



## INFORMATION ON ACCREDITATION

### Background

A system of accreditation was introduced by the South African Translators' Institute in 1990 to improve the standing of language practitioners in the community and to assure clients of a certain level of competence in the language practitioner they employ. The system began with translation and has been expanded as required.

Accreditation is available only to members of the Institute and can be applied for after three months of membership. If membership of the Institute lapses, accreditation lapses as well. Persons applying for accreditation thus implicitly agree to remain members of the Institute.

Accreditation is currently available for

- translation,
- purposes of becoming a sworn translator,
- language editing,
- interpreting.

As preparation for the **full accreditation examination** or in order to assess their readiness for accreditation, members may undertake a **practice test**. This entails the translation or editing of a single text, which is then marked and returned to the candidate. Further details are available in a separate pamphlet. The practice test is not compulsory except in the case of sworn translation, but all candidates are strongly advised to write the test before attempting an exam.

Student members may not write a practice test or examination.

### The following requirements must be met to undertake a practice test or the full accreditation examination:

- A post-secondary language practice qualification\* aligned with the Higher Education Qualifications Framework  
**PLUS** evidence of two years' language practice work in the relevant discipline (with professional references)  
(candidates must submit copies of their academic qualifications and academic record)  
**OR**  
Evidence of at least five years' language practice work in the relevant discipline (with professional references)  
**OR**  
Current accreditation by SATI

## **OR**

Membership of or current accreditation by a FIT member association acceptable to the SATI Council

*\* A language practice qualification is a qualification to prepare for applied language work such as translation, interpreting, text editing, terminology, lexicography and language planning; it does not include pure language studies or language teaching qualifications.*

- Candidates must watch the Power Point presentation on the accreditation system that is available on the SATI website before they will be allowed to write the test or examination.
- Candidates must sign a copy of the code of ethics each time they take an examination.
- Candidates for sworn translation exams must own a copy of the SATI manual on sworn translation.

### **The various accreditation examinations currently available:**

**Translation accreditation** is available in a range of official and foreign languages.

Members wishing to apply for translation accreditation should contact the accreditation officer to check that their language combination is available.

- The accreditation officer and candidate decide about a suitable date for the examination.
- On the specified date the candidate receives the translation examination electronically via email.
- The candidate will complete a solemn statement declaring the examination was completed within the framework as prescribed by the Institute, and that in particular it was completed within the prescribed single period of 24 hours and that the work is entirely his/her own, with no consultation of any other person.
- The accreditation examination is a written examination in which three questions out of approximately eight, covering a variety of fields, must be completed. One question (a general text) is compulsory. The main objective of the examination is to test the final translation product that the candidate can present, and candidates are therefore allowed 24 hours to complete the exam. Candidates are free to use all and any sources that they may have available. They may not, however, consult another person.
- The translated texts (examination scripts) and solemn statement should be sent back in electronic format to the examination officer within 24 hours after initial reception.
- Once the examination script has been received back by the accreditation officer, it is submitted to two markers, who mark it independently and anonymously. The identity of the candidate also remains secret. If both examiners pass the candidate, she/he passes; if both fail the candidate, she/he fails. The papers are also moderated by the accreditation officer. In the event of one examiner passing and the other failing a candidate, the script is submitted to a third examiner, whose decision is final.

Marking of the examination scripts is done along the lines of a scheme initially introduced by the American Translators Association. This means that errors are classified as either major or minor errors. Two or more major errors in one text, or one major error and seven minor errors in one text, means that one fails the examination. A limited number of minor errors are allowed. Major and minor errors are defined as follows:

- **Major errors:** Gross mistranslation, in which the meaning of the original word or phrase is lost altogether; omission of vital words or other information; insertion of information not contained in the original; inclusion of alternate translations, where the translator should have made a choice; and any important failure in target - language grammar.
- **Minor errors:** Mistranslation that distorts somewhat, but does not wholly falsify, the intent of the original; omission of words that contribute only slightly to meaning; presentation of alternate translations where the terms offered are synonymous or nearly so; and 'inelegance' in target-language grammar.

**Accreditation for purposes of becoming a sworn translator** was introduced by the Institute in order to provide for the standardisation of the examination required as part of the procedure for becoming a sworn translator.

- Candidates must have written a sworn translation practice test before they may apply to write the examination.
- It is compulsory for candidates to study the sworn translation manual carefully to take note the conventions related to sworn translation.
- The accreditation officer and candidate decide about a suitable date for the examination.
- On the specified date the candidate receives the sworn translation examination electronically via email.
- The candidate will complete a solemn statement declaring the examination was completed within the framework as prescribed by the Institute, and that in particular it was completed within the prescribed single period of 24 hours and that the work is entirely his/her own, with no consultation of any other person.
- The sworn translator's examination is a written examination in which various texts, all of which are compulsory, must be translated.
- The procedure is the same as for general translation accreditation, except that marking includes consideration of the conventions pertaining particularly to sworn translations.
- The examination script and solemn statement should be sent back to the examination officer in electronic format within 24 hours after initial reception.
- Once the examination script has been received back by the accreditation officer, it is submitted to two markers, who mark it independently and anonymously. The identity of the candidate also remains secret. If both examiners pass the candidate, she/he passes; if both fail the candidate, she/he fails. The papers are also moderated by the accreditation officer. In the event of one examiner passing and

the other failing a candidate, the script is submitted to a third examiner, whose decision is final.

**Accreditation for language editors** is run along similar lines to accreditation for translators. Six texts on a variety of subjects are provided for editing. A choice of texts may be given within the various questions.

- A candidate receives the editing examination electronically and corrections are done by using Track Changes and then saved in Word format.
- Candidates will complete a solemn statement declaring that the examination was completed within the framework as prescribed by the Institute, and that in particular it was completed within the prescribed single period of 24 hours and that the work is entirely his/her own, with no consultation of any other person.
- The edited text and solemn statement should be sent back to the examination officer in electronic format within 24 hours after initial reception.
- The examiners will assess the editing in terms of errors spotted and suitability of corrections provided. The examiners are highly experienced language editors and will consider a range of possible answers in any given situation.

The editing examination is currently available in English and Afrikaans.

**Note:** If any exam conditions are not complied with, the exam will be declared null and void, the exam fee will be forfeited, and the candidate will have to wait 12 months before they can apply to write the exam again.

**Accreditation for interpreting** is generally carried out once a year in one or two centres in the country, but is dependent on an adequate number of applications having been received to make an examination at a venue economically viable. Currently accreditation is only offered for simultaneous interpreting; other modes are planned to be added in due course. Candidates are examined in the language combination(s) of their choice, with the accreditation certificate reflecting the relevant language(s) and mode. The accreditation exam comprises a simulated interpreting assignment using voice recordings and whispered interpreting equipment. The exam is recorded and independently and anonymously assessed by two markers appointed by SATI.

**Accreditation for Sign Language** interpreting is also available.

### **Appeals**

There is an appeal procedure that enables candidates who genuinely feel they should have passed the accreditation exam to have their paper reviewed. Appeals must be lodged within eight weeks of the date of issue of the exam results. Further details are available in a separate pamphlet.

### **Waiting periods after failing**

The following waiting periods apply before candidates may try again after failing an accreditation exam or a translation or editing practice test:

- The period that a candidate must wait after failing any exam is one year
- The period that a candidate must wait after failing a practice test is up to eight months, depending on the number of major/minor errors in the script.
- If a candidate fails three consecutive practice tests, they must wait two years before being allowed to attempt the test again.

### **General**

The current cost (2020) for the various types of accreditation is as follows:

- Translation, sworn translation and terminology: R1 160 per language combination
- Language editing: R1 160 per language
- Interpreting: Available on request (usually also R1 160 per language combination)
- Practice test: R480
- Appeal: R488

Members outside South Africa pay a R250 Forex fee. Fees are subject to change and should be confirmed when applying for accreditation.

Members wishing to apply for accreditation should download the relevant application form from the Members section of the SATI website. Candidates will be informed of results as soon as they become available and the names of newly accredited members will be published in the Institute's Bulletin. A certificate will be issued to indicate the form of accreditation obtained.

Contact the accreditation officer at [exams@translators.org.za](mailto:exams@translators.org.za). Alternatively contact the SATI office at [office@translators.org.za](mailto:office@translators.org.za).