

GUIDELINES FOR CONSULTANT INTERPRETERS

(ANNEX TO THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS)

International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) – 1997 version

Consultant Interpreters are frequently contacted well in advance of the meeting and asked for advice and a quote. Thus they are the first impression conference organisers have of the interpreting profession. Consultant Interpreters have the task of ensuring a high-quality service adapted to the client's needs while obtaining optimum working conditions for the interpreters at every conference.

The Consultant Interpreter's duties

Consultant Interpreters are a link - not a screen - between the team of interpreters and the conference organiser. Both the organiser and the interpreters rely on Consultant Interpreters to ensure that the AIIC

Code of Professional Ethics is observed.

1. Consultant Interpreters must be accessible. Office facilities, such as a separate phone line, fax, computer, secretarial services can be helpful, in order to react quickly and professionally to incoming enquiries.
2. As much information as possible about the planned meeting should be obtained from the conference organiser in order to compile an accurate quote. Such information should include: active and passive languages, subject matter, date, venue, timetable, number of delegates, whether interpretation is to be recorded, etc.
3. Once a conference organiser has accepted a quote, written confirmation should be obtained before recruiting. A master contract stipulating terms of cancellation can be signed.
4. When recruiting, the Consultant Interpreter shall insure that teams cover all required languages and take account of specialisations where appropriate. Use of relay should be kept to a minimum.
5. When contacting interpreters the Consultant Interpreter should make clear whether the offer is firm or is an inquiry about availability, the latter implying no obligation on either side.
6. Regular contact with a conference organiser in the period before receiving the signed contracts will install confidence in the organiser, especially if he/she is working with interpretation for the first time. The Consultant Interpreter can also obtain useful information about the meeting as it becomes available.
7. Where possible the Consultant Interpreter should arrange for publication of the names of team members in the programme and/or list of participants.

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8. The conference organiser must be advised about how important it is for the interpreters to receive agendas, background documents and scripts well before the meeting. Either the Consultant Interpreter or the organiser should arrange to photocopy and distribute documents to the interpreters as soon as they become available. The Consultant Interpreter should also inquire whether a glossary exists and may arrange for a briefing session if the meeting is technical. The Consultant Interpreter should take measures to ensure that the interpreters receive documents as they become available during the meeting, for this purpose the conference organiser should be aware of the necessity of having a photocopier available.
9. If the Consultant Interpreter is not a member of the team, a Team Leader must be appointed who is fully acquainted with the arrangements and will report back after the meeting.
10. The Consultant Interpreter should check how the conference went with the conference organiser and, if appropriate, seek references for members of the team.