

APTIC Code of Ethics and Good Practice

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Translators, interpreters and editors (“language professionals”) who are members of the Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters of Catalonia (APTIC) act at all times in accordance with the standards of conduct and professionalism appropriate to the aims of the association, which are included in this Code of Ethics.

Explanation: Language professionals take responsibility for their work and conduct; they are committed to providing quality service in a respectful and culturally sensitive manner, dealing honestly and fairly with other parties, and dealing honestly in all professional practices. They disclose any conflict of interests or matter that could compromise their impartiality.

Good practice:

Language professionals maintain their integrity and independence during the course of their work.

- 1.1. Language professionals complete the jobs they accept unless this is not possible for technical or ethical reasons (see Principles 3.4 and 4.2).
- 1.2. Language professionals adhere to appointment times and deadlines and give sufficient notice if they believe they will not be able to.
- 1.3. Language professionals do not exercise influence over their clients for their own or anyone else’s benefit.
- 1.4. Language professionals do not ask clients for work-related products, gifts or services unless the contracting party explicitly offers them.

2. CONFIDENTIALITY

Language professionals maintain confidentiality and do not disclose to third parties information acquired in the course of their work.

Explanation: Language professionals maintain strict professional secrecy concerning contents or documents they have access to on any medium or in any format before, during and after carrying out a project, unless the client makes them public or specifically states that the information is not confidential. This confidentiality also applies to jobs cancelled and not worked on by the language professional. The duty of professional secrecy extends to colleagues and anyone associated with the translation, editing or interpreting project.

Good practice:

- 2.1. Language professionals do not make use of information they have access to as a result of their work for their own benefit.

2.2. Where teamwork is required, the ethical obligation for confidentiality extends to all members of the team.

2.3. Information may only be disclosed when explicitly authorised by the client, when it is required by law or when someone's health or safety is at risk (see interpreting appendix).

3. COMPETENCE

Language professionals only undertake work they are competent to perform in the languages for which they are qualified or have professional training.

Explanation: Language professionals need to have the appropriate expertise for the jobs they undertake. Language professionals always represent their credentials honestly. Language professionals engage in continuing professional development to maintain and develop their skills, either arranging it themselves (see Principle 7) or requesting it from employers.

Good practice:

3.1. By accepting an order for a translation, interpreting or editing job, language professionals are implicitly stating that they are competent to do the job.

3.2. Language professionals know or study the varied contexts, institutional structures, terminology and genres of the areas in which they accept work.

3.3. If it becomes apparent in the course of a job that expertise beyond their competence is required, language professionals immediately notify the client and work to find an appropriate solution, for example, by recommending a colleague with the appropriate skills.

3.4. Language professionals work in the languages agreed upon with the client and in which they are competent.

4. FAITHFULNESS AND IMPARTIALITY

Language professionals endeavour to respect the original content and purpose specified in the client's order. They do not get involved in exchanges of communications or documents, except where mediation is necessary. They fully and accurately render the content in the target language while being faithful to the spirit of the original message or text without omitting or distorting anything. In more creative types of translation, they endeavour to render the intention, even if this means moving away from the original.

Explanation: Language professionals play an important role in facilitating oral and written communication between parties who do not share a common language or culture. Language professionals are not responsible for what the parties communicate, only for the complete and accurate transfer of the message. They do

not allow bias to affect their work, nor do they soften, strengthen or alter the messages being conveyed.

Good practice:

4.1. Professional impartiality is required for all translation, interpreting and editing jobs.

4.2. Where language professionals find it difficult to be impartial because of personal beliefs or other circumstances, such as cases when they consider that the fundamental rights of one or more participants are being violated, language professionals may choose to reject the job in question. If they have already begun, they offer to withdraw from it.

4.3. During a job, language professionals do not voice or write any opinion about any matter or person unless they are specifically asked to do so. If they are asked for an opinion, they make it with the utmost discretion and confidentiality.

4.4. Language professionals frankly disclose any conflict of interest that may arise concerning the acceptance of a job.

4.5. Language professionals are not responsible for what clients say or write. Nor do they alter, add or omit the content or intention of the original message.

4.6. Language professionals acknowledge mistakes in their work and correct them immediately. Translators and editors also indicate to the client if an original document contains an objectively significant error. However, if the original is clearly deficient, the professional may ask the client for a revised version before starting work. Language professionals may, if they see fit, offer to edit the original document for the client.

4.7. When circumstances allow, language professionals ask for anything they do not understand to be repeated, reformulated or clarified.

5. CLARITY OF ROLE BOUNDARIES

Language professionals focus on conveying the message and do not undertake the role of other parties involved in project.

Explanation: The focus of language professionals is on transferring the message while taking into account the target audience. During their interpreting or translation duties, they do not carry out other tasks such as advocacy or giving advice of any kind, unless mediation is necessary to explain possible cultural differences between the parties involved or any of them request such services. To this end, when the situation so requires, language professionals explain their role in accordance with the principles of this Code.

Good practice:

5.1. In the course of their work, language professionals do not take on other roles, such as offering advocacy, guidance or advice, if they have not been hired for these purposes.

5.2. Language professionals draw attention to any situation in which the other participants misunderstand the role of the translator, interpreter or editor, or have inappropriate expectations.

5.3. Language professionals maintain strict professional relationships with their clients and inform them if they consider that professional boundaries are being infringed upon or that the language professional's physical or mental integrity is at risk.

6. MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Language professionals are responsible for the quality of their work as self-employed language professionals, contractors or employees. They always endeavour to secure satisfactory working conditions for performing their duties, which includes establishing obtaining an appropriate briefing (information, preliminary meetings or information sessions), precise work specifications with a pre-agreed price and clear protocols for behaviour in specific environments when necessary.

Explanation: Translators and interpreters work in a variety of settings with specific institutional demands and a wide range of professional and business contexts.

Translators, interpreters and editors must be familiar with these contexts and endeavour to have the people they work with understand their role. In all cases, whether working for direct clients, agencies or colleagues, language professionals maintain the same professional standards. At the same time, contractors must have appropriate and fair procedures in place that recognise and foster good practices among language professionals.

Good practice:

6.1. Language professionals follow this Code in all situations, regardless of whether they are working as employees, self-employed workers, contractors, supervisors or subcontractors for other language professionals.

6.2. Language professionals request briefing and access to reference material and background information before there were commences.

6.3. Interpreters endeavour to secure a physical environment that enables optimal message transfer in the given context. This includes using devices and accessories that participants usually need to hear and speak, such as standard booths suitable for conference interpreting, appropriate physical arrangements for confidentiality or security measures in cases of physical risk. It also includes the provision of seating and reasonable breaks to prevent interpreter fatigue.

6.4. If language professionals consider that adequate conditions as arranged with their clients and in accordance with this Code are not being provided, they may demand compliance with them.

7. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Language professionals maintain and develop their knowledge throughout their careers.

Explanation: Language professionals engage in lifelong learning, recognising that individuals, services and practices evolve and change over time. They continually upgrade their knowledge of their working languages; their translation, interpreting and editing skills; and their understanding of diverse contexts and cultures. They keep abreast of technological advances in their professional practice so they can continue to provide quality service. Language professionals working with languages for which there is no standard training or qualifications maintain and update their knowledge independently.

Good practice:

7.1. Language professionals improve their skills and knowledge thorough continuing professional development throughout their careers.

7.2. Language professionals maintain an appropriate level of knowledge of the languages and cultures in which they offer their services.

7.3. Language professionals support and promote continuing professional development within the sector and among their colleagues.

7.4. Language professionals endeavour to keep themselves informed about the latest trends and advances in theory and practice in their specialist areas to improve their skills and practice.

8. PROFESSIONAL SOLIDARITY

Language professionals respect and support their colleagues and uphold the reputation of the professions of interpreting, translation and editing in accordance with the good practices set out in this Code of Ethics.

Explanation: Language professionals show loyalty to the profession beyond their individual interest. They support and further the interests of the profession, the association and their colleagues and offer help to one another. APTIC may set up a committee to resolve professional disputes directly or indirectly affecting its members.

Good practice:

- 8.1. Language professionals support and further the interests of the profession and their colleagues and offer one another help.
- 8.2. Language professionals do not accept rates that are derisory or damaging to the profession.
- 8.3. If a member recommends another member to a client, the recommended member refrains from directly offering services to that client.
- 8.4. Language professionals endeavour to resolve any dispute with their colleagues in a cooperative, constructive and professional manner.
- 8.5. APTIC may mediate conflicts or disputes between its members.

9. SOCIAL COMMITMENT

Language professionals show solidarity with public bodies by placing themselves at their service in serious or emergency situations that require their services immediately.

Explanation: In emergencies affecting the region or its people, language professionals do everything possible to place themselves at the service of the competent authorities, institutions and public bodies to ensure the transmission of information to groups who need it.

Good practice:

9.1. Language professionals offer their services as a priority to public institutions and services such as the courts, medical and social services, etc., in cases of disasters, emergencies, conflicts, accidents, etc., affecting the region or particular groups, especially groups at serious risk of exclusion.

10. VOLUNTEER WORK

Language professionals may offer their services to not-for-profit social or solidarity organisations without payment or under special conditions. However, before accepting a commission or offering their services free of charge, language professionals check that the organisation requesting their services really is a volunteer organisation and that it does not have the structure and funding of a conventional business that pays fixed salaries and remuneration for other services.

Explanation: In special cases, language professionals may offer their services free of charge or at reduced rates to social and solidarity organisations and associations, such as NGOs, associations, cultural organisations, etc.

Good practices

10.1. Language professionals provide their services with the same rigour and professionalism as when they work for businesses or institutions. They ensure that

they have the best conditions for doing their job properly (i.e., breaks, space, material, sound equipment, etc.).

10.2. Language professionals do not work free of charge for not-for-profit organisations that normally operate as conventional for-profit businesses that pay their staff and their regular service providers.

Conduct issues specific to translators and editors

T1. Before beginning a job, translators and editors confirm the purpose of the job, the required form of delivery and the delivery deadline.

T2. Translators and editors obtain as much information, terminology and reference material as possible and necessary for the proper and timely execution of the job, and treat this material confidentially or as expressly agreed. If the client has but fails to provide reference texts crucial to the desired outcome, the translator or editor is not responsible for inadequacies in the text demonstrably caused by the failure to provide these resources.

T3. Translators and editors deliver a text that fully and impartially reflects the meaning and intention of the source text in accordance with the purpose specified in the client's order.

T4. Translators and editors work only with the source and target languages for which they are qualified.

T5. Translators and editors carry out only tasks they consider to be within their competence and relevant specialities and for which they have the necessary resources, skills and level of comprehension and fluency. Translation work should normally be checked by a person with the relevant knowledge or skills, either provided by the contractor or subcontracted by the translator.

T6. If the source text contains particular elements that must be taken into account to do the job, translators make every effort and apply their professional judgement to inform the client of this. Such elements may include ambiguities, factual inaccuracies, linguistic errors, imprecise terminology, language the translator judges to be discriminatory or expressions or references that could jeopardise achieving the purpose of the text.

T7. When subcontracted, translators do not contact the direct client of the person or company subcontracting them.

T8. Translators and editors may subcontract work only to other language professionals who they have good reasons to believe possess the necessary skills and resources and who follow this Code of Ethics and Conduct, and always in compliance with any agreement entered into with the client. In all cases, responsibility for the final text lies with the translator or editor who subcontracted out the work, unless otherwise expressly agreed.

T9. If a translation for a publisher is to be edited or checked by an editor, the revised version must always be returned to the original translator for approval and finalisation. If changes are made in the translated text after delivery to the client without the translator's agreement or knowledge, the translator ceases to be responsible for the translated text.

T10. The translator is the author and the owner of the rights to the translation and any material arising from all term research undertaken as part of the job (such as glossaries, translation memories, etc.).

T11. If the translator cannot translate directly from the original version and must use another translation, the translator requests the author's consent and cites the name of the original translator.

T12. Professional translators working in areas involving copyright matters endeavour to follow the principles established in UNESCO's Nairobi Recommendation on the Legal Protection of Translators and Translations and FIT's Translator's Charter (see [the FIT website](#)). Literary translators must have a good understanding of copyright law and the customs of the profession and carefully read the contracts they sign. If they do not possess such knowledge, they should get professional advice.

Conduct issues specific to interpreters

I1. Interpreters prepare themselves by obtaining from the client as much information and briefing as is necessary to carry out the assignment. They treat this information confidentially or as expressly agreed.

Completeness in interpreting

I2. To ensure the same access to everything said or signed by all parties taking part in a conference, meeting or any event, interpreters accurately and completely relay everything communicated.

I3. Interpreters interpret in the first person.

I4. Interpreters maintain the emotions of the speakers in their interpreting and do not soften or enhance the force of messages conveyed or the language used. In specific contexts, such as in court or psychometric assessments, incoherence, hesitation and unclear statements are maintained in the interpretation. Where appropriate, the interpreter may clarify to the court the register or language usage employed by the speaker.

I5. If obvious untruths are told, interpreters accurately convey them in the same way as presented. In certain cases, the interpreter may state that the date, figure, etc., just translated is a verbatim translation of what the speaker said. If the interpreter considers that the speaker's error is the result of mere distraction and does not substantially change the meaning of the discourse, the interpreter may correct the error.

Relations with other parties and the interpreter's role in dialogue situations

16. In dialogue situations where some participants may be unaccustomed working with interpreters, the interpreter encourages these participants to address one another directly.

17. In situations with various participants where the interpreter is not interpreting aloud to all, the interpreter makes it possible for all participants to follow and participate in the debates by whispered simultaneous interpreting or other suitable means when other parties are communicating in the language not understood by the party or parties in question.

18. Except when interpreting simultaneously or when the context or conditions do not allow it, the interpreter asks for anything that is unclear to be repeated, rephrased or explained and informs all participants of what is happening.

19. In emergency situations in which interpreters may not have had the opportunity to be adequately briefed or given enough time to prepare, or if there are safety/security issues, interpreters notify the person responsible of this lack of ideal preparation.

110. Interpreters keep the participants informed of any comment by any party addressed to the participants except for comments made “in private” not addressed to all participants.

111. Participants may sometimes place competing expectations on interpreters. These expectations may contravene interpreters’ ethics, therefore the onus is on the interpreters to clarify the boundaries of their role and help their clients to achieve the best outcome in an interpreted session. In conversations arising in periods of waiting, interpreters take care to be courteous without being personal.

112. Interpreters testify to their qualifications and the accuracy of their interpreting and, when requested, explain their linguistic choices. However, interpreters do not testify to the participants’ understanding of the messages, which remains a matter for the participants.

Remote interpreting

113. Interpreters familiarise themselves with the growing use of technology for interpreting, including telephone, video and Internet interpreting and the use of various recording and broadcasting devices. Interpreters who interpret using these technologies get training to understand the effects of their use and how communication is shaped by these technologies. Institutions, agencies, companies, etc., that use these technologies are encouraged to develop protocols and brief interpreters on their use and on any particular requirements they may have.

Specific institutional settings of interpreting work

114. Where interpreters have roles in addition to that of interpreting due to specific employment agreements, they clearly indicate when they are acting as interpreters and do not switch roles without notice.

115. In specific institutional environments where the duty of care or security rules regulate the behaviour of all participants, such as health care or high-security settings,

interpreters follow the relevant policies and procedures in accordance with the instructions and guidelines of whoever commissioned the service.

Acknowledgements

This APTIC Code of Ethics was drawn up by the working group formed by members Frederic Rovira i Jacquet and Marta Morros i Serret, with the support of the translation committee and the board of the association. For drafting the appendix on specific translation, editing and interpreting issues, the authors have drawn primarily from the AUSIT (Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators) Code of Ethics and Conduct, with AUSIT's consent, adapting it to the circumstances in Catalonia.

Barcelona, 15 February 2016