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ITI response to Instructus Consultation on National Occupational Standards for translation and interpreting.

ITI welcomes the review, not least as an opportunity to publicise the standards. There is very little awareness of them in the profession or among those who interact with us They are generally an excellent description of the knowledge and skills relevant to translation and interpreting. They deserve to be better known.

It would be helpful to have more clarity on the status of the standards. The Instructus website does not state whether 'national' means the UK or England. While much of the content describes knowledge and skills essential to all translation or interpreting, some does not – e.g., not all professional translators or interpreters act as mentors, though many of us do.

Although the standards documents are not dated, it is clear that they predate neural machine translation and generative AI: these have been radically transforming translation since the mid-2010s. Translators and interpreters need to be able to make informed decisions on whether and, if so, how to make use of these technologies: the standards must cover the knowledge and skills now relevant.

Post-editing machine translation is now an important part of the work of many translators, and Instructus will need to decide whether to address it in the existing units or create a new one specifically about it. The balance may be in favour of a separate unit, which will be useful to those who do post-editing, as APTra5 is to colleagues who act as mentors.

The new technologies have also had an impact on the relationship with clients, in particular discussions on a new assignment (APTra2 and Ptra2) often need to cover decisions on whether new tools suit the text, advising clients on benefits and risks, as well as being accountable for the final output.

Similarly, the standard on remote interpretation (CFAINT09) should cover the suitability and use of the various platforms for interpreting assignments and the risks involved for both interpreters and clients as regards loss of internet connection, audibility, visibility, confidentiality, and data protection.

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The standards treat research mainly as terminology. The review is an opportunity to extend it to understanding the context of the source text and to critical evaluation of online sources and AI output, addressing output that is often fluent and apparently authoritative but actually inaccurate.

Awareness of client confidentiality and data protection has always been important and is even more so with the risks associated with generative AI. Knowledge of the risks, including inaccuracy and breach of client confidentiality, should feature in the standards.

The above points are reflected in our new Professional Practice Framework. A copy is attached, with guidance and examples. They also chime with the new (October 2026) European Master's in Translation Competence Framework. You will be aware that it presents translation as a combination of five connected competence areas, includes information transfer and thematic research, has a stronger focus on technology and emphasises the importance of critical thinking and ethics.

Some detailed suggestions from members of the ITI Professional Development Committee on the translation standards are set out below, including on how the new technologies could be addressed in the existing units. If this integrated approach is adopted, it will be important to make clear that these are relevant only to those who choose to work with the new technologies.

We wish Instructus well with the review and would be happy to offer further input if that would be helpful. We will do what we can to raise awareness of the revised standards when published.

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