

TOOL: Working with translators

Translators are people who provide written translations from one language to another (interpreters provide oral/spoken translation during conversation). Translation is a skill, and professional translators are highly experienced. Qualified translators are certified by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI). For further details, visit naati.com.au.

Checklist

Do you:

- have a language services policy?
- know what's appropriate?
- know what's legally required?
- ensure staff understand when to use a translator?
- ensure staff understand how to use a translator?
- know where to find out more information?
- know where to go for training and staff support?

The National Accreditation Authority for Interpreters and Translators (NAATI) sets and monitors standards in Australia by accrediting both interpreters and translators at different levels of competence. All NAATI-certified interpreters and translators are bound by a code of ethics in accordance with the Australian Institute for Translators and Interpreters (AUSIT) code of ethics. This means they should not add, modify or delete information, nor act as an advocate for the client, and must remain impartial at all times.

NSW Government policy is to provide translation or interpreter services to ensure that the highest quality of these services is available when needed.

Use of online translation tools

There has been a rapid growth in the availability and use of online translation tools in recent years. We recommend caution, and to avoid using such tools in a professional context. They can be highly inaccurate and there is a high risk of mistranslation. To try this yourself, copy non-English text and translate – how clear is it to you what is being communicated?



Guidelines and tips

<p>Use professionals</p>	<p>Effective translating is a demanding skill</p> <p>Relying on bilingual colleagues to informally translate is not always appropriate or accurate</p> <p>Just because someone can speak another language does not mean they can write fluently, clearly and persuasively in it. Think about it – sometimes it’s hard to write clearly in your own first language. Translators tend to be best when translating into their native language</p>
<p>Ensure you select a translator who knows your sector</p>	<p>For very specific sectors or highly technical language, hire a translator with relevant skills and experience</p>
<p>Make sure you know what language or dialect you really need!</p>	<p>Be specific: You may need to communicate with people who speak a particular dialect. The ‘same language’ may be used quite differently in different parts of the world</p>
<p>Prepare and brief your translator</p>	<p>In situations requiring specialised or technical vocabulary, also provide a glossary of terms</p>
<p>To double check your result</p>	<p>When in doubt regarding the clarity of the message received, ask for a reverse translation. This technique is a valuable, yet non-intrusive, check on accuracy</p>



Further help

Interpreting and translation services are available to all NSW Government agencies, private and commercial organisations, community groups and individuals through Multicultural NSW.

Multicultural NSW Language Services provide comprehensive interpreting and translation services in 104 languages and dialects, including Auslan (Australian sign language). Face-to-face interpreting services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Other options include professional and private translation and interpreting services.

References

[NSW Government Language Services Guidelines](#)

