

**CIOL Qualifications Diploma in Public Service Interpreting
Written Examiner Reports – June 2023**

LANGUAGE: Arabic
PATHWAY(S): Law/Health

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

Candidates appear to be better prepared for the exams.
Most candidates seem to lack a sufficient amount of subject related vocabulary in both languages.
A majority of candidates seem to stick to using simple tenses for verbs in both Arabic and English.

Recommendations to Candidates

Candidates are encouraged to review Standard Arabic grammar to be able to give a more accurate translation. For example, the verb forms in Arabic change the meanings of the verb.

Candidates are encouraged to invest more time practicing the exams in their own time. There are past papers available from CIOL for them to practise with under timed conditions,

Candidates are encouraged in using a wider range of grammar and verbs' tenses in Arabic and English. They seem to stick to using simple tenses. This is not adequate for a Level 6 exam.

LANGUAGE: Farsi
PATHWAY(S): Law

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

A mixture of Pass and fail candidate were allocated in this round of exams. The pass rate was about 30%.

Some candidates produced an adequate/ excellent performance in all aspects.

Overall, the performances almost commonly were affected by a lack of specialist terminology and knowledge of key terms concerning the subject matter, and except for a couple of instances, the majority of candidates did not demonstrate adequate knowledge and use of the keywords.

The most common errors were related to the literal translation of the key terms and the erratic use of synonymous phrases. Almost in some performances, despite all successful efforts in different aspects, mixing up the synonymous words and literal translation of the complex, specialist terminologies resulted in significant and serious errors.

Examples included mixing up “Charged” and “Accused of”, “Allegation” and “Accusation”, “Alibi” and “Eyewitness” [living witness in one case] or “Interrogation” and “Questioning.”

The difference between some of the cases mentioned above may seem acceptable and insignificant, but they significantly impacted the accuracy of the entire message in related segments. The impact did not stop there. Misusing synonymous phrases in a level 6 translation task led to several significant issues that negatively impacted the entire translations clarity, coherence, and effectiveness.

In such circumstances, in a real-life scenario, an end-user who relies on the translation expertise of a language professional in order to act upon the information they receive may not be able to act appropriately and correctly.

Recommendations to Candidates

Emphasising the importance of preparation before the written translation exam can never be enough. Preparation before sitting for a translation exam is crucial for several reasons.

Adequate preparation not only enhances candidates' chances of performing well in the exam but also ensures that they can effectively demonstrate their translation skills and knowledge—regular practice by using and going through open-source materials, e.g. A-Level Books [Eng. Law] will enhance the chance of success in the actual exam.

Through practice, candidates can refine their ability to choose accurate and contextually appropriate words, maintain the tone and style of the source text, and handle complex sentence structures.

Searching on the net for general texts about the structure of the Law system of the source language country using various available online dictionaries [FA-En] will assist. E.g., <https://dic.b-amooz.com/en/dictionary/w?word=alibi#alibi noun 1>

Going through the translations, the “Casual” approach by the translator was evident in some cases. Some basic errors, including omission of simple words or even an entire non-complex sentence [not due to the complexity of the word/sentence or because of avoiding it], sometimes resulted in a difference between success and failure. So, concentration and paying full attention to the source text is essential for a successful attempt.

Another shortcoming observed during this round was a lack of typing skills, particularly in Farsi, which resulted in too many simple spelling errors and the incompleteness of the task within the time. This issue should be addressed in advance by the candidates who decide to sit for the exam.

Nevertheless, no candidate failed solely due to a lack of typing skills. Therefore, improving typing skills and becoming proficient regarding the “E-sides” of the exam's requirement in a fast-changing era is also essential.

LANGUAGE: Mandarin/Cantonese
PATHWAY(S): Law/Health

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

The overall performance of the candidates this session was very good for the written units.

Most of the candidates had excellent linguistic skills in both languages (English and Cantonese / English and Mandarin), good knowledge of specialist terminologies and cultural awareness.

Recommendations to Candidates

The candidates must ensure they use the formal language for the written units.

Although to fully follow the text is important, candidates need to pay attention to the differences of the word orders between English and Chinese, especially the conditional tense.

LANGUAGE: Polish
PATHWAY(S): Law/Health

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

For Law pathway the text to translate was for a family member to understand how the police should treat a person with mental health issues. Most candidates completed the task successfully and displayed excellent knowledge of grammar and specialist terminology.

Some candidates clearly struggled with grammar using incorrect tenses. The correct use of tenses is of great importance because it affects the transmission of the original message. The use of

Present Perfect Tense instead of Past Simple Tense indicates that the past actions are related to or continue into the present, which was not the intention of the source text.

The importance of grammar cannot be emphasized enough because it helps the reader know what is being communicated and how to respond appropriately.

Most candidates who undertook Law and Health pathways seemed to be familiar with the appropriate style and used the correct register.

It was also pleasing to notice that all candidates had installed the Polish alphabet on their computers and used diacritic marks correctly.

Recommendations to Candidates

As in previous years, it was noticed that the candidates' knowledge of English specialist terminology was more advanced than that of Polish specialist terminology. I suggest therefore, that candidates read and listen to general news and documentaries on TV and/or online to build up a bank of useful terminology.

Remember to study the text carefully and pay particular attention to details on the key issues.

LANGUAGE: Portuguese Brazilian

PATHWAY(S): Law

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

Overall, this cohort did well in the Exams.

Candidates showed knowledge of specialist terminology and kept paraphrasing to a minimum.

Candidates' weakness was displaying hesitation which hampered the flow of the interpretation and translation.

Recommendations to Candidates

It is important that the candidates follow the standard method of interpreting/translating and avoid using slang terms which are not appropriate to the situation/context.

When interpreting within a Legal context there is a certain formal register which must be used as this would be a more realistic scenario. More knowledge of legal situations and practising would eventually ensure candidates would automatically think in this way.

It is always advisable to read the context carefully.

This will allow you to determine what the end translation should be referring too and should help you to translate effectively as you should remember this is set as a real-life scenario,

It is also important that candidates have the same level of language and specialist knowledge in both languages.

LANGUAGE: Romanian

PATHWAY(S): Law

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

A general observation is that while candidates' knowledge/ control of specialist terminology was by and large adequate, there were numerous lapses in the idiomatic use of language, particularly English. For instance, expressions such as "it was not in his character", "the straight and narrow",

“got involved with the wrong crowd”, “kept out of trouble”, “hold a grudge” etc. were often rendered in word-by-word constructions which sound awkward and unnatural. Even basic concepts such as “local shop/ convenience store” were at times rendered clumsily as “shop nearby” or “proximity store”. There were also numerous instances of inadequate verbal constructions (tenses/ aspect) or deficient grammar in general (this is most immediately obvious in a construction such as “It is impossible for my brother to have committed this crime/offense”, which was poorly rendered by many candidates).

In the text to be translated into Romanian, many candidates misunderstood and inaccurately rendered “Force Medical Examiner” (they did not understand that “Force” referred to the police), and in some cases also terms that should not have posed problems such as “mental health problem” (where “mentală” used instead of “mintală” in Romanian refers to ‘mentality’ not to the mind. While it is unlikely to pose problems of comprehension, this confusion should not exist at this professional level) or “custody”, erroneously rendered as “custodie” instead of “arest”.

Another issue which resurfaces in both language is the misuse of connectives (prepositions and conjunctions), which impedes coherence and at times leads to misunderstandings or difficulties in comprehension.

Recommendations to Candidates

Candidates should bear in mind that to be a good interpreter you should be good in two languages. If you are very fluent in one and only manage to ‘get by’ in the other, that does not make you a good interpreter. You should have good background knowledge of your subject in both languages.

Candidates should know that it is not enough to be a native speaker to also be a decent translator or interpreter. It takes some hard work on their part. Candidates should prepare for the exam by studying grammar and thoroughly familiarising themselves with specialist terminology – there is often a lot of interference from English which could be at least partly remedied if candidates were reading more specialist material in the OL. Word-by-word translation most often fails to render the meaning of the original.

It is essential for candidates to re-read what has been written in its entirety, to see if it makes sense in the context of the situation being described. This applies to spelling and use of diacritical signs in Romanian, which are often left out as if they were optional.

Regarding the strengths and weaknesses observed, candidates should be reminded that making good use of dictionaries is not enough if it is not backed up by correct, coherent and grammatically adequate language.

LANGUAGE: Russian

PATHWAY(S): Law

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

Many of the difficulties that candidates encountered stemmed from inadequate command of specialist terminology, insufficient attention paid to the context, and how to translate the text in a way that an English or Russian reader would understand. A legal document must be translated with precision and accuracy – users of these translations will need to act upon the information they provide.

Legal terms that presented difficulty:

Candidates should pay attention to nuances of meaning and how words and terms are used within a specific context. Choosing the wrong meanings will lead to the users of the translation receiving misleading information. Therefore, it is important to understand the differences between them.

Some examples of related words and terms which have different meanings:

- offence and crime
- to blame, to accuse, to charge
- to be charged, to be convicted, to be sentenced
- to be convicted, to go to jail
- police station vs the police
- custody office vs place of confinement. Place of confinement refers to a prison or penal colony, not a place of temporary custody inside a police station. Its use in the context of this exam would cause alarm and stress to the person using the translation.
- to ask, to question (in the sense of interrogate), to interview
- to answer, to witness
- unreliable evidence, unsubstantiated evidence

Some specialist terms, the Russian words for which candidates need to learn:

- caution, to be cautioned
- custody, custody office, custody officer, custody record, lawful custody
- medical examiner/medical officer
- appropriate adult
- mental health problem, mental health professional, mentally vulnerable

Some terms from ordinary speech that have quite different Russian equivalents:

- convenience store
- stacking shelves

Style and grammar:

Some candidates constructed sentences more complex and convoluted than the original and more convoluted than required for an accurate and fluent translation.

Importance of register:

Many candidates are not fully aware of the difference between colloquial and formal (legal) language. Often candidates used words from conversational Russian instead of correct legal terminology. There were also instances where candidates created Russian words that do not exist.

Recommendations to Candidates

There is a tendency to assume that if you have a good mastery of conversational Russian, this skill transfers easily into professional translation and interpreting. It is important to master Russian legal terminology and to be familiar with Russian legal practice. English legal practice differs markedly from that in Russia, but the latter will generally be the frame of reference through which the Russian speaker will understand your translation or will frame a Russian text for you to translate into English. Therefore, it is important to know how to convey equivalence between the two sets of terminology. One good way to master this is to look at some basic accounts of Russian court cases.

Useful sites:

<https://www.bbc.com/russian>

<https://www.svoboda.org/>

<https://procrf.ru/>

You will want to build up a bank of legal terms in both Russian and English that will make it easier for you to find the appropriate equivalents.

Some examples of related words and terms which have different meanings:

- offence and crime
- to blame, to accuse, to charge
- to be charged, to be convicted, to be sentenced
- to be convicted, to go to jail
- police station vs the police
- custody office vs place of confinement
- to ask, to question (in the sense of interrogate), to interview
- to answer, to witness
- unreliable evidence, unsubstantiated evidence

Some specialist terms, the Russian words for which candidates need to learn:

- caution, to be cautioned
- custody, custody office, custody officer, custody record, lawful custody
- medical examiner/medical officer
- appropriate adult
- mental health problem, mental health professional, mentally vulnerable

Also, do not restrict yourself to bilingual dictionaries. Use monolingual dictionaries to understand the differences in meaning that a word might have in order to find the appropriate word for your context.

Pay close attention to the brief explained at the head of the exam paper and to the context. Always check that the translation you are providing makes sense in the specific context.

Be careful not to omit words that are key to understanding nuance and emphasis, for example, the word совершенно (from the phrase, “совершенно не в его характере”), or the word совсем (from the phrase, “совсем юный”).

A good translation has to use correct grammar and syntax, spelling, and punctuation. Russian rules of punctuation are not always the same as in English, especially the placement of commas.

Russian contains many particles and short words which affect the meaning of a sentence. If these are omitted, whether translating from or into Russian, this can change the meaning or distort the emphasis in the original. The same is true of prefixes of verbs. See, for example, the differences between держать (под стражей), сдерживать (to restrain), задерживать (to arrest), удерживать (to withhold, to retain). Similarly, know the difference between что бы (separate words), and чтобы.

LANGUAGE: Spanish

PATHWAY(S): Health

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

Most candidate had a good knowledge of health-related terminology in English: cyst, uterus, presión arterial.

Some mistakes were found for example with “endometrium” and “blood flow”.

Recommendations to Candidates

The term “Endometrium” is translated as “endometrio” (not “endometria” or “endometrium”). Use of possessives with parts of the body. In Spanish, we do not generally use the possessive pronouns for parts of the body. For instance, “over her chest” → “en el pecho” (not “en su pecho”). Avoid the use “test” in English and use the Spanish word “prueba”.

Names of tests, diseases, etc. should be in lower case.

After introductory connectors (A continuación, después,) a comma is needed.

It is suggested there is further revision of accents in Spanish: válvula, máquina, etc.

LANGUAGE: Ukrainian

PATHWAY(S): Health

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

General comments regarding this year’s performance:

Overall, the candidates' strengths were apparent in their Ukrainian language skills, particularly in sight translation and English into Ukrainian tasks.

All candidates completed all five units.

Unit 4

The written translation into English involved a GP letter explaining endometriosis.

The common issues among the candidates who did less well were poor grammar, numerous spelling errors, and a lack of terminology knowledge.

For instance, 'intestines' was translated as 'abdomen,' and 'vagina' was translated as 'groin'.

Unit 5

The task in this unit was to translate a leaflet about the Tilt Test from English into Ukrainian.

Candidates who didn’t perform as well displayed inaccuracies and demonstrated inadequate knowledge of specialist terminology, Ukrainian grammar, and made numerous spelling errors.

Recommendations to Candidates

1. Work on English grammar:
Focus on improving your understanding and usage of tenses, conditionals, and complex sentence structures. Develop a solid understanding of grammar in complex sentence structures, including the use of tenses and prepositions.
2. Enhance medical terminology and pronunciation.
Dedicate time to learning and practicing medical vocabulary, particularly the correct pronunciation of keywords.
3. Allocate more time for improving English language skills.
Devote sufficient time to strengthening your overall command of the English language. Practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing to enhance fluency and accuracy.
4. Focus on specialist terminology:
Take extra care to learn the subtle differences between similar words in the medical field.

For example, distinguish between "employer" and "employee," "climbing" and "hiking," "concern" and "anxiety," "dizzy" and "drowsiness," etc.

5. Engage in real-life practice.
Seek opportunities for practical experience in hospitals, translating official leaflets, or working with specialised media reports available online.
6. Thoroughly prepare for the exam.
Familiarise yourself with the exam structure and requirements, and ensure thorough preparation and practice. Being a native speaker is not sufficient; thorough preparation is essential for success.
7. Strive for accuracy.
Aim for high levels of accuracy in your translations. Attention to detail and precise understanding of meaning are crucial in medical contexts.
8. Maintain natural and authentic translations.
Avoid overly literal translations that do not resemble natural Ukrainian speech.

LANGUAGE: Ukrainian

PATHWAY(S): Law

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

General comments regarding this year's performance:

Overall, the candidates' strengths were apparent in their Ukrainian language skills, particularly in sight translation and English into Ukrainian tasks.

However, weaknesses in English grammar, specialist terminology, accuracy, and spelling were observed, leading to poorer attempts in certain units.

All candidates completed all five units.

Unit 4

The written translation into English involved someone with a witness statement in support of their defence.

The common issues among candidates that did less well were poor grammar, occasional spelling errors, and a lack of terminology knowledge.

For instance, 'a grocery store' was translated as 'a bakery,' and 'before charging' was translated as 'before convicting'.

Unit 5

In this unit, the assignment was to translate English into Ukrainian. The task involved translating information from a website that provides guidance on how individuals with mental health issues should be treated by the police.

It is worth noting that the candidates performed well in the assignment, demonstrating their proficiency in Ukrainian writing skills, which appeared to be their strongest area.

The candidates demonstrated good knowledge of specialist terminology, Ukrainian grammar, and made only a few occasional spelling errors.

Overall, the candidates' strengths were apparent in their Ukrainian language skills, particularly in sight translation and English into Ukrainian tasks.

However, weaknesses in English grammar, specialist terminology, accuracy, and spelling were observed, leading to failed attempts in certain units.

Recommendations to Candidates

1. **Work on English grammar.**
Focus on improving your understanding and usage of tenses, conditionals, and complex sentence structures. Develop a solid understanding of grammar in complex sentence structures, including the use of tenses and prepositions.
2. **Enhance law terminology and pronunciation.**
Dedicate time to learning and practicing legal vocabulary, particularly the correct pronunciation of keywords.
3. **Allocate more time for improving English language skills.**
Devote sufficient time to strengthening your overall command of the English language. Practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing to enhance fluency and accuracy.
4. **Focus on specialist terminology.**
Take extra care to learn the subtle differences between similar words in the legal field. For example, distinguish between "charge" and "conviction," "climbing" and "hiking," "concern" and "anxiety," etc.
5. **Engage in real-life practice.**
Seek opportunities for practical experience in courts, translating official leaflets, or working with specialized criminal reports available online.
6. **Strive for accuracy.**
Aim for high levels of accuracy in your translations. Attention to detail and precise understanding of meaning are crucial in law contexts.
7. **Maintain natural and authentic translations.**
Avoid overly literal translations that do not resemble natural Ukrainian speech.

**CIOL Qualifications Diploma in Public Service Interpreting
Written Examiner Reports – November 2023**

LANGUAGE: Arabic
PATHWAY(S): Law/Health

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

Overall, the candidates did well in this series. The candidates in general, seemed more prepared for the nature of the examination.

Some candidates paraphrased the given texts in a way that lead to information being missed. Candidates should interpret every given detail.

Most candidates will be stressed during the examination. It is natural to feel stressed, however, candidates are encouraged to work on managing their reaction, as this can affect their performance in the exams.

Candidates were sometimes not knowledgeable enough to know whether to translate a given section of the text as a question or as a sentence. I advise the candidates to try to determine the tone of the sentence and not only the information contained within it.

Candidates are asked to review the use of sign “hamza” when writing in Arabic as well as the use of the definite article “the”. In addition, candidates are reminded to follow the standard Arabic sentence structure: put the verb first and the subject second when speaking and writing in Arabic.

Recommendations to Candidates

Candidates are encouraged to review Standard Arabic grammar to be able to give a more accurate translation. For example, the verb forms in Arabic change the meanings of the verb.

Candidates are advised to invest more time practicing the exams in their own time. There are past papers available from CIOL for them to practise with under timed conditions,

Candidates are also encouraged to use a wider range of grammar and verbs and to be aware of tenses, both in Arabic and English. On this occasion, candidates seemed to stick to using simple tenses. This is not sufficient for an exam within a Level 6 qualification.

LANGUAGE: Cantonese and Mandarin
PATHWAY(S): Law/Health

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

There were a good mix of candidates who took Cantonese and Mandarin Units 04 and 05 and in this series they all performed well.

All candidates had excellent linguistic skills in both languages (English and Cantonese / English and Mandarin), a good knowledge of specialist terminologies, and cultural awareness.

Recommendations to Candidates

Candidates must use formal language for the DPSI written Units 04 and 05.

Although fully following the text is essential, the candidates should also pay attention to the differences in the order of the words between English and Chinese - especially the conditional tense.

Practising for the exams is essential. As this cohort realised, specialist terminology must be learnt and revised before the exam takes place. Please try to think in advance about the terminology that may be present if you are sitting either a Health or Law pathway exam paper.

LANGUAGE: French
PATHWAY(S): Law/Health

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

There were very different performances from the candidates this session, ranging from very good to not acceptable at this level of qualification.

While it is obviously important that all the elements from the original passage are translated in full, the candidates should also read through their translation and try and see how it is received through the eyes of the reader/client. They should check that their sentences make sense and flow well in the target language.

Using the right syntax and (very importantly) thinking if this is how a native speaker would phrase it is strongly recommended.

A good knowledge of the subject matter in both languages is required as being a native speaker is not enough to carry candidates through the exam.

Recommendations to Candidates

The candidates should always prepare for their exam with specialist terminology in mind.

Regarding the Health pathway, candidates should ensure that they are familiar with the different body parts, as well as illnesses and appropriate medications - including dosage.

A good knowledge of the subject matter in both languages is required, as being a native speaker is not enough to carry candidates through the DPSI exam.

LANGUAGE: Kurdish
PATHWAY(S): Law

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

Overall, in this exam series, approximately half of the candidates performed well and were able to pass the written Units 04 and 05. Those who performed well demonstrated adequate competence in both the English and Kurdish languages, which showed good concentration, as well as a good command of grammar and vocabulary.

The weaker points were grammar and a lack of specialist terminology. Most of the candidates struggled with jargon and specialist terminology.

Recommendations to Candidates

I would advise candidates to familiarise themselves with specialist terminology/jargon by reading topical magazines/ journals containing legal literature and to focus more intently during the exam.

Candidates can also make use of examination past papers to get an idea of the nature of the examination papers insofar as the topics likely to arise, and the legal terminology they might encounter in the exam.

There were also some grammatical mistakes made by many of the candidates, so it is extremely important for all candidates to strengthen their grammar/syntax structure and not to confuse the three main verb tenses: past, present, and future.

In English, each of these tenses can take four main aspects: simple, perfect, continuous (also known as progressive), and perfect continuous. Candidates need to understand and use these if relevant, when translating.

LANGUAGE: Polish

PATHWAY(S): Law/Health

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

Health:

The text to translate into English was a letter to a GP informing him about a new patient's treatment for cervical cancer. The candidates seemed to be familiar with the style of medical writing. All translations preserved the appropriate register and style.

Overall, the candidates were well prepared and displayed a good knowledge of specialist terminology. However, some candidates struggled with grammar and sentence structure. Some of the grammatical errors included the lack of definite and indefinite articles, subject – verb disagreement, and in some instances a plural noun was followed by a singular form of a verb.

Several candidates also had difficulties with following English punctuation rules including the beginning and the end of a letter. It is particularly important to pay very close attention to detail. Tiny changes to content can completely change a given meaning, including moving and changing punctuation.

The text to translate from English into Polish was a leaflet from a GP about the winter flu vaccine. The candidates conveyed the message correctly and specialist terminology was used appropriately. There were no problems with the use of Polish grammar but again, as above, there were punctuation mistakes: mainly missing commas, or using commas in the wrong places.

Law:

The text to translate into English was a letter from a mother to a child written prior to the child's adoption hearing.

Some of the errors made by the candidates were due to a lack of knowledge of English grammar.

Some candidates used the wrong tenses – present tenses were used instead of past tenses. Present Perfect Tense was sometimes used instead of Past Simple Tense which could make the reader think that the decision had not been made yet, which was not the intention of the source text.

In a few cases, mistakes were made with capitalisation in the letter. We do not write words like ‘you’ with a capital ‘Y’ in the middle of a sentence. This type of capitalisation is not correct English usage.

The text to translate from English into Polish was an extract from a letter to a person to clarify their licence conditions.

In previous reports candidates have been asked to install the Polish alphabet on their laptops. Unfortunately, there are still scripts being submitted without Polish diacritical signs, the result of which constitutes spelling mistakes, which is unacceptable at this qualification level of translation.

It is paramount that the translated text is clear, coherent and looks professional. The lack of the Polish alphabet makes the text more difficult to follow and correctly understand.

Recommendations to Candidates

Please make sure that you have a good knowledge of English grammar, especially tenses.

Ensure you practise with past exam papers and have someone, if possible, who is fluent in either or both languages read through it for you.

I recommend again that candidates download the Polish alphabet to their laptops.

I also recommend that candidates read good quality writing in their target language in order to expand their range of specialist terminology. Knowing the grammar rules in different languages is very important. Languages use punctuation differently, so translators should be familiar with the correct punctuation usage in both the source language and the target language.

LANGUAGE: Romanian

PATHWAY(S): Law

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

The candidates’ overall performance in translating from English into Romanian was of a much higher standard than those translating from Romanian into English. In particular there was a better command of specialist vocabulary and syntactic structures.

In the translation from Romanian into English, the candidates rendered some specific terminology using relatively approximate paraphrasing e.g. ‘a care order or procedure’ instead of ‘care proceedings;’ ‘placement centre’ for ‘foster care’; however, none of the texts expressed ‘kinship evaluation’ appropriately.

One of the recurrent grammatical problems, within both units of the written exams, was in the inappropriate use of the past tense vs present perfect, which in Romanian are expressed by the same verbal form.

Recommendations to Candidates

Candidates should remember that to be a good translator you should be knowledgeable in both languages. If you are very fluent in one and only manage to ‘get by’ in the other, that does not make

you a good translator. You should have a good background knowledge of your subject in both languages.

Candidates should know that being a native speaker is not enough to also be a good translator. Translating takes a lot of hard work. Word-by-word translation most often fails to render the meaning of the original correctly.

It is essential for candidates to re-read what they have written in its entirety, to see if it makes sense in the context of the situation being described. This applies to spelling, spacing (it is, essentially, a writing exam) and the use of diacritical signs in Romanian, which are sometimes left out as if they were optional.

Regarding the strengths and weaknesses observed, candidates should be reminded that making good use of dictionaries is not enough if it is not then followed with the correct, coherent and grammatically adequate application of the language.

LANGUAGE: Spanish
PATHWAY(S): Law/Health

Overall Performance of Candidates and any Particular Strengths and Weaknesses.

There was an excellent command of both the English and Spanish languages from most of the candidates. Different reformulations have been observed to conform with the syntax of the target language, for example: changes in verb tenses (from present tense in English to Spanish subjunctive), or changes from active into passive structures.

All information was also conveyed from the source text without omissions, distortions, or misinterpretations. The use of specialist terminology was excellent, especially within the Health pathway (“gotas microscópicas,” “smear test”).

Register and genre conventions were also conveyed, using formal register expressions such as the opening and closing of e-mails.

However, there were a few examples of candidates having an inaccurate knowledge of legal terminology and who made different basic mistakes in the target language (Spanish). They translated literally on too many occasions, leading to incoherences and repetitions.

In this exam, different spelling mistakes were also found such as “ofical” y “subjeto”.

Recommendations to Candidates

Most of the candidates performed incredibly well.

However, for those candidates who did not do as well, it is advised to review the spelling of key terminology such as “sujeto” or “oficial” and to avoid the use of literal translation. In some parts, such as verb tenses or passive structures, there was a relevant difference between the English and Spanish and literal translations lead to incoherences and texts that did not sound natural.

More practise and reading through what has been written before submitting the final paper, ensuring it makes sense and reads well, is strongly advised.