



Requirements for interpreters and translators

The decision to grant asylum in Switzerland depends largely on the outcome of face-to-face interviews and hearings. Asylum seekers are interviewed by an official from the State Secretariat for Migration SEM. In addition to the interpreter, provision is made for a legal representative, who supports the asylum seeker during the asylum procedure. Working in consecutive mode, the SEM interpreter translates orally the content of the interview/hearing, the duration of which can vary greatly. Short interviews may also be carried out over the telephone or Skype for Business. Upon completion of the interview/hearing, the interpreter translates the minutes back into the original language. The interpreter may occasionally also be required to provide written translations.

Apart from the key skills for interpreting, the work of the interpreter and/or translator also requires a high degree of personal integrity and a good understanding of their role.

As a specialist in your field, you should meet the following requirements:

Personal requirements (social and self-management skills)

You

- are trustworthy, discreet, reliable and a person of integrity;
- are aware of your responsible role and are committed to the ethical principles of the profession;
- adhere to the values and principles of the Federal Administration;
- have a mature personality and a highly developed ability to reflect and to carefully consider your actions;
- consciously adopt a neutral position;
- respect boundaries, which includes recognizing when you yourself need support, and are able to ask for such support;
- can remain personally and professionally detached and, at the same time, focused and patient;
- are capable of handling emotionally charged situations with calm and authority;
- regularly reflect your communicational behaviour and your role.

Job-specific requirements (technical skills)

You

- have native-speaker competence in the target language (Level C2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)) and an excellent vocabulary and good knowledge of grammar;
- are fluent in the official language German, French or Italian (level C1 CEFR or higher);
- master consecutive interpreting;
- have a quick intelligence, a good memory and an excellent ability to concentrate;
- can interpret clearly, precisely and fluently in a well-structured manner;
- are able to translate contents verbatim from one language into another, even complex ones, all the while finding the appropriate words instantly;
- have a realistic view of your personal, linguistic and professional abilities as well as your limits and are able to react appropriately in case of communication difficulties while remaining calm and professional;
- have the ability to summarize texts and reports;
- are able to recognize when your own interpretations are leading to misunderstandings and can correct them transparently;
- have a good educational background, a positive attitude towards learning and change, you also pay due attention to professional advancement;
- are familiar with the political and social relations between Switzerland and the country whose language you are interpreting or translating for;
- enjoy working in teams with varying partners;
- have good stamina and can maintain a consistently high level of quality throughout lengthy hearings;
- are flexible in terms of working hours and are prepared to accept assignments at different SEM locations;
- are of good repute and consent to undergoing a Personnel Security Screening PSS (including any asylum dossier, if relevant);
- preferably have proof of a qualification in the field of interpreting.