

# EUROPEAN MASTER'S IN TRANSLATION

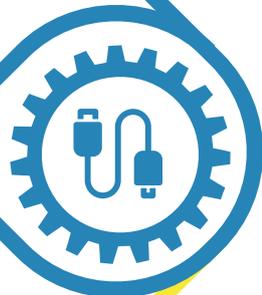
Competence  
Framework 2017



LANGUAGE AND CULTURE



TRANSLATION



TECHNOLOGY



PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL



SERVICE PROVISION

# Foreword

The European Master's in Translation network first published its framework for translator and translation competence, including the well-known EMT "Wheel of Competence", in January 2009. This has now become one of the leading reference standards for translator training and translation competence throughout the European Union and beyond, both in academic circles and in the language industry. Almost ten years on, the basic principles laid down in 2009 still stand, but it is time to reconsider the framework in the light of the changes which have affected both the language industries and European universities.

In the translation industry, technological change has had an ever-increasing impact on the way translation services are performed, though human intelligence, knowledge and skills are still the key factors in delivering quality translations and the growing range of language services which translators and translation companies can provide. Market needs have also evolved, with the continuing expansion of English as a lingua franca creating new needs that can only be met by reversing the traditional "mother tongue" principle in some translation environments. Simultaneously, artificial intelligence and social media have considerably changed people's relation to communication in general and translation in particular, with machine translation applications and other language tools now commonly available on desktop and mobile devices. This is gradually impacting the translation process and many translation markets, and has changed the perception of translation among the general public and among translation studies students and graduates. Technological and societal changes such as these need to be taken on board in academic translator training programmes, so that future graduates become aware of both the challenges and opportunities that they represent, and can adapt their skills and practices accordingly.

In October 2016, with future translation graduate employability firmly in mind, the EMT Board was given the remit of producing a new EMT competence framework. The new framework was expected to embody the founding principles of the EMT network, while incorporating the key competences and skills required of future translation graduates. The remit also included producing a simple, functional competence framework that could be used to assess the delivery of a common set of learning outcomes by universities wishing to join the EMT network in the next round of applications. Following a consultation process involving the network membership and language industry stakeholders, a draft framework was produced. This has now been adopted as the EMT competence framework for 2018-2024.

December 2017,

*Daniel Toudic and Alexandra Krause*  
on behalf of the EMT Board

This **competence framework** aims to consolidate and enhance the **employability of graduates of Master's degrees in translation** throughout Europe. It is based on the EMT's founding principles set out by the Expert Group in January 2009. It also takes into account the research outcomes on translation and translator competence reported by the translation studies research community and the changes that have affected the language services industry since then.

**Note:** The terms 'competence', 'skill,' 'knowledge' and 'learning outcomes' are used here in accordance with the *European Qualifications Framework* ([http://relaunch.ecompetences.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/EQF\\_broch\\_2008\\_en.pdf](http://relaunch.ecompetences.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/EQF_broch_2008_en.pdf))

### **Skill:**

'means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems.'

### **Competence:**

'means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.'



### **Knowledge:**

'means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study.'

### **Learning outcomes:**

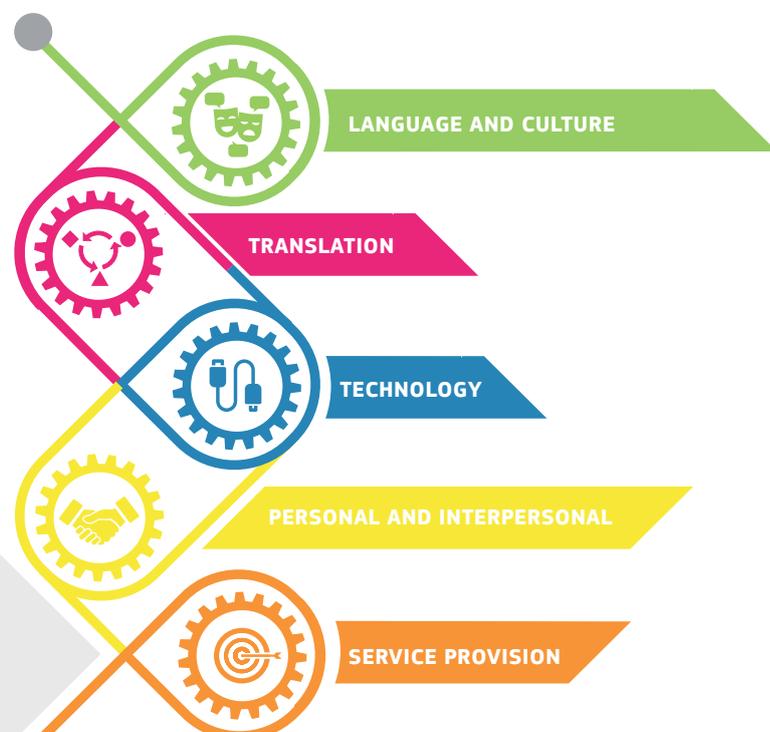
'means statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.'

This framework does not claim to provide a comprehensive description or model of all the competences, skills and knowledge that translation graduates should acquire. It does not, for instance, include the theoretical knowledge or the generic research skills that are an integral and important part of many advanced translation studies programmes. As in the original framework, it sets out a common set of learning outcomes for EMT Master's degree programmes, described in terms of the general competences and specific skills that their graduates are expected to possess<sup>1</sup>. Individual programmes may, of course, deliver a much wider range of competences, skills and knowledge in areas that are not included in this framework.

The framework is based on the premise that “translation” is a process designed to meet an individual, societal or institutional need. It also recognises that it is a multi-faceted profession that covers the many areas of competence and skills required to convey meaning (generally, but not exclusively, in a written medium) from one natural language to another, and the many different tasks performed by those who provide a translation service.

The framework therefore considers that translator education and training at Master's degree level should equip students not only with a deep understanding of the processes involved, but also with the ability to perform and provide a translation service in line with the highest professional and ethical standards.

It defines five main areas of competence:



<sup>1</sup> It assumes that the aim of Master's degree programmes is to teach a combination of knowledge and skills, which will enable students to achieve the competences considered essential for access to the translation industry and to the wider labour market.

Within each of these areas, a number of skills are deemed to be essential or important within the context of a Master's degree in translation. Although each of them can be viewed separately, and the relevant skills can be applied to different professions beyond the translation industry, the five areas defined below should be considered as complementary and equally important in providing the translation service, which is the ultimate goal of the translation process.

The framework does not attempt to define different levels for each of the areas of competence. It is assumed that Master's degree programmes within the EMT network expect students to achieve the advanced level of competence required of future language industry professionals.

However, it recognises that some of the competences, skills and knowledge may have been acquired at previous stages in the higher education process (e.g. at undergraduate level) and that Master's degree programmes lasting more than one academic year are likely to define different learning outcomes at different stages in the programme. Applicants will be asked to specify details if skill levels differ according to modules or progression in the programme.



## LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

(TRANSCULTURAL AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS)

This competence encompasses all the general or language-specific linguistic, sociolinguistic, cultural and transcultural knowledge and skills that constitute the basis for advanced translation competence. It is the driving force behind all the other competences described in this reference framework. The framework therefore takes as a premise that a high level of language competence in at least two working languages<sup>2</sup> (CEFR level C1 and above or an equivalent level in comparable reference systems) should be a prerequisite for access to any EMT Master's degree course in translation<sup>3</sup>.

EMT applicants will be required to show what procedures are used to ensure that students admitted to their Master's programme have acquired the necessary level in this area of competence, whether via an undergraduate qualification, or by certification, examination, personal portfolio, interview, or any other means.

However, the EMT also recognises that within the European context, the number of working languages may differ according to the national and/or professional environment, and that the same *level* of competence may not be achieved (or required) in *all* working languages. Moreover it acknowledges the fact that language and culture competence in each working language may be explicitly and implicitly improved and perfected during the Master's degree programme. Applicants will therefore be required to state the minimum number of working languages required in the programme, how many other working languages are mandatory or optional and the levels expected upon admission and upon graduation.

WORKING LANGUAGE	SOURCE (S) AND/OR TARGET (T) LANGUAGE	EXPECTED ADMISSION LEVEL	PROOF OF ADMISSION LEVEL	PROOF OF LEVEL UPON COMPLETION
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<sup>2</sup> Defined as the source and target languages that the translator uses in a professional capacity. Generally, the main target language is referred to as language A, the main source language as language B and other source languages as C, D etc.

<sup>3</sup> The EMT recommends that the translator's main target language should be mastered at CEFR level C2 or with native or bilingual proficiency.



## TRANSLATION

(STRATEGIC, METHODOLOGICAL AND THEMATIC COMPETENCE)

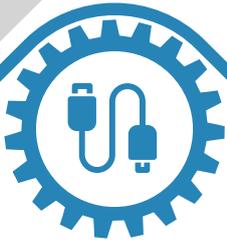
Translation competence lies at the heart of the translation service provision competences defined in this framework.

It should be understood in the broadest sense, encompassing not only the actual meaning transfer phase between two languages (including the use of relay languages), but also all the strategic, methodological and thematic competences that come into play before, during and following the transfer phase *per se* – from document analysis to final quality control procedures.

Applicants will be invited to specify the different types of domain-specific, media-specific and situation-specific types of translation that are included in their curriculum, including special areas such as public service translation and interpreting, localisation or audiovisual translation. This section also recognises that the ability to interact with machine translation in the translation process is now an integral part of professional translation competence.

## STUDENTS KNOW HOW TO...

- 1 Analyse a source document, identify potential textual and cognitive difficulties and assess the strategies and resources needed for appropriate reformulation in line with communicative needs
- 2 Summarise, rephrase, restructure, adapt and shorten rapidly and accurately in at least one target language, using written and/or spoken communication
- 3 Evaluate the relevance and reliability of information sources with regard to translation needs
- 4 Acquire, develop and use thematic and domain-specific knowledge relevant to translation needs (mastering systems of concepts, methods of reasoning, presentation standards, terminology and phraseology, specialised sources etc.)
- 5 Implement the instructions, style guides, or conventions relevant to a particular translation
- 6 Translate general and domain-specific material in one or several fields from one or several source languages into their target language(s), producing a 'fit for purpose' translation
- 7 Translate different types of material on and for different kinds of media, using appropriate tools and techniques
- 8 Translate and mediate in specific intercultural contexts, for example, those involving public service translation and interpreting, website or video-game localisation, video-description, community management, etc.
- 9 Draft texts for specific purposes in one or more of their working languages, taking into account specific situations, recipients and constraints
- 10 Analyse and justify their translation solutions and choices, using the appropriate metalanguage and applying appropriate theoretical approaches
- 11 Check, review and/or revise their own work and that of others according to standard or work-specific quality objectives
- 12 Understand and implement quality control strategies, using appropriate tools and techniques
- 13 Pre-edit source material for the purpose of potentially improving MT output quality, using appropriate pre-editing techniques
- 14 Apply post-editing to MT output using the appropriate post-editing levels and techniques according to the quality and productivity objectives, and recognise the importance of data ownership and data security issues



## TECHNOLOGY

(TOOLS AND APPLICATIONS)

This competence includes all the knowledge and skills used to implement present and future translation technologies within the translation process. It also includes basic knowledge of machine translation technologies and the ability to implement machine translation according to potential needs.

### STUDENTS KNOW HOW TO...

- 15** Use the most relevant IT applications, including the full range of office software, and adapt rapidly to new tools and IT resources
- 16** Make effective use of search engines, corpus-based tools, text analysis tools and CAT tools
- 17** Pre-process, process and manage files and other media/sources as part of the translation, e.g. video and multimedia files, handle web technologies
- 18** Master the basics of MT and its impact on the translation process
- 19** Assess the relevance of MT systems in a translation workflow and implement the appropriate MT system where relevant
- 20** Apply other tools in support of language and translation technology, such as workflow management software



## PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL

This competence area includes all the generic skills, often referred to as “soft skills”, that enhance graduate adaptability and employability.

### STUDENTS KNOW HOW TO...

- 21** Plan and manage time, stress and workload
- 22** Comply with deadlines, instructions and specifications
- 23** Work in a team, including, where appropriate, in virtual, multicultural and multilingual environments, using current communication technologies
- 24** Use social media responsibly for professional purposes
- 25** Take account of and adapt the organisational and physical ergonomics of the working environment
- 26** Continuously self-evaluate, update and develop competences and skills through personal strategies and collaborative learning



## SERVICE PROVISION

This competence covers all the skills relating to the implementation of translation and, more generally, to language services in a professional context – from client awareness and negotiation through to project management and quality assurance.

### STUDENTS KNOW HOW TO...

- 27** Monitor and take account of new societal and language industry demands, new market requirements and emerging job profiles
- 28** Approach existing clients and find new clients through prospecting and marketing strategies using the appropriate written and oral communication techniques
- 29** Clarify the requirements, objectives and purposes of the client, recipients of the language service and other stakeholders and offer the appropriate services to meet those requirements
- 30** Negotiate with the client (to define deadlines, rates/invoicing, working conditions, access to information, contracts, rights, responsibilities, language service specifications, tender specifications etc.)
- 31** Organise, budget and manage translation projects involving single or multiple translators and/or other service providers
- 32** Understand and implement the standards applicable to the provision of a language service
- 33** Apply the quality management and quality assurance procedures required to meet pre-defined quality standards
- 34** Comply with professional ethical codes and standards (confidentiality, fair competition etc.) and network with other translators and language providers via social media and professional associations
- 35** Analyse and critically review language services and policies and suggest improvement strategies

