Aptitude Tests in Interpreting

Candidate profile

In order to be eligible for admission to the programme candidates must

- Hold a recognized University degree or equivalent, including people with science degrees or non-language arts degrees relevant to EU policies.
- Have an excellent command of their mother tongue (A language - Maltese) over a wide range of topics and registers. *See the definition of A, B and C languages given below.
- Have a full understanding of their B (English) and C languages – (German/Italian/French/Spanish/Arabic) across the full range of registers.
- Be aware of – and able to understand – a range of accents in their B and/or C languages.
- Offer one of the following language combinations: A-CC, or A-B
- Have a good overall knowledge of international affairs.
- Be well-informed of the economic, social and cultural background of the countries in which their working languages are used.

Applicants will be expected to have the following skills:

- An ability to follow an argument or line of reasoning.
- Good powers of concentration, analysis and synthesis.
- Good communication skills.

They will also be expected to show:

- A high degree of motivation: these are demanding – and rewarding – courses, requiring serious commitment.
- The ability to work under pressure.
- A willingness to learn.
- Readiness to accept advice. Trainee interpreters are effectively assessed every time they work; while feedback on questions of accuracy, style and use of language may seem personal it is central to training. Applicants must show an ability to deal with constructive criticism.

Aptitude Tests

The test panel generally includes a majority of professional interpreters and interpreter trainers.

The aptitude tests reflect the demands of the profession of conference interpreting. Admission to a course is not a guarantee of its successful completion.

These tests are designed to test applicants for the skills as outlined in the Applicant Profile section above. These are rigorous tests: conference interpreting is a demanding profession.

The complete aptitude test shall include:
• An interview. (15 marks)
  • The oral reproduction of short and structured speeches (2-3 minutes) from the candidate’s C and B languages into A and A into B. This is to test applicants’ ability to listen to, understand, process and reproduce a short speech on a general topic. They must show that they have understood the message and are able to communicate it. (70 marks)
• A general knowledge test. (15 marks)

Additionally the test may include:

• A sight translation: applicants are given a short (300-word) text to read; they are then invited to provide an oral rendition of the text.
• A brief oral presentation in the A and/ or B language by the applicant on a subject chosen by the panel.

*Languages

A: The interpreter’s native language (or another language strictly equivalent to a native language), into which the interpreter works from all her or his other languages in both modes of interpretation, simultaneous and consecutive.

B: A language other than the interpreter’s native language, of which she or he has excellent command and into which they work from one or more of their languages.

C: Languages, of which the interpreter has a complete understanding and from which he or she works.