

REQUESTING TRANSLATION OR INTERPRETING SERVICES:  
GUIDELINES

Individuals or organizations needing translation or interpreting services should take into account the following:

1. Proficiency in a second or native language does not mean that one is qualified to serve as an interpreter or a translator.
2. In order to provide high-quality interpreting services, one must be trained and qualified in several areas beyond language proficiency, including but not limited to interpreting techniques and skills, terminology, cultural awareness, ethical standards, professional conduct, personal and professional boundaries, impartiality, confidentiality, transparency, working conditions and advocacy, and considerations specific to each interpreted event.
3. In order to provide high-quality translation services, one must be trained and qualified in several areas beyond language proficiency, including but not limited to translation techniques and skills, terminology, cultural awareness, ethical standards, professional conduct, personal and professional boundaries, confidentiality, working conditions and advocacy, text types and genres, use of computer-assisted translation tools, target-language style and conventions, context and meaning, and considerations specific to each translation assignment.
4. Requests for translation and interpreting services should not be indiscriminately forwarded by email with open invitations to provide the services as this will result in unvetted individuals performing tasks they may not be qualified to undertake.
5. Identification of one or more students to provide translation or interpreting services should include measures to ensure that pre-service training is provided if necessary. TIS faculty can provide guidance on what this training should entail.
6. Undergraduate students are unlikely to have the training necessary to provide quality interpreting services. In some cases, students could be trained to take on the tasks associated with what is sometimes described as “language mediation,” which may involve spending time with individuals who need assistance understanding certain procedures (for example, filling out a form, renting an apartment, or registering their children for programs). However, even this type of task requires preparation.

**For these reasons, [the policy of TIS](#) is to refer those requesting services to professional organizations.**