

*Working with an interpreter—  
the Key to Communicating with  
your Clients*



**IMMIGRANT SERVICES**  
Guelph-Wellington



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## What is Interpretation?

### Types of interpretation



#### **Cultural interpretation**

Cultural interpreters provide a perspective on the cultural nuances that may underlie communications.

#### **Language Interpretation**

Language interpretation is conducted in public service settings such as medical and mental health sectors, community services, educational institutions, and social services.

#### **Consecutive Interpretation**

An interpreter allows the speaker to complete a thought or statement, before interpreting.

#### **Simultaneous Interpretation**

The interpreter speaks at the same time as the person who is speaking. This kind of interpretation is appropriate for conferences, meetings, and presentations.

**Language interpretation** is the act of facilitating oral communication between users of different languages.

**An interpreter** is someone who converts a spoken message from one language to another.

#### **Sight Translation**

An oral translation of a written document.

#### **Face-to-Face Interpretation**

An interpretation done “in person” for example at the service provider’s office or client’s home, with client, interpreter and service provider present.

#### **Telephone Interpretation**

An interpretation conducted over the telephone.

#### **Message Relay**

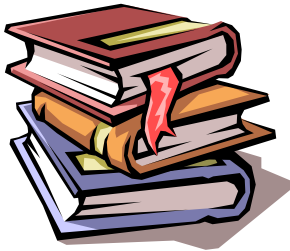
A message that is relayed over the telephone. For example, a service provider might ask an interpreter to call their client to inform them of the date and time of an appointment.



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## Common Terms



### **Source Language**

The language **from which** interpretation is carried out.

### **Target Language**

The language **into which** the interpretation is carried out.

### **Dialect**

Variations of a language based on region, class etc. which deviates from the standard language in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

### **Utterance**

A complete unit of speech in spoken language. It is generally, but not always, bounded by silence.

### **Language Register**

This term describes the simplicity or complexity of the language used in discourse. Interpreters will adjust the register of speech to the level of the recipient if they feel the register used is so specialized or technical that the recipient would not understand.



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## Arranging for an interpreter



### To arrange for an interpreter please contact:

Jean Chow, Settlement Services Integration Co-ordinator

Tel: 519-836-2222 ext 226, Fax: 519-837-2884

Email: [jchow@is-gw.ca](mailto:jchow@is-gw.ca)

### You will be asked to:

- ✓ Specify the language of the non-English speaker and their country of origin.
- ✓ Describe the nature and context of the appointment, persons in attendance, and provide site specific information.
- ✓ Indicate whether circumstances dictate that you require a male or female interpreter.
- ✓ Provide the date, time and place of the interpretation.
- ✓ Provide your name, agency affiliation, contact email and telephone number.
- ✓ Specify client ID codes and PO numbers as required for billing.
- ✓ For a sight translation or for message relays provide the content by fax or email.
- ✓ Prepare ample time for the appointment as the interpreter will be repeating everything that you and your client have to say.



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## Fee schedule

### Who pays for ISGW interpretation services?

When service providers call ISGW to arrange for an interpreter the fee for the interpreter is charged to the service provider.



### ISGW Fee Interpreter Fee Schedule

Cost per hour*	Message relay**	Missed appointment***	For appointments outside of Guelph
\$31.25	\$12.50	\$31.25 flat fee	.40 cents per km plus travel time of \$31.25 an hour
<b>All interpretation fees include a 25% service charge. The fee for the interpreter is \$25 an hour. A message relay is \$10.00</b>			

\*There is a minimum charge of \$31.25 for an interpretation for any part of the first hour. After the first hour, services are prorated based on \$31.25 an hour. For example: If a session lasts for 15 minutes, the charge is \$31.25.

If a session lasts for one hour and 40 minutes, the charge would be calculated as follows:  $100 \text{ (min)}/60 \text{ (min)} = 1.66 \times \$31.25 = \$51.87$

\*\* **A message relay** is when the interpreter calls a client to pass on information from the service provider. The message might be to tell the client the time and day of an appointment, for example.

\*\*\* **What is a missed appointment?** A missed appointment is when the client or service provider does not show up for the session. The interpreter will wait 15 minutes and if the client/ service provider does not appear, the session is considered a missed appointment and the minimum charge is applied.

**What happens if you have to cancel an appointment?** There is no charge for an appointment if you are able to cancel it within 24 hours of the time at which it is scheduled.



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## Working with an Interpreter

### The interpretation Session

- ✓ Allow the interpreter to introduce him/herself to both the service provider and the client.
- ✓ Provide seating that allows the interpreter to sit beside or just behind the client.
- ✓ Clearly explain your role as a service provider speaking clearly and directly to the client, not to the interpreter.
- ✓ Pace the conversation by speaking in short sentences. This provides the interpreter the time necessary to repeat your words, and is the reason you need to book more time for the session than you normally would.
- ✓ Use plain language. How the client responds as well as the client's non-verbal communication can help you determine if they understand what they are being told.
- ✓ **Be aware, that it is the responsibility of the service provider NOT the interpreter to make sure that the client comprehends what is being communicated.**

- ✓ The interpreter should not offer or be asked for his or her opinion.
- ✓ Ask the interpreter to sight translate any documentation that requires a client signature. Hand documents directly to the client if a signature is required.



- ✓ Avoid the use of idioms, colloquialisms, and metaphors as it is unlikely that there is an equivalent in other languages.
- ✓ Some English words do not have an exact translation into other languages, so the interpreter might have to provide an explanation of the term. This does not mean that the interpreter is having a side conversation with the group, rather s/he is helping the group to understand the context of the term used.



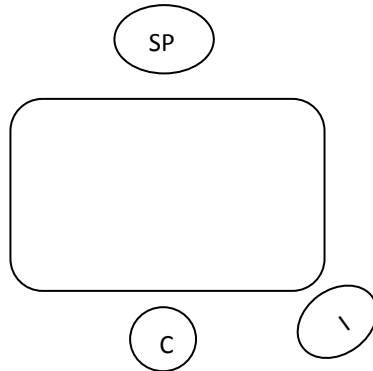
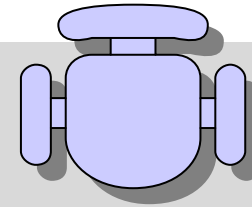
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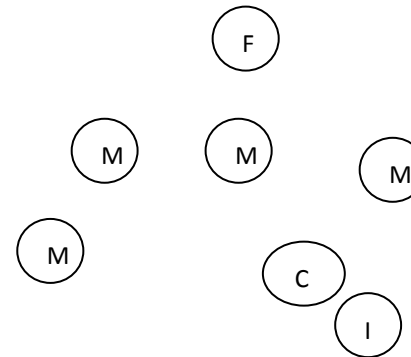
## Working with an Interpreter

### Seating arrangements

Seating arrangements are an important consideration in an interpretation session. The client and the service provider should face each other as they should be talking directly to each other, not to the interpreter. It is the interpreter's role to change focus from service provider to client, and from client to service provider.



#### Group session



C= client, F= facilitator, I= Interpreter, M=member, SP= service provider



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## Working with an Interpreter

### The interpreter's Introduction

#### The interpreter will:

- ✓ introduce him/herself by first name only – for reasons of confidentiality;
- ✓ identify which organization they represent (i.e. the agency providing interpretation services)
- ✓ inform all parties that s/he will speak in the first person;
- ✓ inform all parties that everything that is said during the session will be interpreted;
- ✓ ask all parties to speak in short sentences in order to allow time for interpretation and to ensure accuracy;
- ✓ inform all parties that everything the interpreter sees or hears will be kept confidential unless they are required by law to inform the appropriate authorities;

- ✓ inform all parties that the interpreter is there to interpret for all parties involved;
- ✓ ask all parties to speak directly to each other, and not to the interpreter;
- ✓ inform all parties that the interpreter may use notes as memory aids, but that all notes will be destroyed at the end of the session;
- ✓ inform all parties that there may be a need for the interpreter to interrupt in order to clarify something was not clearly understood; and
- ✓ request permission from all parties to act as an interpreter







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## Working with an Interpreter

### Checking for Understanding

**It is important to regularly check to ensure that you and your client understand each other.**

**You can check your client's understanding by asking them:**

- ✓ directly if they would like anything clarified;
- ✓ open-ended questions to elicit understanding;
- ✓ to repeat back their version of what has been said;
- ✓ to summarize the main points of the discussion

**You can check if you understand the client by:**

- ✓ asking the client to re-phrase anything you might not have understood.
- ✓ summarizing what you think the client has said.
- ✓ re-wording information that the client has shared in order to verify your understanding.





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## Working with an Interpreter

### Interpreter Interruption

**An interpreter may interrupt an interpretation for the following reasons:**

- ✓ The interpreter does not understand a word or a concept.
- ✓ The interpreter has noticed a cultural reference that is likely to cause a misunderstanding.
- ✓ It is clear to the interpreter that there is a misunderstanding on either side.
- ✓ The interpreter needs to ask for a repetition or a rephrase of information.
- ✓ The interpreter needs to correct an interpretation error.
- ✓ The interpreter needs to tell either party that they are speaking too quickly or are failing to pause.
- ✓ The interpreter needs to take a break.





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## Working with an Interpreter

### What to avoid

#### Whenever possible avoid using:

- × Jargon
- × Technical terms
- × Slang
- × Metaphors
- × Acronyms
- × Idioms
- × Cultural references
- × Humour
- × Colloquialisms
- × Abbreviations
- × Double negatives
- × Figures of speech (I died of embarrassment)
- × Rhetorical questions
- × The subjunctive mood (i.e. if conditionals) as the subjunctive does not exist in many languages.



# Tips

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## Working with an Interpreter

### Group Settings

**Following are some tips to help your session go smoothly:**

- ✓ When possible, provide the interpreter with the content of your presentation a few days prior to the event. It might be necessary for the interpreter to prepare for technical terms or terms specific to the topic of the presentation that might not exist in the language of interpretation.
- ✓ Allow a few minutes before you begin your presentation to meet with the interpreter to talk about how you would like to handle questions and clarifications from the group.
- ✓ During your presentation, speak a little more slowly than you normally would.
- ✓ When possible, use plain English and avoid technical terms and acronyms.

Working with an interpreter in a group setting can be challenging. This is especially true if there are several language groups, each with an interpreter.

- ✓ Try to pause after two or three sentences, to allow the interpreter to relay the information.
- ✓ If you have covered some particularly important or complex content, take a moment to summarize it.
- ✓ Avoid the use of idioms, colloquialisms, and metaphors as it is unlikely that there is an equivalent in other languages.
- ✓ Some English words do not have an exact translation into other languages, so the interpreter might have to provide an explanation of the term.
- ✓ Although interpreters make every effort to be discrete in group settings, be aware that there will be background noise during the presentation.



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## Interpreter Training

### Knowledge Certification

The knowledge element of an interpretation course integrates theory, principles and concepts with practical applications and skills development. Programs aim to assist in the development of introductory level competencies, skills, knowledge and attitudes which are required to function as a certified language interpreter.

### Oral Certification

#### The ILSAT

The Interpreter Language Skills Assessment Test (ILSAT) is a dual-language recorded audio test which measures sight translation and the ability to conduct consecutive interpretation. It was developed by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration Language Interpreter Services Program. The ILSAT is also used by Ontario Colleges, community agencies and public institutions to assess interpreting aptitude and skills. ILSAT submissions are assessed by independent markers recruited and

trained by Across Languages (London, Ontario) according to standardized marking criteria.

#### The CILISAT

The Community Interpreter Language and Interpreting Skills Assessment Tool (CILISAT) was developed by the CISOC (Cultural Interpretation Services for our Communities) at the request of the Ontario's Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, in order to evaluate the language and interpretation proficiencies of those applying for certification as community interpreters. All tests are evaluated by independent assessors.

*ILSAT and CILISAT assessments are offered via select institutions such as colleges and universities, and some settlement services agencies.*

**Immigrant Services Guelph-Wellington is a designated ILSAT administration site.**

### Certification

