



Code of Ethics

Last Updated on October 2007

General Principles

1. Professional conduct

Interpreters and translators shall at all times act in accordance with the standards of conduct and decorum appropriate to the aims of Language Factory, the national professional association of interpreters and translators.

Interpreters and translators should:

- always be polite and courteous, unobtrusive, firm and dignified
- explain their role to clients, encouraging them to speak to each other directly
- allow nothing to prejudice or influence their work, and disclose any possible conflict of interest
- decline gifts and tips (except token gifts customary in some cultures), explaining to clients that accepting them could compromise their professional integrity
- ensure punctuality at all times (and if lateness is unavoidable, advise clients immediately)
- prepare appropriately for assignments and ensure they are completed
- refrain from unprofessional or dishonourable behaviour and refer any unresolved disputes to Language Factory and accept its decision.
- Ensure that all portable devices such as mobile phones and blackberries are turned off during sessions

2. Confidentiality

Interpreters and translators shall not disclose information acquired during the course of their assignments.

- Interpreters and translators may only disclose information with the permission of their clients (or if the law requires disclosure).
- If other interpreters or translators are involved in the same assignment and require briefing, this should be done after obtaining the clients' permission, and all are obliged to maintain confidentiality.
- No work should be subcontracted to colleagues without clients' permission.
- Translated documents remain the client's property.

3. Competence

Interpreters and translators shall undertake only work which they are competent to perform in the language areas for which they are "accredited" or "recognised" by NAATI.

- Acceptance of an assignment is a declaration of one's competence and constitutes a contract. If, during an assignment, it becomes clear that the work is beyond the interpreter's or translator's competence, they should inform clients immediately and withdraw.
- Interpreters/translators must clearly specify their NAATI accreditation, level and language direction, if necessary explaining its significance to clients.
- It is the interpreter's responsibility to ensure that working conditions facilitate communication.
- If an interpreter or translator is asked to provide a second opinion or to review alterations to the work of another practitioner, there should be final agreement between all interpreters and translators concerned.

4. Impartiality

Interpreters and translators shall observe impartiality in all professional contracts.

- Professional detachment must be maintained at all times. If interpreters or translators feel their objectivity is threatened, they should withdraw from the assignment.
- Practitioners should not recommend to clients anyone or anything in which they have personal or financial interest. If for some reason they have to do so they must fully disclose such interest - including assignments for relatives or friends, or which affect their employers.
- They should not accept, or should withdraw from, assignments in which impartiality may be risked because of personal beliefs or circumstances.
- Interpreters and translators are not responsible for what clients say or write. They should not voice or write an opinion on anything or anyone concerned with an assignment.
- If approached for service by all parties to a legal dispute, an interpreter or translator shall offer to work for the first party making the request and notify all parties concerned.

5. Accuracy

Interpreters and translators shall take all reasonable care to be accurate.

They must:

- relay accurately and completely all that is said by all parties in a meeting - including derogatory or vulgar remarks, non-verbal clues, and anything they know to be untrue
- not alter, add to or omit anything from the assigned work
- acknowledge and promptly rectify any interpreting or translation mistakes. If anything is unclear, interpreters must ask for repetition, rephrasing or explanation. If interpreters have lapses of memory which lead to inadequate interpreting, they should inform the client, ask for a pause and signal when they are ready to continue.
- ensure speech is clearly heard and understood by all present. Where possible (and if agreed to by all parties), interpreters may arrange a short general conversation with clients beforehand to ensure clear understanding by all
- provide full evidence of NAATI accreditation or recognition if requested

*Part of the copy of the **Language Factory Code of Ethics for Interpreters & Translators** was adapted from the **Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT)** website*