

NATIONAL INTERPRETER EDUCATION STANDARDS

FORMULATION OF STANDARDS

The *National Interpreter Education Standards* and guidelines for accrediting interpreter education programs were formulated by the CIT Educational Standards Committee with substantial input from the professional community. The CCIE Committee on Policies and Standards will be responsible for periodic review and reformulation of the *Standards* and guidelines according to a procedure that will assure the participation of the CCIE stakeholders.

Committee members may be interpreter educators or practitioners, representatives of the public served by interpreters and others deemed appropriate to the development of acceptable standards for reviewing interpreter education programs. A balance of interests will be maintained in committee composition. As emphasized in the composition of the CCIE Board and Committee structure, it is strongly recommended that composition of the above mentioned committee also preserve stakeholder diversity.

The review cycle for the *National Interpreter Education Standards* is every ten (10) years. The timetable recognizes the continuous development of the practice of interpretation, the expanding body of knowledge in interpretation, and changes in postsecondary education. Proposed standards and guidelines revisions will be circulated to the CCIE constituencies for review and comment. Those invited to comment may include the CCIE-accredited programs, site visitors and committee members, the interpreting organizations and individuals from those organizations, employers, other accrediting bodies and related regulatory groups, interpreter education programs, and interested individuals. The committee will carefully consider comments gathered in this process. Changes to the *Standards* and guidelines resulting from the review and comment process may be circulated repeatedly for additional review. This dialogue with the field of interpretation is an important component of the accreditation process.

Once formulated, standards and guidelines are submitted to the CCIE Board of Commissioners for adoption. The CCIE Board will determine an effective date for all of the CCIE *Standards* and guidelines.

THE STANDARDS

PREAMBLE

A. Description of the Profession

Interpretation is the art and science of receiving a message from one language and rendering it into another. It involves the appropriate transfer and transmission of culturally-based linguistic and nonlinguistic information. The goal of interpreting is to transfer a message from a source language into a target language without skewing it while keeping in mind the linguistic needs of the recipients of the message. Interpreting serves a diverse population in a variety of settings across a broad range of fields and therefore requires professional interpreters to possess a breadth and depth of knowledge.

B. Objective

Since its inception, the Conference of Interpreter Trainers has held the vision of national standards for interpreter education. The *National Interpreter Education Standards* identify the knowledge, skills, and perspectives students need to gain in order to enter the field of professional interpreting. The *Standards* give students, faculty, curriculum developers, administrators, employers, and consumers a common set of expectations about what basic knowledge and competencies interpreting students should acquire.

The *Standards* are to be used for the development, evaluation, and self-analysis of postsecondary professional interpreter education programs. They will guide new programs in defining policies on entry requirements, curricular goals, faculty selection, teaching methods, and projected student outcomes. For existing programs, the *Standards* provide benchmarks for assessing and enhancing student outcomes, evaluating and updating faculty, and improving curricula and related practices.

GENERAL CRITERIA

C. Sponsorship

1. The sponsoring institution of higher education must be accredited by nationally recognized agencies.
2. Sponsoring institutions must be authorized under applicable law or other acceptable authority to provide a program of postsecondary education.
3. The sponsoring institution shall demonstrate a commitment to recognizing and fostering positive attitudes and efforts toward diversity among its members.
4. The sponsoring institution assumes primary responsibility for student admission, curriculum planning, selection of course content coordination of classroom teaching and supervised practice, appointment of faculty, receiving and processing applications for admission, and documenting satisfactory completion of the educational program. The sponsoring institution shall also be responsible for providing assurance that practicum activities assigned to students are appropriate to the program.
5. In programs in which academic instruction and supervised practice are provided by two (2) or more institutions, responsibility of the sponsoring institutions and of each practicum center must be clearly documented as a formal affiliation agreement or memorandum of understanding. The time schedule for periodic review shall be documented.

D. Resources

Personnel

The program shall have a director and faculty who possess the necessary qualifications to perform the functions identified in documented descriptions of roles and responsibilities. Efforts should be made to recruit qualified Deaf program directors, faculty, and practicum supervisors.

1. Program Director

a) Responsibilities

The director of the educational program shall be responsible for management and administration of the program including planning, on-going evaluation, budgeting, and selecting faculty and staff.

b) Qualifications

The director of the educational program shall be an interpreter who has relevant experience in administration, teaching, and practice. The director shall hold a minimum of a master's degree, or have equivalent educational qualifications.

2. Faculty

a) Responsibilities

Faculty responsibilities shall be consistent with the mission of the institution.

b) Qualifications

The faculty shall:

- 1) Include certified interpreters.
- 2) Have documented expertise in the area(s) of teaching responsibilities and shall demonstrate effectiveness in teaching their assigned subjects.
- 3) Collectively have academic and experiential qualifications and background appropriate to meet program objectives.
- 4) Be collectively diverse or have documented exposure to diverse populations.

c) Professional Development

- 1) The program shall have a documented plan for continued professional growth to ensure that program faculty can fulfill their assigned responsibilities.

- 2) Each faculty member shall have a written plan for continuing professional development.

d) Faculty/Student Ratio:

The faculty/student ratio shall:

- 1) Permit the achievement of the purpose and stated objectives of the program.
- 2) Be compatible with accepted practices of the profession.
- 3) Ensure quality education by adjustment of faculty/student ratio where required.

3. Clerical and Support Staff

Clerical and program support staff shall be provided to meet program and administrative requirements.

Financial Resources

A budget of general institutional funds allocated to the program shall be sufficient to develop and maintain the stated objectives of the program and to fulfill its obligations to matriculating and enrolled students.

Physical Resources

1. Facilities

- a) Classrooms and laboratories shall be provided consistent with the program's educational objectives, teaching methods, number of students, and safety standards of the institution, and shall allow for efficient operation of the program.
- b) Appropriate laboratory space shall be assigned to the interpreter education program on a priority basis.
- c) Appropriate space shall be provided to store and secure equipment and supplies.
- d) The program director, faculty, and support staff shall have appropriate office space.
- e) Appropriate space shall be provided for the private advising of students.
- f) Facilities shall be constructed and maintained according to appropriate safety and health considerations and in compliance with state and federal laws concerning accessibility.

2. Equipment and Supplies

Appropriate and sufficient equipment and supplies shall be provided for student use and for teaching the didactic and practical components of the curriculum.

3. Learning Resources

Students shall have ready access in time and location to an adequate supply of current books, journals, periodicals, computers, video and audio material, and other reference materials related to the curriculum.

E. Students

Admissions Policies and Procedures

1. Admission of students shall be made in accordance with clearly defined and published practices of the institution of higher education.
2. Policies regarding standards for admission, advanced placement, transfer of credit, credit for experiential learning (if applicable), and requirements for previous education or work experience shall be provided and readily accessible to prospective students and the public.

Evaluation of Students

1. Criteria for successful completion of each segment of the educational program and for graduation shall be given in advance to each student.
2. Evaluation content and methods shall be consistent with the objectives and competencies described for the educational program in both didactic and supervised education components. Evaluation shall be employed frequently enough to provide students and program officials with timely indications of the students' progress and academic standing.

Health

Students shall be informed of and have access to the health services provided to other students in the institution.

Guidance

1. Advising related to interpreter education coursework and practicum shall be the responsibility of the program faculty.
2. Advising during and pertaining to practicum shall be a collaborative process between the faculty and practicum educators.

3. Referral by program faculty to other institutional or community resources shall be provided for students with problems that may interfere with the students' progress through the program.

4. Review of policies and procedures.

5. Examination of curriculum design to assure integration of program's mission and philosophy.

F. Operational Policies

Fair Practices

1. Program description, publications, announcements, and advertising shall accurately reflect the program offered.
2. Student and faculty recruitment, student admission, and faculty employment practices shall comply with the institution's published nondiscrimination, equal opportunity, and affirmative action policies.
3. Graduation requirements, tuition, and fees shall be published and made known to all applicants.
4. Policies and processes for student withdrawal and for refunds of tuition and fees shall be published and made known to all applicants.
5. Policies and procedures regarding student suspension and dismissal shall be published and made known.
6. The program or sponsoring institution shall have a defined and published policy and procedure for processing student and faculty grievances.
7. Provision shall be made for the health, safety, and confidentiality of consumers, students, and faculty associated with educational activities.
8. A program admitting students on the basis of ability to benefit shall publicize its objectives, assessment measures, and means of evaluating ability to benefit.

Student Records

Satisfactory records shall be maintained regarding student admission, enrollment, and achievement. Grades and credits for courses shall be recorded on students' transcripts and maintained according to the sponsoring institution's policies.

G. Program Evaluation

The interpreter education program shall have a continuing system for reviewing the effectiveness of the educational program especially as measured by student achievement and shall prepare timely self-study reports to aid the staff, the sponsoring institution, and the accrediting agencies, where applicable, in assessing program qualities and needs.

Outcomes

Programs shall routinely secure sufficient qualitative and quantitative information regarding the program graduates to demonstrate an ongoing evaluation of outcomes consistent with the graduate competencies specified by the educational program.

1. This data should be routinely documented and analyzed.
2. Sources of data should include but not be limited to:
 - a) Surveys of graduates and employers on such matters as employment settings, type and scope of practice, salary, job satisfaction, and adequacy of the educational program in addressing education and skills.
 - b) Interviews with program graduates and employers of graduates, e.g., satisfaction with graduates' skills; satisfaction with own skills upon entry into employment.
 - c) Data on the evaluation of student performance on state and national certification examinations.

Results of Ongoing Program Evaluation

The results of ongoing evaluation shall be appropriately reflected in the curriculum and other dimensions of the program. In particular, the program shall systematically use the information obtained in its evaluation to foster student achievement.

Program evaluation should be a continuing systematic process and should include:

1. Internal and external curriculum validation in consultation with employers, faculty, mentors, students, and graduates;
2. Follow-up studies of students' employment and performance on state and national examinations;
3. Review of admissions policies and procedures; and

4. Examination of curriculum design to assure integration of program's mission and philosophy.

SPECIFIC CRITERIA

H. Curriculum

Description of the Program

1. Mission
The statement of the mission of the interpreter education program shall be consistent with that of the sponsoring institution.
2. Philosophy
The statement of philosophy of the program shall reflect:
 - a) A sociolinguistic view of Deaf and hearing communities. Efforts should be made to establish and maintain an open and continuing dialogue with the various members of the Deaf community representing the diversity within the communities. Diversity within the deaf community must be recognized as an evolving factor. The opinions and information gained through the dialogues should guide the development of the curriculum, instruction, and practicum.
 - b) An approach to learning and instruction that supports the acquisition of knowledge and competencies associated with interpretation. Approaches to learning shall identify and support the learning needs of a diverse population including traditional undergraduates, student parents, older students, disabled students, students from racial and religious minorities, male students as a minority in the field, and international students.

Curriculum Design

The curriculum design shall provide the basis for program planning, implementation, and evaluation. It shall:

1. Support the mission of the interpreter education program.
2. Identify educational goals that are consistent with the program's mission and philosophy statements.

3. Describe the set of organizing principles that explains the selection of the content, scope, and sequencing of coursework.
4. Establish the view of Interpreting as it relates to the world rather than the local isolation.
5. Represent cultural competence that is not limited to simple recognition and mention of diverse cultures and groups.
6. Include the involvement of the local Deaf community.

Instruction shall follow a plan which provides evidence of:

4. Appropriate teaming experiences and curriculum sequencing to develop the competencies necessary for graduation, including appropriate instructional materials, classroom presentations, discussions, demonstrations, community exposure, and supervised practice.
5. Clearly written and sequenced course syllabi which describe learning, objectives and competencies to be achieved for both didactic and supervised education components.
6. Frequent documented evaluation of students to assess their acquisition of knowledge, problem identification, problem-solving skills and interpretation competencies.

I. Prerequisites

Language prerequisites shall be specified as a foundation for the professional education.

1. American Sign Language

Students shall possess proficiency in American Sign Language that at least enables them to converse in a culturally appropriate and participatory fashion, to narrate, and to describe with connected discourse.

2. English

Students shall possess proficiency in English that at least enables them to converse in a culturally appropriate and participatory fashion, to narrate, and to describe with connected discourse.

J. Content Requirements

The course of study shall be based on a broad foundation of liberal arts, sciences, professional education, research, and practicum. It shall include:

1. Liberal arts content that is prerequisite to, or concurrent with, professional education and shall facilitate the development of:

- a) Superior oral and written communication skills;
- b) Logical thinking, critical analysis, problem-solving, and creativity;
- c) Knowledge and appreciation of multicultural features of society;
- d) Ability to make judgments in the context of historical, social, economic, scientific, and political information; and
- e) An appreciation of the ethnic, cultural, economic, religious, social, and physical diversity of the population along with the practical knowledge of its influence and impact on the profession;

2. Social and behavioral sciences content that is prerequisite to, or concurrent with, professional education and shall facilitate the development of knowledge and appreciation of:

- a) Human behavior in the context of sociocultural systems to include beliefs, ethics, and values;
- b) Minority group dynamics, prejudice, class, power, oppression, and social change; and
- c) Language and society, bilingualism, language variation, syntax and semantics, cross-cultural communication, and cross-cultural conflict.

3. Professional education that will enable students to develop and apply knowledge and competencies in interpretation.

- a) Knowledge areas shall include:
 - 1. Theories of interpretation and translation;
 - 2. Historical foundations of the profession;
 - 3. Interpreter role and responsibilities;
 - 4. Professional ethics;
 - 5. Human relations;
 - 6. Dynamics of cross-cultural interaction;
 - 7. Human services and community resources;
 - 8. Certification and licensure;
 - 9. Business practices;
 - 10. State and federal legislation;
 - 11. Continuing professional development; and
 - 12. Stress management and personal health.
- b) Competencies shall include:
 - 1. Language
 - (a) ability to understand the source language in all its nuances; and
 - (b) ability to express oneself correctly, fluently, clearly, and with poise in the target language.
 - 2) Message Transfer
 - (a) ability to understand the articulation of meaning in the source language discourse;
 - (b) ability to render the meaning of the source language discourse in the target language without distortions, additions, or omissions; and
 - (c) ability to transfer a message from a source language into a target language appropriately from the point of view of style and culture, and without undue influence of the source language.

3) Methodology

- (a) ability to use different modes of interpreting (i.e., simultaneous or consecutive), ability to choose the appropriate mode in a given setting; and
- (b) ability to use different target language forms, ability to choose the appropriate form according to audience preference.

4) Subject matter

- (a) breadth of knowledge allowing interpretation of general discourse within several fields;
- (b) sufficient specialized knowledge of one (1) or two (2) disciplines allowing interpretation of more specialized discourse within these disciplines; and

5) Techniques and logistics, such as ability to manage the physical setting and ability to select and use appropriate equipment.

Note: The competencies in b. (1-5) were first discussed and described by Roda Roberts (1992).

4. Research

- a) Necessity for and values of research on interpretation and interpreter education;
- b) Essential components of a research protocol;
- c) Analysis of studies related to interpretation; and
- d) Application of research results to interpretation practice.

5. Practicum

- a) Supervised practicum shall be an integral part of the educational program. The experience shall provide the student with the opportunity for carrying out professional responsibilities under appropriate supervision and professional role modeling.
 - 1) Objectives for each phase of the practicum shall be collaboratively developed and documented by the program faculty, practicum supervisor, and student.
 - 2) The ratio of program faculty to students shall ensure proper supervision in and frequent assessment of achieving the objectives.
 - 3) Practicum shall be conducted in settings equipped to provide application of principles learned in the curriculum and appropriate to the learning needs of the student.
- b) Directed observation in selected aspects of the interpreting service provision process shall be required. Those experiences should be designed to enrich didactic coursework. These experiences should be provided at appropriate times throughout the program.

- c) In-depth experiences in delivering interpreting services shall be required. These experiences are not intended to emphasize unsupervised performance.
 - 1) The practicum should provide experiences with various groups across the life span, various language preferences, and various service-delivery models reflective of current practices in the profession.
 - 2) The practicum shall be supervised by qualified personnel.
 - 3) To ensure continuity of application of academic concepts, the practicum shall be completed within a reasonable time frame.
 - 4) The student's practicum shall be formally evaluated and documented by the practicum supervisor in accordance with program guidelines. This evaluation shall be shared with the student.

K. References

Roberts, Roda P. 1992. "Student Competencies in Interpreting: Defining, Teaching, and Evaluating." In E. A. Winston (Ed.), *Student Competencies: Defining, Teaching, and Evaluating*.

Proceedings of the Ninth National Convention, Conference of Interpreter Trainers, Denver 1992.