



Interpretation in the Asylum Procedure

Checklists

How to use the checklists

These checklists are practical tools to support your work as an interpreter.

The checklists cover various stages of your assignment: the preparatory phase, the interpreting phase and follow-up activities. A specific checklist is dedicated to remote interpretation.

Before undertaking your assignment, you can use the checklists to remind you of key aspects of interpreting and actions you can take to ensure the quality of your services.

When completed after the assignment, the checklists may also serve as a self-assessment tool. If all applicable boxes in the left-hand column are ticked, you performed the interpretation according to the main guidance. If you are not in a position to tick all applicable boxes, the checklist provides an indication of which aspects you need to improve on in your next assignment.

CHECKLIST 1: Preparing to interpret in the asylum procedure

- I am familiar with the code of conduct of my national authority, and I uphold the following **key principles** when interpreting: professionalism and integrity, accuracy and completeness, confidentiality, impartiality and neutrality.

- I have **not received and was not promised any benefit**, advantage or gift from anyone to influence my interpreting.

- I am **aware of my own competencies** and limits, and I can guarantee that I am able to deliver the necessary quality in my assignment.

- I am **aware of my biases, stereotypes, opinions and beliefs** and do not let them influence my neutrality or impartiality.

- I do **not wear signs or clothing that could be associated** with political or ideological convictions or with military or law enforcement authorities.

- I inform the interviewer if I identify any possible **conflict of interest** based on the information received about the applicant and/or the case.

- I am **familiar with the various vulnerabilities** that applicants may have and the potential consequences for their ability to effectively participate in the interview.

- I am available for a **briefing** with the interviewer on the applicant's profile and any other information useful for my assignment.

- I have **everything I need for the interview**, e.g. a pen and paper to take notes, water, a glossary and a dictionary.

- I am aware of **safety and security measures**.

- Prior to the interview, I agree with the interviewer on a discrete signal to indicate that there is a **need for a break**.

- I feel well rested and **fit for the interview**.

- I consciously slip into the **role of interpreter**.





CHECKLIST 2: Interpreting an asylum interview

- I make sure that I can **see and hear** all participants.

- I am not related or otherwise acquainted to the applicant, and I do not have any personal or other issues that could create a **conflict of interest**.
or
I inform the interviewer otherwise.

- I can **fully understand the language and the dialect** spoken by the applicant and the interviewer, and the applicant can fully understand my language and dialect.
or
I immediately inform the interviewer otherwise.

- If applicable, I **inform the interviewer** that the applicant speaks a language or dialect different from the one I have been assigned to and in which the interview is supposed to be conducted.

- I **interpret in an accurate and complete manner** without omissions, additions, changes or filtering, as closely as possible to the original wording.

- When there are words that cannot be interpreted exactly in the target language, I **inform all participants** that I will explain or describe them.

- I **keep all participants informed** of anything I need to say that is not strictly part of the interpretation (asking a participant for clarification, checking the participant has understood correctly, asking a participant to repeat themselves, etc.).

- I **interpret everything** said by all participants, including side conversations.

- I **speak in the first person**, and I use exactly the same pronouns, gender and terms used by the applicant to describe themselves and others.

- I **reflect the register** (choice of words and structure of sentences) used by all participants.

- I **do not** take sides, give opinions or advice, or share my personal views.

- I **do not interrupt** the speakers, except to ask them to slow down or pause if necessary to ensure my full understanding and accurate interpretation.

- If needed in order to ensure accurate interpretation, I **inform the participants** that I need the speaker to repeat or clarify their points.

- Through verbal and non-verbal communication, I act with **empathy and respect**, keep an attentive and neutral attitude and do not express bias, impatience, judgement or other adverse feelings or thoughts.

- I speak with a **clear voice** and at a convenient pace.

- I **take notes** to ensure accurate and complete interpretation.

- I **use glossaries**, dictionaries or other tools if needed and as allowed.

- I ask for a **break** if I need one and when I have to share information with the interviewer.



CHECKLIST 3: After the interpretation

- I **hand over my notes** to the interviewer or destroy them depending on national regulations.
- I **do not disclose** with anybody **any information** related to the applicant or the interview.
- I **memorise any new words** and update my glossaries.
- I am **open to receiving feedback** on my assignment in order to improve my skills.
- I consciously **leave the role of interpreter** to draw a line between my private and my professional life.
- I **do not accept any benefit**, advantage or gift from anyone after the interview.
- I **do not have any interaction with the applicant** after the interview, and I do not provide advice or suggestions, or opinions, to them.
- I **take care of my well-being** by paying attention to negative feelings potentially resulting from my assignment and by adopting positive coping strategies.





CHECKLIST 4: Remote interpretation

In the case of remote interpretation, **in addition** to the points mentioned in the checklists 'Preparing to interpret in the asylum procedure', 'Interpreting an asylum interview' and 'After the interpretation', interpreters should ensure the following.

Before the interview and interpretation

- I received or asked for **instructions on the modalities** of remote interpretation (phone or videoconferencing), the device and the platform to be used.

- I make sure that the **device I am using is fully charged** and that I have a charger at hand.

- I make sure that the following items are with me and **work properly**:
 - main device (laptop, computer, phone, tablet or other) and its charger
 - headset
 - microphone
 - speaker
 - internet or phone connection
 - camera (only for videoconferencing).

- If I identify **any technical issue** that I cannot solve in time for the interview, I inform the interviewer ahead of time.

- In the case of videoconferencing, I make sure that I have a **neutral background**.

- In the case of videoconferencing, I adjust the angle of the camera so that **my face is visible**. I also adjust the lighting so that I can be seen clearly, and I do not wear clothes that may affect the clarity of the image on the screen.

- I make sure that there is **no other noise around** and that others cannot overhear the interview.

- I make sure that I am **alone in the room** for the entire duration of the interpretation. I make sure that a 'do not disturb' sign is placed outside the door.

- I **agree with the interviewer on a signal** to use when I need the speakers to pause, and the applicant is informed accordingly.

- I talk with the interviewer prior to the interview about **more frequent turn-taking** and more frequent breaks.

During the interpretation

- If I face any difficulty in hearing or seeing the other participants, I **immediately inform the interviewer**.

- If needed due to **delays** between receiving and sending messages, I remind the interviewer and applicant to take turns in speaking and allow time for interpretation in between.

- If the interview is a **phone interview**, I make an effort to pay attention to the tone of voice and intonation of the participants and any other vocal signals that could help me understand non-verbal cues.

- In the case of videoconferencing, I ask the interviewer or applicant to **adjust their camera** if needed.





For more information,
consult the
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