

Diploma in Translation

Handbook for Candidates

Updated July 2014

This handbook supersedes all previous editions. Candidates and teaching staff must ensure that they are working from the current edition of the handbook. The IoL Educational Trust cannot be held responsible for any problems arising from use of an out-of-date version.

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Ofqual Qualification Accreditation No. 501/1445/1QCF Level 7

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Preface

The Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL) serves the interests of professional linguists throughout the world and the IoL Educational Trust (IoLET) – an associated charity of the Institute – is a respected awarding organisation recognised by Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) delivering nationally accredited language qualifications.

Founded in 1910, the Institute now has around 5,700 Fellows, Members, Associate Members and Students. It aims to:

- serve the professional interests of its members
- set the professional standard for language practitioners
- be an authoritative and respected voice promoting the learning and use of languages
- provide advice to organisations engaged in the formulation of policy and strategy affecting languages in the UK

The Institute publishes a bi-monthly authoritative journal, *The Linguist*, and is actively involved in promoting languages as well as raising awareness of the importance and relevance of language knowledge and use through engagement with national and international projects.

IoLET qualifications serve both professional linguists, providing the gold standard for translators and interpreters, recognised widely in the UK and around the world, as well as other linguists who may have a different primary role but who use their language(s) on a regular basis in their professional work.

The Diploma in Translation was first offered in 1989 and is now regarded as the gold standard for translation professionals. It is taken in around 40 countries annually as candidates around the world recognise the benefits that a high-level qualification brings. It serves both as an entry qualification for organisations employing translators, as a validation for freelance translator for their skills and has become the qualification of choice for organisations when selecting professional translators.

Ann Carlisle
Executive Director
IoL Educational Trust (IoLET)

July 2014

Special note:

The IoL Educational Trust (IoLET) organises thousands of individual examinations every year. The vast majority proceed without a hitch. However, there are occasional and isolated instances of unforeseen problems, such as a centre having technical problems or scripts being lost in the post. In such circumstances IoLET always does its best to rectify such problems as soon as possible, but may have to make alternative arrangements, such as a re-sit at the next Diploma in Translation (DipTrans) examination. IoLET will not be responsible for any consequential losses to candidates or centres arising from such problems.

Equal opportunities policy for examination candidates

IoLET takes into account all current legislation in relation to diversity and equality. IoLET is committed to equality of access to its examinations for all candidates regardless of gender, age, ethnic origin, nationality, creed, sexual orientation, marital status, employment status or disability.

IoLET seeks to ensure that:

- the content and assessment of its examinations are non-discriminatory and are appropriate to the knowledge and skills specified;
- the style and language of IoLET documentation is readily understood and does not reflect stereotyped or biased attitudes;
- all persons associated with the examinations follow fair and just processes and procedures.

In the case of a query relating to this policy, candidates should contact the Director of Examinations at IoLET in writing.

Introduction

The Diploma in Translation is a postgraduate level (Masters) qualification intended for working translators and for those who, having reached a high level of linguistic competence, wish to embark on a career in professional translation. It is available to candidates with a level equivalent to a good university degree in one or more modern languages.

Successful candidates are entitled to use the designation 'DipTrans IoLET' and may be eligible to apply for Membership or Associate Membership of the CIOL.

The diploma tests the ability of candidates to translate from a source language into the mother tongue (target language) to a professional standard and their awareness of the professional activity of translation. Candidates are required to have an appropriate level of writing skills in their target language. The passages set for translation will be of a standard of difficulty that translators would expect to meet in their daily work. They will not, however, be of a highly technical or specialised nature.

It must be stressed that candidates, even those holding a degree in languages, generally require additional experience or training. IoLET is an awarding organisation and does not run courses. Candidates are advised to contact IoLET for a list of examination centres running DipTrans courses or visit www.ciol.org.uk.

Centres are required to register as approved centres on an annual basis. Candidates should note, however, that IoLET exerts no control over any tuition offered by external organisations.

Full professional competence is normally achieved only by translators working into their language of habitual use. Please note that the DipTrans is not suitable for candidates seeking a general test of language competence.

This handbook should be read in conjunction with the Examination Candidate Regulations, available from IoLET by emailing info.diptrans@ciol.org.uk or by visiting www.ciol.org.uk.

Diploma in Translation

1. Examination content

The examination consists of three units which are as follows:

Unit 01: Written Translation of a General Text 3 hours

A text of about 600 words of a demanding but non-specialised nature will be set. Candidates will be required to translate the text into their target language to a professional standard of accuracy.

Unit 02: Written Translation of a Semi-specialised Text 2 hours

Three texts of a semi-specialised nature, each of approximately 450 words, will be set within the following broad subject areas:

- Technology
- Business
- Literature

Candidates must choose one of these three texts to translate into their target language to a professional standard of accuracy.

Unit 03: Written Translation of a Semi-specialised Text 2 hours

Three texts of a semi-specialised nature, each of approximately 450 words, will be set within the following broad subject areas:

- Science
- Social Science
- Law

Candidates must choose one of these three texts to translate into their target language to a professional standard of accuracy.

Candidates are required to pass all three Units in order to qualify for the Diploma in Translation. A Distinction may be awarded for outstanding performance in any Unit and a Merit may be gained for a performance that exceeds the minimum requirements for the Pass grade. All Units are individually assessed and for each Unit passed a Unit certificate will be issued. The full Diploma will be awarded when all Units are passed. If candidates take the full exam in one year and pass, they will be issued with the full Diploma certificate. The overall qualification will state 'Pass' and the reverse of the certificate will show the breakdown of individual results.

2. Unitisation

IoLET qualifications have changed to a new unitised format under the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) as regulated by the Office of Examinations and Regulation (Ofqual).

The QCF recognises achievement through the award of credits and qualifications. It also allows for the accumulation and transfer of credits between qualifications and for exemption from some of the achievement requirements of a qualification.

- The DipTrans has been divided into units and entered onto the QCF unit databank.
- Each unit is separately assessed and certificated.
- Once all the units have been completed, the full qualification will be awarded.

- Candidates are able to sit units in any order and any combination.
- The five-year rule for completion of the qualifications remains unchanged, ie the first year starts when candidates receive their first pass in any of the units.
- The form and content of the examination and the registration dates remain unchanged.

3. Re-sits

Candidates may re-sit failed units in any order. All units must be passed within five years of the first pass in any unit.

4. General principles

The Diploma in Translation assesses and rewards basic professional competence in translating from any language into English or from English into any other language, and also within other language combinations that do not include English.

The underlying assessment principle recognises, in practical terms and in the context of the texts set for the examination, what constitutes a professionally usable standard of translation. For a translation to be deemed 'professionally usable', it should clearly be of the standard demanded by the market, be functionally accurate and stylistically appropriate and linguistically authentic, and should faithfully render the style and intended effect and meaning of the source language text.

Candidates need to use analytical language skills and be able to handle specialised and semi-specialised terminology in both the source and target languages. They should bear in mind the differences in the relevant norms of the two languages. Where appropriate, they should show complete awareness of features of grammar (morphology and syntax), lexis, idiom, etc. in the source text and find equivalents for connotations, the cultural significance of any aspects of civilisation (local custom, manners, food, clothing, etc.), natural usage, colloquialisms, phatic language, routine formulations, common metaphors and technical terms in the target text. Candidates are expected to write as a native speaker of their target language, reaching a high standard of accuracy and authenticity.

5. Translator's notes

Avoid using translator's notes unless they are absolutely necessary. Use them only as you would in a professional context, bearing in mind the scenario specified in the rubric.

This means that translator's notes:

- should be used sparingly, if at all;
- should be addressed to the target reader and not to the examiner;
- are to be an opportunity for you to give the reader additional essential information rather than to display your knowledge;
- should not explain a translation problem or to justify the solution opted for;
- may be used to indicate that there is, or may be, an error in the source text (spelling error, error in dates, figures or units quoted etc). If this is the case, the note needs to be diplomatic, remembering that the assumed error may not actually be an error;
- may be used to indicate an ambiguity in the text that cannot be clarified under examination conditions;
- may be used to provide necessary additional information for the reader, to clarify, for instance, culture-bound notions if
 - this information cannot be provided within the body of the translation,
 - you genuinely think that the reader needs it,
 - the point to be clarified is essential for the message or
 - you think it is normal practice for the kind of writing you are dealing with;

- should be written in the target language;
- should be brief and to the point.

Above all, translator's notes should not be used to indicate how you would go about finding out information to which you do not have access in the examination (such as "I would look up website xxx" or "I would consult dictionary yyy"). In a professional context, the client expects the translator to have done all necessary research before submitting the work.

The lack of translator's notes does not mean automatic penalisation as very few translations require them. Translations will be eligible for Pass, Merit or Distinction grades, with or without translator's notes, as long as the candidates apply critical thought and appropriate strategies to how they translate the texts before them.

6. The Overall Assessment Criteria

6.1 Criterion statements: The pass mark for the examination is 60%. Candidates who obtain between 70% and 90% will be awarded a Merit and candidates whose marks fall between 80% and 100% will be awarded a Distinction. A translation can be awarded Distinction, Merit or Pass only if it is professionally usable. Any translation which is not professionally usable will be awarded a Fail.

All three units of the examination must be passed for candidates to obtain the full Diploma in Translation. In each unit, candidates are graded under the three different criteria or 'Aspects of Performance' set out below. A pass grade must be achieved in all three aspects in order to pass in any of the units of the examination. The 'Aspects of Performance' are:

1. **Comprehension, accuracy and register**
2. **Grammar (morphology, syntax, etc), cohesion, coherence and organisation of work**
3. **Technical aspects: punctuation, spelling, accentuation, transfer of names, dates, figures, etc**

Each Aspect of Performance comprises a four-point scale showing the different criteria for the awarding of results. Assessment in each of the units of the examination is carried out by matching a candidate's performance to a series of criteria.

6.2 Marking criteria: The statements below describe criteria used under each of the Aspects of Performance.

Aspect of Performance 1: Comprehension, accuracy and register - the correct transfer of information and evidence of complete comprehension and appropriateness of rendering and lexis

Grade	Band	Numerical Mark
↓	↓	↓
Distinction	The translation shows an excellent command of the subject matter with faultlessly accurate transfer of information and evidence of complete comprehension throughout. The choice of language and register are entirely appropriate to the subject matter and to the spirit and intention of the original.	40 – 50
Merit	The translation shows a good command of the subject matter, although at times there may be some under or over translation or a slight lack of clarity. The vocabulary, terminology and idioms and register are faithful to those of the source text.	35 – 39
Pass	The translation shows an adequate command of the subject matter.	30 – 34

There are no serious errors or omissions in the transfer of information. Any inaccuracies or omissions are minor and will not give false or misleading information to the reader.

Fail	The translation shows an inadequate grasp of the informational content. There are a number of clumsy or inappropriate renderings, both major and minor inaccuracies, which distort or impair the message at several points. There may also be serious omissions, some incorrect choice of register and terminology, and/or unidiomatic use of language.	0 – 29
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Aspect of Performance 2: Grammar (morphology, syntax, etc), cohesion, coherence and organisation of work

Distinction	The translation reads like a piece originally written in the target language. The sentence structures, grammar, idioms, linkages and discourse are all entirely appropriate to the target language.	28 – 35
Merit	The translation is well organised, with good sentence structures and overall coherence. Whilst not perfect, the translation is written with appropriate reorganisation of the information contained in the source text where necessary.	24 – 27
Pass	The sentence structure is sound, though with some awkwardness, and lapses in grammar. Nothing too serious.	21 – 23
Fail	The translation does not read like an original piece of writing. It may be stilted and incoherent. There may be too much adherence to the sentence structure of the source text, with little effort to modify the sentences. There may also be paraphrasing or over-elaboration.	0 – 20

Aspect of Performance 3: Technical points relating to spelling, accentuation, punctuation and the transfer of dates, names, figures, etc

Distinction	The spelling, accentuation, punctuation, and transfer of dates, names and figures in the translation range from excellent to faultless.	12 – 15
Merit	There are only minor technical lapses.	10 – 11
Pass	The translation is correct in all major technical elements but with one or two minor lapses of spelling and with some errors in punctuation.	9
Fail	A considerable number of technical faults are present, which would render even an otherwise good translation unacceptable in professional terms.	0 – 8

Translations with 5% or more of the source text missing will automatically be awarded a Fail mark.

A copy of the mark sheet follows on the next page.

**7. DIPLOMA IN TRANSLATION: MARK SHEET (CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETED)
Qualifications Credit Framework Level 7**

ALL SECTIONS BELOW *MUST* BE COMPLETED (ONE MARKSHEET PER PAPER)

SECTION	Candidate Number : _____		UNIT NO: 1 / 2 / 3 (Circle one)		Source language	Target language				
	UNIT 2 (tick appropriate option)		A : TECHNOLOGY		B : BUSINESS	C : LITERATURE				
	UNIT 3 (tick appropriate option)		D : SCIENCE		E : SOCIAL SCIENCE	F : LAW				
SECTION	<p>This section must be completed using the Marking Guidelines.</p> <p>Fill in the boxes with the number of marks allocated for each Aspect of Performance, as well as the grade for each aspect.</p>	Aspects of Performance	Candidates MUST obtain a pass in <i>each</i> Aspect of Performance in order to be given a full passing grade.	Assessment Criteria		Maximum marks available	Minimum pass mark (60%)	Marks obtained by candidate		
		1. Comprehension, Accuracy and Register		How well has the candidate understood the source text? How accurately has the message been conveyed? Are there any serious errors likely to impede comprehension? Are the choices of language and register entirely appropriate to the subject matter and to the spirit and intention of the original?	50	30				
		2. Grammar (morphology and syntax), coherence, cohesion and organisation of work		What is the quality of the candidate's writing in the target language? Has the candidate produced a text, which is grammatically accurate, coherent, authentic, cohesive and well-organised?	35	21				
		3. Technical aspects: spelling, punctuation, accentuation, transfer of names, figures, dates, legibility etc		How has the candidate dealt with technical aspects? Has the candidate produced a text that is correctly spelt, punctuated, paragraphed and legible? Have names, figures and dates been correctly transferred?	15	9				
SECTION	<p>Regardless of the candidate's final grade, you must give detailed comments on his/her performance, and justify the marks that you have given for the translation.</p> <p>Write on reverse if necessary.</p>	Candidate's Final Grade (circle one box)					60 - 69 = Pass	70 - 79 = Merit	80 - 100 = Distinction	FINAL MARK
		Fail	Pass (only if minimum pass mark is obtained in all three aspects of performance)	Merit (only if all three aspects of performance are passed with no fewer than 35 marks in Aspect 1 and the final mark is between 70 and 79)	Distinction (only if all three aspects of performance are passed with no fewer than 40 marks in Aspect 1 and the final mark is between 80 and 100)					
Examiner's name (in capitals):		Examiner's signature:		Chief Examiner's signature		Chief Moderator's signature		Date:		

Information about the examination

1. Languages

Candidates should normally translate only from their source language into their target language. The target language is their mother tongue or language of habitual use where this has taken the place of their mother tongue and has reached a comparable standard. Candidates' source language may be any recognised language of a nation or national group having a culture, literature and expression of thought to which the syllabus of the examination can be applied and of which they have a suitably good grasp. Normally either the source or target language should be English, although it is possible to arrange examinations between French, German, Spanish and Italian, subject to the availability of examiners.

There must be a minimum number of candidates registered for the examination; however, if the source language is a less common one and if there are three or fewer candidates for that specific language combination, a surcharge will be applied to the normal examination fee.

2. Level of examination

The Diploma in Translation is equivalent to C2 level as described in the Common European Framework. It tests professional translating skills at a postgraduate level (Masters) of competence. The examination is open to all. Candidates are advised to ensure prior to registering that

- their level of linguistic attainment in the source language is at least equivalent to a good university degree,
- they are familiar with the relevant cultural background,
- they have a sound knowledge of the specific fields of their choice.

Candidates are advised to possess at least one of the following:

- a degree in the source language (or a combined degree where that language is examined at final degree level),
- extensive knowledge of the source language gained from substantial and consistent use of the language in a professional capacity, or through having studied the particular language to effective operational proficiency.

In all cases, admission to the examination is at the IoLET's discretion.

3. Recognition and equivalences

The Diploma in Translation qualification has been accredited by the United Kingdom's Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) for entry into the Qualifications Credit Framework at Level 7 (Masters) (www.ofqual.gov.uk). It also meets the standards of the National Occupational Standards In Translation (Professional Translator).

The Diploma has an international reputation. Candidates sit the examination in more than 45 countries.

UK-specific recognition:

- Holders of the Diploma in Translation will be granted exemption from Module 6 (Translation Project) of the MA in Translation Studies at Birmingham University.
- The Diploma in Translation is also recognised by the Open University and credit is awarded in the form of 60 points at level 2 with BA designation.
- Students who attain a mark of 65% or more in the Annotated Translation Project of the MA in Applied Translation Studies at London Metropolitan University will be moderated by IoLET with a view to granting exemption from Unit 02 or 03 (semi-specialised translation) of the Diploma in Translation.
- Students who attain a mark of 65% or more in the Translation Project & Commentary of the BA (Hons) in Applied Translation at London Metropolitan University will be moderated by IoLET with a view to granting exemption from Unit 01 (General Translation Paper) of the Diploma in Translation.
- Holders of the Diploma in Translation may be granted credit for prior experience of up to 40 credits if they wish to follow Aston University's MA Translation programmes, which would amount to exemption from the Practical Translation modules. Students who obtain a mark of 65% or above in the Practical Translation Component of the MA Translation in a European Context and a mark of 70% or above in the Specialised (LSP) Translation of the BSc in Translation Studies will, subject to IoLET moderation, be granted exemption from Unit 01 of the Diploma in Translation and certification endorsed by Aston University.
- Students who obtain a mark of 65% or above in the Specialised Translation (Foreign Language into L1) module of the MA at Durham University will, subject to IoLET moderation, be granted exemption from Unit 01 of the Diploma in Translation.

Please see www.ciol.org.uk for updates to this list.

4. Courses

Although IoLET does not run courses, we provide details of organisations that offer help in preparing for the Diploma in Translation. Email info.diptrans@ciol.org.uk for visit www.ciol.org.uk for further information.

Candidates are not obliged to attend a formal course leading to the Diploma qualification before sitting the examination but guidance and preparation have proved to be beneficial.

5. Examination texts

In general, texts used for the examinations are of a topical nature and of relevance to the social, political, economic and cultural environment of the countries where the source language is spoken. Material is drawn from authentic published sources and is intended originally for the educated or well-informed lay reader. The target readership is always defined in the rubric of each paper so that candidates can focus on the intended readership's needs and expectations. The texts are semi-specialised in nature and display some degree of complexity.

6. Use of reference material in the examination

Candidates are strongly advised to use paper dictionaries and other reference works, including their own glossaries, none of which may be shared with other candidates. It is not necessary to provide a bibliography giving details of reference works used in the examination. IoLET does not recommend any particular titles, although a list of suggested reading is included at the end of this handbook.

7. Use of computers in the examination

The use of machine translation programs or access to the Internet during the examination is not permitted.

Some examination centres offer IT equipment and facilities that do not contain software with translating programs. The use of laptops or electronic notebooks is not allowed as it is difficult, if not impossible, to monitor the programs installed. For the same reason, electronic dictionaries may not be used. IoLET accepts no responsibility for IT facilities that malfunction on the day of the examination.

No distinction is made by examiners during the marking process between candidates who word-process their scripts and those who handwrite; however, all candidates are advised to present their work well (paying attention to spacing and formatting) and, if handwriting their examination, to write legibly and to ensure that crossings-out and insertions are clear.

8. Scripts

Candidates' scripts remain the property of IoLET at all times and are not returned to candidates under any circumstances.

9. Diploma in Translation prizes

The Fred Brandeis Trophy is awarded each year in memory of Mr Fred Brandeis, a longstanding Fellow and friend of the Chartered Institute of Linguists, to the best Diploma in Translation candidate translating from English into German.

The Richard Lewis Communications Trophy is offered each year by a long-established company providing language training for business and industry, Richard Lewis Communications, to the candidate who produces the best overall performance in any language combination.

The Schlapps Oliver Shield is presented by Mrs Marjorie Elms FCIL in memory of her late father Mr G A Schlapps Oliver, a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Linguists for many years, to the college which produces the best results for a group entry.

Preparatory notes on translation

1. Preparing for the Diploma in Translation

As a qualification indicating basic professional competence, the Diploma in Translation requires a high level of language competence in the source language and native speaker ability, or equivalent, in the written target language. In order to ensure that they are fully aware of the level and demands of the examination, candidates are advised to study this handbook carefully, to consult past examination papers, to download the List of Recommendations to Candidates and/or the [Seminars](#) for specific language combinations. They should always make sure that they have sufficient training and/or experience to attempt the examination at a professional level.

Two factors determine how much preparation may be needed in the run-up to the examination:

- the knowledge of relevant subject areas and experience of translating to professional standards candidates may already have
- the amount of translating practice with feedback that candidates are able to receive prior to the examination.

Candidates are expected to read widely and keep abreast of current affairs so that they are not daunted by unfamiliar cultural references. Effective reference material is vital. In addition to bilingual dictionaries, candidates will need bilingual and monolingual reference materials and it may also be helpful to have lists of acronyms and abbreviations and glossaries in both languages, which will be useful, for example, in checking the spelling of proper names in the translation.

Candidates should ensure that prior to the examination they have established precisely where in the reference material selected specific information can be found, for example, where lists of geographical names in translation or weights and measures are given in a dictionary.

Candidates are encouraged to join classes specifically leading to the Diploma in Translation or to join other courses that include elements relevant to the preparation for it. Postgraduate courses in comparative or applied linguistics, international trade or international studies with a foreign language may also provide some of the theory and an introduction to concepts and terminology for some of the topics within the options offered. Webinars such as those offered by [eCPD](#) can also be very helpful.

2. Importance of translation theory

Whilst priority should be given to the practice of translation, with feedback on the quality of their translations, candidates should have an awareness of theory and an understanding of how this theory should be applied. Aspects of translation theory that candidates may find helpful in their preparation for the Diploma include:

- an understanding of the dynamics of translating, ie, a consideration of source text and author, expected readership and the cultural setting of the source and target languages;
- the search for translation equivalences and other translation procedures such as transfer and naturalisation;
- types of register and style, their implications and some experience in handling concepts and terminology in both languages of the examination;

- an awareness of translation problems and possible solutions to specific problems relating to proper names, abbreviations, conversions, weights and measures etc. such as translator's notes;
- an awareness of text typology and types of translation and, in particular, of the appropriateness of semantic as opposed to communicative translation.

3. Translation techniques

Candidates should also be aware of strategies that can assist in the production of faithful translations. As a guide, consider the following recognised techniques:

Direct translation techniques

They are used when structural and conceptual elements of the source language can be transposed into the target language:

- Borrowing: taking words straight into another language, also known as 'transfer' (eg using *baguette*, *Schadenfreude* or *glasnost* in an English text)
- Calque: borrowing a phrase from another language and translating it literally word-for-word (eg translating the French *marché aux puces* as 'flea market' in English or the English *skyscraper* as 'gratte-ciel' in French)
- Literal translation: a word-for-word translation

Indirect (oblique) translation techniques

They are used when the structural or conceptual elements of the source language cannot be directly translated without altering meaning or upsetting the grammatical and stylistic elements of the target language:

- Transposition: changing the sequence of parts of speech (for example, rendering a French noun with an English verb, such as *après sa mort* 'after she died')
- Modulation: using a phrase that is different in the source and target languages to convey the same idea (for example, German uses *Lebensgefahr* [literally, 'danger to life'] where English uses 'danger of death' or a French speaker will refer to the *dernier étage* of a building where an English speaker will refer to the 'top floor')
- Reformulation or equivalence: expressing something in a completely different way, as is common, for example, when translating idioms or proverbs that do not have direct equivalents in other languages
- Adaptation: expressing something specific to the source language culture in a totally different way that is more familiar in or appropriate to the target language culture (a good example would be paraphrasing expressions in English deriving from cricket, such as 'being on a sticky wicket', 'having had a good innings' or 'bowling a googly')
- Compensation: expressing somewhere else in the target text something that cannot be translated and whose meaning would be lost in the immediate translation (such as replacing a reference in a French newspaper to *Quai D'Orsay* with one to 'the French Foreign Ministry')

4. Hints and pitfalls

The standard of a candidate's work is assessed by breaking down the constituent elements that make up a professionally usable translation, i.e. how the candidate understands the source text (decoding) and renders this into the target language (encoding) in such a way that the text reads as if it had originally been written in the target language.

4.1 Decoding

The main proof that a candidate has understood the source text is the accuracy of the translation, in which information from the source text is correctly transferred to the target text. Accuracy is therefore a crucial element in any translation. As comprehension of the source text is essential to how the text is encoded or translated into the target language, a text that has not been understood cannot be accurately translated.

Some causes of lapses in accuracy are:

- inability to grasp the meaning of a whole sentence or paragraph and therefore resorting to literal translations
- guessing at the meaning of words instead of consulting a dictionary
- comprehension problems resulting in the mistranslation of individual words, concepts, idioms or technical terms
- omitting sections of the translation (omission of more than 5% of the source text means an automatic fail, regardless of how good the remaining translation is)

To minimise the chances of inaccuracy, candidates need to make effective use of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. Many candidates rely more on dictionaries than on their own personal resourcefulness to provide contextually appropriate translations. Dictionaries should not be treated as if they were authoritative or even definitive, as opposed to being tentative, approximate and provisional. In other words, although dictionaries play an important role, they must be only an aid to the process of translating.

Background knowledge and an understanding of the cultural context are vital to the translator, and these can be acquired over time through extensive reading in both the source and target languages. A lack of confidence in using anything other than basic decoding skills would produce unimaginative and pedantic translations that convey the letter but not the spirit of the original.

Understanding the cultural context helps candidates faced with a reference to *coffee and tea breaks in the office*, for example; in English, these imply morning and afternoon breaks respectively, but this convention may not carry over to other cultures. Another example is the French terms *outré-Rhin* and *outré-Manche* which should not be translated literally as "the other side of the Rhine/Channel" but understood as referring to Germany and Great Britain respectively from a French perspective.

Usage plays an important role in encoding. Candidates can generally use a simple test to establish whether or not to use one figure of speech or another in their translations. For instance, if a particular figure of speech would be unsuitable in a piece of writing in the target language, it may need to be replaced in the translation unless, of course, the intention was to convey some essential aspect of the original to the reader of the translation.

Candidates need to learn to stand back from their translations and to ask themselves if what they have written conveys what they want it to.

4.2 Encoding

In order to obtain a pass in the translation examination, the encoding must respect the norms of the target language *vis à vis* sentence structure, terminology, cohesion of the text and fidelity to the author and his/her intention. Accuracy is a *sine qua non* in any translation. The need for accuracy at this level cannot be overstated: one major error or omission giving false information could have disastrous repercussions in a real-life situation. Once the meaning of the source language text has been decoded, the text needs to be encoded accurately.

The Diploma in Translation tests the ability to

- convey the message accurately
- convey the message appropriately
- convey the message authentically
- present the message acceptably
- provide extra information if necessary

The seriousness of an error depends on the context and a given error can be serious in one context but minor in another. If a candidate's script contains one fatal translation error or omission giving false information to the reader, the minimum professional standard has not been reached and, as a consequence, the candidate cannot be awarded a Pass.

Some of the criteria relating to accurate encoding of the text are the choice of register, vocabulary, terminology and idioms, which must be appropriate to the spirit of the original and must reflect the intention of the source text. In other words, if the source text is 'for the educated lay-person', 'for an interested readership' or 'to appear in the business page of a popular newspaper' or 'in the science supplement of a quality broadsheet', the translation must reflect who the target readership is, as well as the lexical and stylistic conventions of the target publication.

Resorting to over-literal translations or looking at individual words or sections in isolation might be detrimental to the overall quality of the translation produced, despite a correct use of specialised terminology. Therefore, in order to ensure that the target text reads like an authentic piece, it is extremely important that candidates read the whole source text *before* deciding on how to best render it into the target language.

Another aspect of performance that needs careful attention is that of grammar (morphology, syntax, etc), coherence of sentences, text cohesion and organisation of work. Adhering to the source text patterns not only fails to achieve the equivalent stylistic effect but can also result in factual error and confusion for the reader. For example, the verb tense in *We are meeting in the boardroom next Saturday* to express future tense has to be changed in order to render the same meaning into Polish ('W przyszłą sobotę spotykamy się w sali konferencyjnej').

Candidates should ensure that they pay adequate attention to spelling, punctuation and use of diacritics (accents) in the target language. Punctuation that follows the pattern of the source text, spelling errors, missing accents and neologisms can all distort the meaning of the target text. Spelling must be at a professionally usable level. Candidates should avoid the use of abbreviations or colloquial language such as "doesn't", "won't" and "can't" - unless, of course, this reflects the style of the source text.

5. Additional information

Candidates should be aware that the time available for each of the three Units should be
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used in such a way that there is enough time at the end to check through the translation. Candidates are advised to bear in mind the following aspects during the final check:

- Having completed the translation, the candidate should pause briefly and then check to see that the text functions as a coherent whole. It is important to ensure that the overall impression when reading the translation is that of a text originally written in the target language.
- Common sense should be applied to spot errors of organisation, contradictions in a given context and meaningless statements, and to pick up minor inaccuracies and omissions.
- Where there is genuine ambiguity in the source text and the candidate remains undecided between two possible interpretations, the more likely solution should be incorporated into the translation, and the problem and less likely alternative should be briefly explained in a translator's note as it would be in a professional capacity.
- It is essential to check on the correct transfer of names, acronyms, dates, figures, punctuation, and spelling and to ensure that, where appropriate, weights and measures are properly converted between imperial and metric measures or that figures use a decimal point or a comma/space as appropriate to the target language.

Lack of preparation for the demands of the examination, inability to apply acquired skills and techniques to the subject matter of the text, spending too much time searching through dictionaries, and producing drafts and then copying them out are some possible reasons for candidates running out of time during the examination. The failure to complete the translation will be penalised, as this does not reflect professional practice in meeting deadlines.

6. Areas of semi-specialised translations

The six subject areas in Unit 02 (A) Technology, (B) Business and (C) Literature and in Unit 03 (D) Science, (E) Social Science and (F) Law may be taken in any one of the following combinations:

(02A) Technology + (03D) Science
(02A) Technology + (03E) Social Science
(02A) Technology + (03F) Law

(02B) Business + (03D) Science
(02B) Business + (03E) Social Science
(02B) Business + (03F) Law

(02C) Literature + (03D) Science
(02C) Literature + (03E) Social Science
(02C) Literature + (03F) Law

Lists of subjects which may be included within the six semi-specialised areas are:

Unit 02 (A): Technology Agriculture Architecture Engineering Environment Information technology Life sciences Medicine Pharmaceutics/Pharmacology Plastics and polymers Telecommunications Textile technology Transport	Unit 02 (B): Business Accounting Banking Commerce Economics Export and import trade Finance Insurance Marketing Management	Unit 02 (C): Literature Fiction Drama Film scripts
Unit 03 (D): Science Agriculture Astronomy Biochemistry Biological sciences Chemistry Earth sciences Environment Life sciences Mathematics Medicine Pharmaceutics Pharmacology Physics	Unit 03 (E): Social Science Anthropology Development studies Economics Education Environment History Philosophy Political science Psychology Public administration Religion Sociology	Unit 03 (F): Law Case Studies Civil law Commercial law Criminal law Court reports Family law Law reports Legal journal articles International law

Note: These lists are not exhaustive and some categories overlap.

It is important to note that the categories above are semi-specialised and that a pass in, for example, the Law or Technology Paper does not confer Legal Translator or Technical Translator status.

General regulations

Candidate regulations

All candidates must read the Candidate Regulations, which are available from IoLET by emailing info.diptrans@ciol.org.uk or by download from www.ciol.org.uk. Items such as registration, refunds, reasonable adjustments, appeals, IT, etc, are covered.

Availability of examinations

The examinations are held once a year in January. IoLET operates its own assessment centre in London (known as the IoLET Open Centre, London). For a list of United Kingdom and overseas centres where candidates can sit the examination, please visit www.ciol.org.uk.

Fees

For information on fees, please contact IoLET by emailing info.diptrans@ciol.org.uk or visit www.ciol.org.uk.

Registration procedure

For details on how to register please refer to the Examination Candidate Regulations, copies of which are available from IoLET by emailing info.diptrans@ciol.org.uk or visit www.ciol.org.uk.

Past papers and Chief Examiners' reports

Past examination papers in most language combinations and Chief Examiners' Reports covering major language groups are published after each examination session and are available from PWP FS Print & Design. Please use the [examination material order form](#) or email pastpapers@pwpfs.com. Some past papers and reports for small entry languages are also available for [download from the CIOL website](#).

Quality assurance of examination material and results

IoLET carries out routine monitoring and evaluation of its examination formats and examination material. IoLET's external Examinations Review Board meets regularly to review the examinations, and appropriate research is commissioned and published. All IoLET examiners must meet the qualification requirements and are required to adhere to a Code of Conduct. Reliability of marking is assured through the training and continuous monitoring of examiners. Information on Customer Service Standards can be found at www.ciol.org.uk.

The Diploma in Translation examination is subject to the following quality assurance programme:

- Examination papers are moderated to ensure that the standard of assessment is consistent across all units and with the examinations of previous years, that the topics are suitable and that the texts are of the correct length.
- Examination scripts are marked by independent external markers and moderated to ensure that the assessment criteria are applied fairly and in a standardised way.
- An awards meeting attended by chief examiners and chief moderators is held annually to discuss results and to ensure that standardised assessment schemes and criteria have been applied fairly across the various options and languages.

Membership of the Chartered Institute of Linguists

Holders of the Diploma in Translation may apply for membership of the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL), details of which are sent to all successful candidates with their results. IoLET awards three grades of professional membership:

Fellowship is CIOL's highest grade and is reserved for linguists who can demonstrate a significant degree of professional achievement;

Membership requires one year's appropriate experience, in addition to a relevant qualification. The one year's experience must be immediately prior to the date of admission;

Associateship is the normal grade for linguists who have not yet gained the professional experience required for membership. Applicants must have a relevant qualification;

Student membership is also available for those currently enrolled on an appropriate course of study.

Members are entitled to join the CIOL's divisions and societies and benefit from various membership services, including receiving the bi-monthly journal *The Linguist*. They are also bound by the CIOL's code of professional conduct in all their work involving languages. Full details may be obtained on application to the Membership Department.

A Chartered Linguist is a practicing linguist who exhibits the highest levels of competence, skill and professionalism, is willing to demonstrate commitment to maintain and develop these skills, and agrees to periodic review by professional peers.

Contact details

Further information about the Diploma in Translation, IoLET's other examinations and membership may be obtained from www.ciol.org.uk or from:

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F: +44 (0)20 7940 3121
E: info.diptrans@ciol.org.uk

Membership Department

New applications
T: +44 (0)20 7940 3133/3146
E: membershipeligibility@ciol.org.uk

PWP FS Print and Design

[Examinations material order form](#)
T: +44 (0)1992 469927
F: +44 (0)1992 469848
E: pastpapers@pwdfs.com

Suggested reading and reference material

CIOL publications

Chief Examiners' Reports

Comments from Chief Examiners on candidate performance in the Diploma in Translation examination are published annually for the following language combinations in the high entry languages: from French, German, Italian and Spanish into English and from English into these languages; and also for English into Chinese, Greek, Polish, Portuguese and Russian. Reports of the small entry languages can be downloaded from the CIOL's website, and the [Examinations Material Order Form](#) or email pastpapers@pwvfs.com.

Seminars to aid preparation for the Diploma in Translation

Seminars in a variety of language combinations are available for [download](#).

The Linguist is the membership journal of the Chartered Institute of Linguists and is published six times per year. It is free to all CIOL members, available to non-members on subscription, and freely available to view, share and download via our online issue (thelinguist.uberflip.com). It offers readers a wide range of articles that are of interest to anyone and everyone working with languages, as well as news items, event and book reviews, and a popular opinion and comment section.

Other publications (not available for purchase through IoLET)

This handbook does not prescribe publications on translation, but as any reading which assists candidates to reflect on the issues and processes involved in translating is helpful, a sample from an ever-increasing range of publications on translation theory and practice is given below. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

General books on translation

In Other Words. A Coursebook on Translation. Mona Baker (Routledge 1992)

Thinking Chinese Translation. A Course in Translation Method: Chinese to English. Pellatt, Valerie and Liu, Eric T. (Routledge, 2010)

Thinking French Translation. A Course in Translation Method: French to English. Sándor Hervey, Ian Higgins (Routledge 1992)

Thinking German Translation. A Course in Translation Method: German to English. Sándor Hervey, Ian Higgins, Michael Loughridge (Routledge 1995)

Thinking Italian Translation. A Course in Translation Method: Italian to English. Stella Cragie, P. Gambarotta (Routledge 2000)

Thinking Spanish Translation. A Course in Translation Method: Spanish to English. Sándor Hervey, Ian Higgins, Louise M. Haywood (Routledge 1995)

Culture Bumps - an Empirical Approach to the Translation of Allusions. Ritva Leppihalme (Multilingual Matters 1997)

A Textbook of Translation. Peter Newmark (Prentice Hall 1988)

Paragraphs on Translation/More Paragraphs on Translation. Peter Newmark (Multilingual

Matters 1993/1998)

Becoming a Translator. An Accelerated Course. Douglas Robinson (Routledge 1997)

A Practical Guide for Translators. Geoffrey Samuelson-Brown (Multilingual Matters 1998)

Eurojargon: A Dictionary of Acronyms, Abbreviations and Sobriquets. 6th edition. Anne Ramsay [ed] (Fitzroy Dearborn 2000)

The Penguin Guide to Punctuation. R. L. Trask (Penguin, 2004)

Guardian Style. David Marsh and Amelia Hodsdon, (Guardian Books, 2010)

The Telegraph Style Guide. Simon Heffer (Aurum Press, 2010)

The Economist Style Guide (Profile Books, 2010)

Modern Humanities Research Association Style Guide. Free from www.mhra.org.uk

Chinese

Translation Workshop 翻譯工作坊 at Self-learning College 自學書院'- 翻譯工作坊 at www.self-learning-college.org/forum/

French

Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais. Vinay, J. P. & J. Darbelnet Paris (Didier 1958).

Equivalences. Translation Difficulties and Devices (French-English and English-French). Eric Astington (Cambridge University Press 1986)

La Traduction Raisonnée: Collection Pédagogie de la Traduction. J. Delisle (Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa 1993)

Italian

Grammatica della lingua italiana. Marcello Sensini (A. Mondadori 1990)

Italiano senza errori. Marta Torriani (Utility Book 1991)

L'italiano senza errori. L'italiano corretto scritto e parlato. Carla Franceschetti (De Vecchi Editore 2006)

Dizionario delle parole straniere in uso nella lingua italiana. Achille Lucarini, Francesca Scorfani (Editori Riuniti 1999)

Il nuovo manuale di stile. Roberto Lesina (Zanichelli Editore)

More and More False Friends. Bugs & Bugbears. Virginia Browne, Elena Mendes, Gabriele Natali (Zanichelli Editore)

Garzantina Diritto, Diritto online www.dirittoonline.it

Il Manuale di Stile. Roberto Lesina (Zanichelli Editore)

Polish

Successful Polish-English Translation – Tricks of the Trade. Aniela Korzeniowska and Piotr Kuhiwczak (Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1994)

Portuguese

Tradução e Comunicação. Revista Brasileira de Tradutores tc@unibero.edu.br

Translatum – Portal do Tradutor, www.translatum.gr

Translator Self Training Program, Portuguese/English, Mori Sofer (Schreiber Publishing 2004)

A useful link: Associação Portuguesa de Tradutores www.aptr.pt

Spanish

Manual de Traducción inglés-castellano. Teoría y práctica, Juan Gabriel López Guix y Jacqueline Minett Wilkinson (Guedisa 1997)

This list is regularly updated on our website. If you would like to submit entries for inclusion on this list we would be delighted to hear from you. Contact us via info@ciol.org.uk.