Professional solidarity

* 1. LSPs support practitioners who maintain professional solidarity.
	2. LSPs support interpreters and translators professionally and offer them assistance where necessary.
	3. LSPs’ actions further the interests of the profession at all times.
	4. LSPs actively encourage practitioners to become members of the national professional association, AUSIT.
	5. LSPs develop a schedule of fees for the remuneration of translators and interpreters which reflects the skill level required for the assignment and the level of practitioners’ credentials.
	6. LSPs work to enable automatic personal superannuation contributions and voluntary tax deductions on behalf of the practitioners they engage, regardless of their status as employees, contractors or suppliers. This supports the longevity of the profession and works to reduce the lack of job stability in the industry.
	7. LSPs investigate disputes in a co-operative, constructive and professional manner, and make reference to the AUSIT Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct in doing so. If in a dispute it is found that practitioners acted according to the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct, LSPs do not penalise practitioners for having done this. This includes the ability to receive offers for assignments in the future.
	8. AUSIT Industry Affiliates may refer any unresolved disputes with AUSIT members to the AUSIT Board of Professional Conduct for review. LSPs who are AUSIT Industry Affiliates acknowledge that the conclusive decision of the Board applies to all members, with the provision of appeal or review in the interests of natural justice.

*Ethical and conduct issues specific to translators*

* 1. When recruiting editors and proof-readers, LSPs prioritise translators who provide feedback on translation in a professional manner, and who restrict themselves to commenting on errors of accuracy and content rather than focussing on stylistic differences of opinion.

**Part 2: Guideline documents instructive to LSPs, consumers of T&I services and/or T&I practitioners**

This section of the Best Practices for Industry Affiliates contains a list of guideline documents developed either by AUSIT, government bodies, universities and other educational institutions and sector specific bodies. Industry Affiliates are strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with these guideline documents. They outline features of policy, procedures and/or practice that are conducive to an informed and responsible approach to the provision and delivery of professional T&I services by Industry Affiliate Language Service Providers

Language Service Policies (National > State/Territory)

* + [Australian Government Language Services Guidelines](https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settlement-services-subsite/files/language-services-guidelines.pdf) (Dept. of Home Affairs, 2019)
	+ [Assessing Interpreting and Translating Services](https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settlement-services-subsite/files/assessing-interpreting-translating-services-form.pdf) (Dept. of Home Affairs, 2019)
	+ [How to work with interpreters and translators: A guide to effectively using language services](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/how-work-interpreting-and-translating-services) (Victoria State Government, Department of Health and Human Services, 2017)
	+ [Multilingual Information Online: Victorian Government Guidelines on Policy and Procedures](https://www.vic.gov.au/providing-multilingual-information-online) (Victoria State Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2019)
	+ [WA Language Services Policy 2020](https://www.omi.wa.gov.au/resources-and-statistics/publications/publication/language-services-policy-2020) (Western Australia State Government, Office of Multicultural Interests, 2020)
	+ [Multicultural Education Aides and T&I Professionals. The MEA Handbook: Guidelines on the employment and roles of multicultural education aides in Victorian Government Schools – see 5.2 Interpreting and translating services](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/eal-mea-handbook.pdf) (Victoria State Government, Department of Education and Training, 2022)
	+ [Language Services Series](https://www.ceh.org.au/?s=language+services+series) (Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health, 2014)

Translation (National > State/Territory)

* + [Procuring Translation Services](https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settlement-services-subsite/files/procuring-translating-services.pdf) (Dept. of Home Affairs, 2019)
	+ [Translation. Getting it right](https://ausit.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/AUSIT_getting-it-right_translation.pdf). (AUSIT, 2020)
	+ [Effective Translations: Victorian Government Guidelines on Policy and Procedures](https://www.vgls.vic.gov.au/client/en_AU/search/asset/1267688/0) (Victoria State Government, Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, 2017)
	+ [“Can we just check it?” Guidelines for Checking of Health/Medical Translations](https://www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au/services/translation/pdf/guidelinesforcheckingofhealthmedicaltranslations.pdf) (NSW State Government, NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service, 2019)

Interpreting (National > State/Territory)

* + Procuring Interpreting Services (Dept. of Home Affairs, 2019)
	+ [Interpreting. Getting it right](https://ausit.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/AUSIT_getting-it-right_interpreting.pdf) (AUSIT, 2020)
	+ [Recommended Telephone Interpreting Protocols](https://ausit.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/AUSIT_Telephone_Interpreting_Protocols.pdf) (AUSIT, 2020)
	+ [Recommended Remote Video Interpreting Protocols](http://ausit.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Recommended_RVI_Protocols.pdf) (AUSIT, 2022)
	+ [Recommended National Standards for Working with Interpreters in Courts and Tribunals](http://www.naati.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/JCDD-Recommended-National-Standards-for-Working-with-Interpreters-in-Courts-and-Tribunals-second-edition.pdf) (Judicial Council on Cultural Diversity, 2nd ed., 2022)
	+ [Using Interpreters and Family Safety](https://www.dss.gov.au/women-programs-services-reducing-violence-family-safety-pack/interpreters-and-family-safety) (Australian Government, Department of Social Services, 2015)
	+ [Using Interpreting Services: Victorian Government Guidelines on Policy and Procedures](https://content.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-08/Vic-Gov-Using-interpreting-services-guidelines.pdf) (Victoria State Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2019)
	+ [Guide for Interpreters](https://www.mht.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/201904/Guide-for-interpreters.pdf) (Victoria State Government, Mental Health Tribunal, 2017)
	+ [Standard Procedures for Working with Health Care Interpreters](https://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/pds/ActivePDSDocuments/PD2017_044.pdf) (NSW State Government, NSW Health, 2017)
	+ [Guide for Clinicians Working with Interpreters in Healthcare Settings](https://culturaldiversityhealth.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Guide-for-clinicians-working-with-interpreters-in-healthcare-settings-Jan2019.pdf) (Migrant & Refugee Women’s Health Partnership, 2019)
	+ [Mental Health Interpreting Guidelines for Interpreters](https://research.monash.edu/files/299061728/Mental_Health_Interpreting_Guidelines_for_Interpreters_29.XI.2017.pdf) (Monash University and VITS Language Loop, 2017)
	+ [Working with Interpreters: A Practice Guide for Psychologists](https://ausit.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/APS-Working-with-Interpreters-Practice-Guide-for-Psychologists_2013.pdf) (Australian Psychological Society, 2013)
	+ [Working with interpreters by phone in a family violence setting](https://intouch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/inTouch_TipSheetProfessionals_WorkingWithInterpretersByPhoneInFVSetting_website.pdf) (InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence, 2020)
	+ [A guide for engaging and working with interpreters in cases of domestic and family violence, and sexual assault](https://www.qcoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Guide_engaging_interpreters_DFV.pdf) (Queensland Council of Social Service, 2018)
	+ [Good Practice Guide: Working with Interpreters](https://www.cmy.net.au/resource/working-with-interpreters-2/) (Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2011)