

# From fledgling to freelance

**With over 20 hours of webinars and individual sessions, and direct access to eight expert translators, what is the SUFT course really like? We got the lowdown from its most recent alumni on where it has taken them**

The Setting Up as a Freelance Translator online course has run three times since spring 2014 and, with over 50 alumni, ITI is ensuring that the next generation of translators get off to a great start. With students living in India, Sweden, Italy, Germany, Spain, France, Ireland and the UK, its scope is extensive.

We asked some of the January-March 2015 participants for their thoughts on the course.

## Claire Ellender



**Maitre de Conférences in Translation and freelance translator (French into English), specialising in health and**

**well-being and contemporary arts**

'I was really impressed by the SUFT course for a number of reasons.

Aside from its informative, practical content and its tight, well-sequenced structure, it offers plenty of opportunity to explore and develop your own ideas. Of the eight units, I particularly enjoyed Joanna Waller's session, which prompted me to undertake pro bono work and join some of ITI's networks. Gillian Hargreaves' webinar, which showed me how a translation-specific CV differs from an academic one, and Karen Tkaczyk's discussion, which encouraged me to consider how my different fields of specialism fit together, were also extremely

helpful. SUFT is a very thorough and enjoyable course which is excellent value for money. I would absolutely recommend it to all aspiring freelancers.

## Alex Bessant



**MA Translation student, working from French into English**

At first I hesitated in signing up for the SUFT

course, as the cost was a significant proportion of my student budget.

**'Rubbing virtual shoulders with some of the most successful professionals in the industry made me feel part of the family'**

However, having completed the course I am certain that my decision was the right one and that SUFT was worth every penny! All the tutors were hugely knowledgeable and very approachable. Every participant was given individual support and feedback, which I have found an invaluable resource. Being relatively new to the translation industry, I feel that the guidance I received will be key to the way in which I will proceed in my work. I also found the course structure very welcoming and people-friendly despite being carried out over the

usually impersonal medium of the internet! The Course coordinator Ann Brooks and all of the tutors really made an effort to personally connect with all of us. I would urge anyone seeking guidance in setting up as a freelance translator to consider this practical and informative course.

## Sarah Verger



**DPSI, Spanish to English interpreter and translator, specialising in law**

When I enrolled for the course I had translating

experience but no proper freelance experience, so I needed some sound practical advice to get me going. That was exactly what I got: the eight webinars – each followed by an assignment plus a discussion – covered just about every aspect of freelance translating, from taking the plunge, getting pro bono experience and preparing a CV, to deciding which subjects to specialise in, sussing out and approaching good agencies and networking. We also looked at equipping a home office, writing a business plan, and making sure you get paid on time! A must for all budding freelancers!

## Matthew Walker



**Spanish to English translator, specialising in medical texts, with a particular interest in dermatology**

After finishing my MA in Translation, I was faced with the daunting question of 'what now?' I had learnt lots of skills but had no idea how to put them into practice to make a living. When I read about the SUFT

course, I knew it would fill that void in my training. Rubbing virtual shoulders with some of the most successful professionals in the industry made me feel part of the family. The practical advice given and the positivity that came across in the webinars encouraged me to see that one day, with hard work, I could be where our tutors are today. It's not just passive listening. Weekly tasks force you to apply what you have learnt and take a long hard look at your own situation. I'm now in a position to launch my career. I was sorry to finish but as Ann, our coordinator, said as the final webinar drew to a close, 'It's not the end: it's the beginning!'

**Linda Quattrucci**



**German/Italian into English translator, Translator of business communications**  
Stumbling across the SUFT course

came just at the right time in my life and it completely surpassed my expectations. The tutors are hugely committed to offering their help and encouragement; great for the slightly introverted and self-conscious among us. The topics focused on high-level ideas like 'where are we now and where do we want to go?' and details such as preparing invoices and formatting documents. I was impressed with the success of the webinar discussions, and pleased that they were recorded so that I could listen to them afterwards in my own time. My thanks, therefore, go to all for making this course inspiring and professionally meaningful.

**Anna Walden**



**Translator (from English to Russian and Ukrainian, and from Russian and Ukrainian to English)**

I had wanted to become a freelance translator for many years. The most difficult obstacles were

having no contacts and absolutely no idea where to begin. I joined the ITI in December last year and enrolled for SUFT at the recommendation of ITI's professional development officer, Ann Brooks. Upon completion, I believe this is a great start for any freelance translator or linguist. There is bountiful information on the smallest intricacies of our profession and bundles of priceless advice. The course is well structured, masterfully presented and executed at a very high professional level. The tasks are very relevant and complex and they do require very serious commitment of time and dedication. My journey began not long ago, but after the SUFT course I have a clear vision of where I am going and I know exactly how I will get there.

**Claire Opaleye**



**English and Portuguese into French translator, specialising in hospitality, marketing, NGOs and the environment**

I have been a freelance translator for three years and always aimed to attend the SUFT course. When I finally registered, I had doubts as to how useful it would be, given that I already had some experience, but

**'There is bountiful information on the smallest intricacies of our profession and bundles of priceless advice'**

knew I could only benefit from being in personal contact with experienced translators. I learnt so much. It gave me an excellent opportunity to reflect on the experience I had gained and evaluate where I was heading. I also learnt a huge amount on all the subjects, from evaluating my strengths and weaknesses, to writing a sturdy business plan. Sessions on building your presence online, how to develop a

**'The SUFT course has given me all the confidence and tools I need to get started as a freelance translator and face the challenges to come'**

specialisation, how to verify potential clients' payment practices and how to get paid were all very enlightening. Implementing what I had learned through a practical weekly exercise, that I could use as a personalised business tool, was particularly useful. Another great outcome was to have so many questions answered, get personal feedback and ongoing access to tutors in the near future.

**Bianca Dare**



**MRCVS, veterinary and medical translator from English to German**

Setting up as a freelance translator was an exciting but also quite daunting decision for me, a veterinary surgeon and mum of two young children. Yes, I could translate English text into German, but where to start with everything else? I joined the ITI and signed up for the SUFT course. Over the past weeks I have learned about the huge importance of networking and computer skills, I produced a translator-specific CV as well as quotes and invoices, and in our last week we handed in a business plan, making us focus on the future. The access to the tutors, who were happy to answer even the smallest question, is invaluable and I am very grateful for their individual feedback on our weekly tasks. The SUFT course has given me all the confidence and tools I need to get started as a freelance translator and face the challenges to come. 

**To register for the next SUFT course (running from 15 September to 13 November 2015), contact Ann Brooks at [professionaldevelopment@iti.org.uk](mailto:professionaldevelopment@iti.org.uk)**