

## Frequently Asked Questions on inter-institutional accreditation tests

### **1. I would like to apply for a job as an interpreter in the European Institutions: where do I send my application?**

**Staff interpreters** for the EU Institutions are recruited through open competitions that are published in the [Official Journal of the European Union](#) and on the EPSO website ([http://www.europa.eu/epso/discover/job\\_profiles/language/index\\_en.htm#chapter1](http://www.europa.eu/epso/discover/job_profiles/language/index_en.htm#chapter1)).

**Freelance interpreters** (ACI = Conference Interpreting Agents) are recruited by means of inter-institutional accreditation tests (joint tests for the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Court of Justice of the European Union). You should apply on-line via the SPIRIT portal <http://scic.ec.europa.eu/scic/spirit/login.jsp?apLang=E>.

Please note that the selection and recruitment procedures for interpreters and for translators working for the EU Institutions are carried out separately. If you are interested in a career in **translation**, you might like to check the following websites:

- European Commission Directorate-General for Translation (DGT)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/workwithus/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/workwithus/index_en.htm)
- European Parliament Directorate-General for Translation  
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/multilinguisme/EP\\_translators\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/multilinguisme/EP_translators_en.pdf)
- Court of Justice Directorate-General for Translation  
[http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/Jo2\\_10740/recrutement-comment-devenir-juriste-linguiste-a-la-cour-de-justice](http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/Jo2_10740/recrutement-comment-devenir-juriste-linguiste-a-la-cour-de-justice).

### **2. When can I send in my application? Is there a deadline for sending in all my supporting documents?**

You may apply for an inter-institutional accreditation test for freelance interpreters at any time: tests are scheduled periodically, according to the recruitment needs of the institutions. For 2017, testing is expected to start in the second half of the year: an indicative calendar will be published in due course. About 15-20 weeks before the tests, a Screening Committee will review all applications and decide which candidate(s) to invite for testing on the basis of the documents in candidates' files at the time of the screening. Bearing in mind this indicative timeframe, it is advisable to upload all your documents to your SPIRIT profile as early as possible.

### **3. What qualifications and experience do I need to apply for an inter-institutional accreditation test?**

To be eligible for an accreditation test, you must:

- have completed a recognised four-year full-time undergraduate course in conference interpreting and obtained the relevant diploma **or**
- have a recognised Master's degree in conference interpreting **or**
- have a recognised university degree in any subject awarded after 3 years of full-time undergraduate study **and either**
  - have at least one year's professional experience as a conference interpreter (experience as a court interpreter, liaison interpreter, or company interpreter will not be taken into account), acquired after award of the university degree, and clear documentary evidence of the total number of days worked

**or**

- have successfully completed a postgraduate conference interpreting training programme (other than a Master's degree), of at least one academic year of full time study, for which a certificate or other documentary proof can be submitted.

The Screening Committee will take into account differences between education systems.

Please note that the Screening Committee will base its decision on your language combination and the published accreditation profile ([http://europa.eu/interpretation/doc/lang\\_profiles\\_in\\_demand.pdf](http://europa.eu/interpretation/doc/lang_profiles_in_demand.pdf)).

N.B. having the requisite language profile does not confer an automatic right to be invited.

#### **4. How do I prove my experience as a conference interpreter?**

Simply mentioning professional experience in conference interpreting in your CV is not sufficient: your experience has to be duly documented, and all necessary supporting documents should be in your file by the time of the screening.

You are required to provide proof of experience as a conference interpreter in both simultaneous and consecutive interpreting at the level required in international meetings. To do so, you may send the following:

- photocopies of contracts
- statements from your employers specifying the number of days and types of conferences
- letters of reference specifying the number of days worked and the nature of duties
- in exceptional circumstances, photocopies of invoices will also be accepted, if a clear description of the type of work is mentioned.

**Please note that experience as a court interpreter, liaison interpreter or company interpreter does not count as experience in conference interpreting.**

## 5. I am interested in taking the accreditation test in two different A languages: do I need to send in two applications?

No, if you have already applied and wish to change your [A language](#), there is no need to re-apply. The Inter-Institutional Test Office will keep your file in the database and update it upon request (please notify [csi-tests@ec.europa.eu](mailto:csi-tests@ec.europa.eu)). However, please note that you can only be registered with one A language at a time.

## 6. I think I have uploaded all the necessary documents: can you confirm that my file is complete?

The Screening Committee will assess your application on the basis of the current eligibility criteria published on [http://europa.eu/interpretation/accreditation\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/interpretation/accreditation_en.htm) and determine whether or not your supporting documents are adequate.

It is **your** responsibility to make sure that all the required documents (e.g. updated CV with photograph, diploma(s), proof of experience, etc.) are uploaded in good time. You may update existing files, or send in additional ones, at any time via your SPIRIT profile.

Here are some useful tips for preparing your application:

- Please check the **quality** of the electronic files when uploading.
- Please ensure that your **language combination is mentioned on an official document** (if not on the diploma, it is advisable to enclose a diploma supplement. ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/diploma-supplement\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/diploma-supplement_en.htm)))
- Your knowledge and level of **languages not covered by a diploma** should be duly documented (by uploading e.g. certificates or personal statements).
- If the **marks for the interpretation exams** are not specified on the diploma, please provide them on an additional sheet.
- If, when you apply, you do not yet have your final diploma in conference interpreting, please upload an **official certificate** from the University certifying that you have passed the final interpretation exams. Be aware though that if you pass the accreditation test, you will not be added to the list of accredited ACIs until you submit a copy of your final diploma.

## 7. How will I know whether or not I am to be invited to an accreditation test?

Any information relating to your application will be sent via your SPIRIT account, which you are invited to consult regularly.

You are also encouraged to check your personal mailbox, as you may also be contacted by e-mail (see Question 10). Please be aware that we will use the e-mail address you indicated at the time of application (which you can change at any time in the "Personal data" section of your SPIRIT account).

## **8. I have heard that the European Institutions have started to use pre-selection tests in the selection process for freelance interpreters: what does this mean for me as a candidate?**

Since January 2016, pre-selection has been used systematically in the selection process for EU official languages. You will be invited to a pre-selection test if:

- your application is accepted by the Screening Committee
- you have never taken an accreditation test *and/or*
- you have never passed a pre-selection test.

If you pass the pre-selection test, you will be eligible to sit the full accreditation test.

## **9. What if I have already taken an accreditation test in the past and I wish to re-apply: will I have to go through the pre-selection phase?**

If you have taken an accreditation test in the past, you can certainly re-apply at any time via the SPIRIT platform. Your application will be reactivated and submitted to the Screening Committee. If selected at screening, you will be exempted from taking the pre-selection test.

## **10. What is the pre-selection test?**

Pre-selection tests are administered, via a web-based pre-selection tool (PST), by the European Parliament test team. They involve simultaneously interpreting a pre-recorded video speech (speech length  $\pm$  10 minutes) into your A language or a retour language. You cannot choose the language in which you will sit the test: you will be informed of the test language in the invitation. If you pass the pre-selection test, the language tested in the pre-selection phase will be tested again, along with your other languages, in both consecutive and simultaneous modes, in the accreditation test in Brussels.

## **11. I have passed the pre-selection test: what happens next?**

Depending on available testing slots, you will be invited to sit an accreditation test. If you are not invited to the next round of accreditation tests for your A language, your application will be kept on file with a view to arranging the test in the future. You will not be asked to sit a pre-selection test again.

## **12. What does the inter-institutional accreditation test involve?**

For every [passive language](#) and/or [retour language](#) to be tested, there will be a consecutive interpretation test with note-taking (speech length  $\pm$  6 minutes) and a simultaneous interpretation test (speech length  $\pm$  10 minutes). To test your general knowledge of EU Institutions and policies, one of the speeches will be on an EU-related topic. Please note that pre-recorded video speeches (similar to those available in the Speech Repository

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/cooperation-with-universities/speech\\_repository.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/cooperation-with-universities/speech_repository.htm)) might be used for the simultaneous tests.

### **13. How is the test structured?**

For A languages which are official languages of the EU, candidates may be tested in pairs: in this case, two candidates will be invited at the same time and both candidates will be given the same consecutive and simultaneous speeches for each passive language in quick succession. Deliberations will take place at the end of each round. It is current practice to test all the languages identified by the Screening Committee as matching the published accreditation profile.

Please note that different arrangements may apply to tests for non-EU languages.

### **14. I have been invited to the test with a given language combination: can I change the languages chosen?**

It is for the Screening Committee to decide which languages will be tested, selecting them from all the languages that you declared in your application. **This choice cannot be modified.** Please note that, for organisational reasons, the order of the language tests is fixed.

### **15. Do I need to bring any equipment on the day of the test? Can I use my own headset?**

In the test room you will find a notepad and pencils, but you may certainly bring your own. For tests taking place in **European Commission premises**, you may use your own headset, provided it can be plugged into the interpreting console in the booth. For tests taking place in **European Parliament premises**, you are required to use the headset provided.

Electronic devices (tablets, laptops, etc.) are not permitted in the test room unless specifically authorised to test a candidate with a disability.

### **16. I have a disability: what kind of information should I give when applying?**

Please declare your disability using the form provided on the SPIRIT platform, including any need for special assistance or equipment for either the consecutive or the simultaneous test. Every effort will be made to make arrangements for you to be tested in the best possible conditions, while maintaining parity between candidates.

### **17. Who will be assessing my performance at the accreditation test?**

Selection Boards are made up of senior interpreters from the three interpreting services of the EU Institutions (European Commission, European Parliament and Court of Justice of the European Union). Depending on the language combination tested, there might be other interpreters present as assessors, to assist the Selection Board in its evaluation.

**18. What happens if I fail a test? Can I apply again?**

Yes, you may re-apply for a test. In principle, you may take the test up to 3 times. However please be aware that there is no entitlement to three attempts to pass the test. It is for the Screening Committee to decide who to invite to a test. Its decision is based, inter alia, on practical constraints, such as the number of test slots, evolving needs and the priorities established by the Institutions for each language booth.

**19. What happens after I pass the test?**

If you pass all the interpreting components of your test and have fulfilled all administrative conditions, you will be added to the list of ACI interpreters accredited to the European Institutions (see also Question 6).

Accredited ACIs are offered contracts according to the needs of each Institution. Please note that inclusion on the list of accredited interpreters is no guarantee of recruitment.

**20. Can ACI accreditation lead to permanent employment as an official?**

No. Recruitment to a permanent staff post is only possible via open competitions (see also Question 1).

**Inter-institutional Test Group  
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