

Curriculum Standards for Healthcare Interpreter Training

(Training Curriculum Deployment Procedures)

These Curriculum Standards for Healthcare Interpreter Training (the "Curriculum") set a standard for the training and guidance of healthcare interpreters to ensure a certain level and quality as professionals.

This Curriculum has been created for use during training and dispatch by healthcare interpreter training facilities as well as agencies that employ and/or dispatch healthcare interpreters.

First, the Curriculum clearly defines the knowledge, abilities and skills, and ethics that healthcare interpreters should have as professionals. Second, Training Curriculum and provisions upon implementation are cited to ensure the training of healthcare interpreters to obtain a certain level and quality. Moreover, there are provisions regarding continuing education training and guidance to sustain and improve the quality of interpreters as professionals, even after the completion of the training.

1. The role of the healthcare interpreter in the workplace

A healthcare interpreter has the adequate medical and health-related knowledge, vocabulary, abilities, and skills and, as a mediator between languages, enables effective dialogue between engaged parties during medical consultations and other related situations. This is done by precisely understanding the speaker's intent, and by faithfully conveying the message to the listener.

A medial interpreter, when necessary, should support mutual understanding by intermediating between health professionals and patients who have different linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds.

* Any tasks beyond those outlined, such as interpreting in a specialize field, should only be conducted after sufficient interpretation experience has been gained in the above.

Knowledge

- Knows and understands cultural and social differences between health professionals and patients with regard to health, medical, and communication issues
- Has sufficient basic knowledge and vocabulary in the areas of medicine and health
- Understands the patient's rights in medical care

Abilities and skills

- Is proficient in both native and target languages
- Has interpreting skills for dialogue, necessary for healthcare interpretation (i.e., consecutive interpreting skills for dialogues)
- Is knowledgeable about and skilled in multicultural communication, and responds appropriately depending on the situation.
- Is skilled in coordinating the healthcare interpreting environment
- Can prepare and collect information related to the case in advance
- When necessary and with the speaker's consent, can appropriately intermediate any cultural issues
- Takes necessary precautions to prevent infection, and otherwise provides for their mental and physical health while on duty
- Can review their performance in order to maintain and improve their abilities

Ethics

- Understands their role as an interpreter, and behaves according to work rules and ethical codes
- Behaves consciously and responsibly as a professional
- Treats everyone with the respect they deserve as people and human beings
- Precisely understands the intent of the speaker and interprets faithfully
- Treats all clients neutrally and impartially
- Does not disclose any confidential information obtained in the course of their duty and respects clients' privacy
- Is able to be aware of and judge their professional and linguistic limitations appropriately

2. Requirements to participate in the training curriculum

Following are requirements for participating in the training curriculum

- In principle at least 20 years of age
- Native language abilities at the level of a college student, with knowledge equivalent to that of a high school graduate
- Is able to participate in advanced level conversation and debate in target language
 - Can take part of conversations naturally with native speakers of the target language
 - Understands both abstract or concrete topics regarding health
 - Understands other speakers' opinions or statements, and can respond to them by

explaining their own opinions in detail

- Understands the customs, practices, and social norms in countries and regions where the native and target languages are spoken
 - Accepts that cultural or social values can differ
 - Can communicate with clients respectfully
- ※ In principle language capabilities should meet or exceed the above requirements. For languages with limited resources, training facilities should provide extra support to help trainees improve their language abilities.
- ※ The time required for this extra language support is not included in the Curriculum.

3. Requirements to complete training

In order to complete the healthcare interpreter training candidates must:

- Attend at least 90% of the training
- Submit training reports (may be written in their native language)
- Submit the glossary they built during training (with words in both native and target languages)
- Submit a final report (information gathered on topics discussed during training as well as building their glossary)
- Pass a proficiency test, fulfilling the evaluation criteria

4. Training length and format

The following states the length and format of the training:

- Training period consists of 50 class units or more. The basic duration of one class is 90 minutes.
- Class format is seminar-type, in small groups (around ten people)
- At least eight practical interpretation training classes should be conducted. The interpretation training should build on content introduced in previous classes.
- On-the-Job and other practical training conducted after completion of the training course should consist of 25 classes or more. 20 of those classes (around 30 hours) must be onsite hospital training.

5. Training content

- Training is conducted to impart knowledge, abilities, skills, ethics, and know how to respond accordingly as a healthcare interpreter
- Training consists of three parts: Healthcare Interpreter Training I, Healthcare Interpreter

Training II, On-the-Job Training (OJT, actual interpretation work at medical facilities)

Healthcare Interpreter Training I

Understand the roles and responsibilities of healthcare interpreters, **while learning basic healthcare knowledge, interpreting skills and ethics**

- The role of the healthcare interpreter (basic healthcare interpreting concepts and knowledge)
- Language profile (gain an understanding of one's linguistic abilities and learn how to build a glossary)
- Professional awareness and responsibilities (ethical codes that healthcare interpreters must follow)
- Basic knowledge of the human body and disease
- Basic knowledge of medical examinations, medications, and infections
- Interpretation skills necessary for healthcare interpreters I (consecutive interpretation methods and training)

Healthcare Interpreter Training II

Acquire relevant knowledge, ability to respond, and interpretation skills necessary for actual interpretation

✦ Basic knowledge of Japan's healthcare system

Interpretation skills necessary for healthcare interpreters II (review skills, practice note-taking, do mock interpretations)

Understand the differences between medical staff and patients with regard to culture and social background

Communication skills necessary for healthcare interpreters (multicultural communication, interpersonal communication, cultural intermediation)

Self-care for healthcare interpreters (Physical and mental self-care)

- Practical interpretation skills (how to gather information, walk-through of an interpretation session and learning how to respond accordingly, position and influence the interpreter has in medical dialogue, applying non-verbal communication skills)
- ✦ Mock interpretation (role playing medical consultation and diagnosis scenes at various departments, exams, etc.)

On-the-Job Training

Interpreters who complete Healthcare Interpreter Training I and II and fulfill the evaluation criteria continue on to OJT at medical facilities

- OJT should be conducted for 25 classes (approximately 37.5 hours) including orientation and review sessions. 20 classes (30 hours) should be allotted to actual interpretation work, approximately 20-30 sessions.
- OJT should be conducted as soon as possible and no later than two years after completing the training course.
- An orientation session must be conducted to confirm work scope and responsibilities prior to OJT.
- Trainees are to keep a record of their training and review their performance during OJT.
- OJT trainees cannot work by themselves. They must always be under the supervision of a hospital staff member (coordinator) while interpreting
- A health professional(supervisor) must go over case studies with the interpreter during OJT
- The OJT period may be extended due to limited the numbers of OJT sites or interpreting opportunities at such sites, or when target language scarcity makes it difficult to secure.

The role of the coordinator during OJT

- Coordinators who can supervise and educate healthcare interpreters during OJT are assigned.
- A mid-term review should be conducted during the OJT period with experts (supervisors) providing guidance
- Ideally coordinators have a deep understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and challenges of healthcare interpreters.
- Coordinators contact medical facilities and clarify the trainees' work scope and responsibilities before training starts.

6. Considerations when deploying the training Curriculum

- The training must be conducted with due consideration to the diversity of trainees.
- All languages are to be treated equally.

7. Detailed rules for administering the ability test

Test items

- Written test and an oral examination in native and target languages (questions should be drawn from themes discussed during training and brought up in submitted reports)
- Mock interpretation of medical consultation

Evaluation criteria

- Level of understanding of the training material
- Understands the speakers' message accurately and can faithfully interpret it
- Behaves consciously and responsibly as a professional
- Understands the role of a healthcare interpreter and can respond accordingly in during dialogue interpretation
- Has the skills to coordinate and communicate in various situations

8. Validation for those who have previous interpretation experience

In order to take the validation test candidates must:

- Meet all requirements to participate in the training
- Have sufficient knowledge, abilities and skills in the medical field, with interpretation experience of approximately 40 hours within the past two years (list of healthcare interpretation work with clients must be submitted. Interpretation for family and friends cannot be included)
- Can prove completion of training at a similar level to the Curriculum(certificates or other proof required)

Evaluation

- Conduct oral and/or written examinations to assess language and interpreting skills as well as a mock interpretation session

Training for those who pass the validation test

- Those who have been confirmed to have sufficient knowledge, abilities, skills, and experience will be exempted some training courses. However, if any curriculum item is proved to be insufficient, one must take the training course on that topic
- The following courses must be taken by everybody, regardless of previous experience or ability: Role of the healthcare interpreter, Awareness and responsibility as a professional, Communication skills for healthcare interpreters, Interpretation training, Final report and final exam, On-the-Job Training

9. Certificate of completion

Training course completion certificates will be issued by facilities that conduct training according to the Curriculum.

10. Rules for supervision and maintaining and improving skills after the completion of training

- To maintain and improve interpretation skills and knowledge, interpreters should attend 2-3 training sessions per year related to interpretation skills and knowledge.
- The number of sessions may be increased if deemed necessary.
- Interpreters should receive periodical guidance from professionals via the discussion and sharing of case studies

11. Standards for training facilities and employment agencies

- Training facilities are to conduct the training defined in this Curriculum and issue certificates of completion to trainees who have participated in at least 90% of the trainings and fulfill the evaluation criteria.
 - Conduct training to maintain interpreter knowledge and abilities 2-3 times per year
 - Dispatch or employment agencies must provide opportunities to discuss and share case studies with professionals as well as other periodical guidance.
- ※ A "professional" means a supervisor who has working experience and knowledge as well as abilities and skills related to healthcare interpretation.

12. Interpretation in a specialized field

Any interpretation tasks out of the scope above, such as interpretation in a specialized field, should only be conducted after sufficient interpretation experience has been gained in the above. Fundamentally 2 years or more (at least 80 hours) of working experience is necessary.

13. Changes and revisions to the Curriculum

This Curriculum is revised every three years by a committee of experts or another advisory panel. This Curriculum may be changed by adding to or correcting the text as needed.

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Healthcare interpreter Training I Understand the role and responsibilities of healthcare interpreters while acquiring basic medical knowledge, interpreting skills, and ethics.

Class name	Class units (1 unit = 90min)	No. of classes	Hours	Goals	Content
Role of the healthcare interpreter	1	1	1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to medical interpretation: understand the roles and position of medicinal interpreters and understand the knowledge, abilities, skills, and ethical codes necessary 	The role of the healthcare interpreter Knowledge, abilities, skills, and ethical codes necessary for healthcare interpreters Potential healthcare interpreter trainees Dialogue interpreting and reciprocal actions About community interpreting (with a focus on medical interpreting)
Creating your language profile	2	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain an understanding of your current linguistic profile (including language abilities, speech characteristics, and knowledge gaps due to environment, learning methods, or study history). Learn how to build a glossary (list of words learned during training). 	Language profile The importance of personal glossaries and how to build them
Professional awareness and responsibility (ethics)	3	3	4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand what kind of ethical codes and codes of conduct healthcare interpreters follow and learn how to respond and behave accordingly. Using the standards for training healthcare interpreters and the healthcare interpreter code of conduct learn and discuss: respecting human rights, being faithful and correct, neutrality and fairness, sincerity and trustworthiness, avoiding personal relationships, knowing your limits, confidentiality and privacy, and courtesy and manners. Simulations such as short skits and role plays are used to learn how to apply theory in real-life situations. 	What it means to be a professional Code of conduct Respecting human rights Being faithful and correct Neutrality and fairness Sincerity and trustworthiness Avoiding personal relationships Knowing your limits Confidentiality and privacy Courtesy and manners
Basic knowledge of the human body and disease	10	10	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire basic knowledge and vocabulary of the human body and disease in order to understand conversations correctly at medical facilities. Learn the name, system, and function of each organ, as well as major diseases and pathology by group: the human body and disease; circulatory organs; respiratory organs; digestive organs; musculoskeletal system; kidney, urinary, endocrine, and metabolic system organs; ophthalmology, otolaryngology, dentistry, and dermatology; psychiatry, the brain, and neurology; obstetrics and gynecology; and pediatrics. 	Basic knowledge of the human body and categorization of various diseases Basic knowledge of circulatory organs Basic knowledge of respiratory organs Basic knowledge of digestive organs Basic knowledge of musculoskeletal system Basic knowledge of kidney, urinary, endocrine, and metabolic system organs Basic knowledge of ophthalmology, otolaryngology, dentistry, and dermatology Basic knowledge of psychiatry, the brain, and neurology Basic knowledge of obstetrics and gynecology Basic knowledge of pediatrics
Basic knowledge of medical examinations	2	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire basic knowledge and vocabulary about major medical examinations, focusing on clinical lab tests and imaging and their type, purpose, method, and precautions. 	Types of medical exams and precautions (clinical lab tests and imaging)
Basic knowledge of medications (pharmaceuticals)	1	1	1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire basic knowledge and vocabulary about medications, focusing on prescriptions by type, category, and route, along with other details such as medicine pocketbook ("Okusuri Techo"). 	Types of medications and how to take them (prescriptions and over-the-counter medicine) Medicine pocketbook (Okusuri Techo)

Basic knowledge on infectious diseases	1	1	1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire basic knowledge of infectious diseases, their major types , route of infection, and immunization. 	Vaccine types and timing
					Major infections and their infection routes
Interpretation skills necessary for healthcare interpreters I	5	5	7.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review previous material and check the glossaries trainees have assembled during the previous classes: basic knowledge of the human body and disease, basic knowledge of medical examinations, basic knowledge of medications, and basic knowledge of infectious diseases. Understand consecutive interpretation as used by healthcare interpreters and what it is like, how errors happen, and the process by which it is done. 	What is consecutive translation?
					Glossary review
					Interpretation skill training
					Assessment of language ability and interpretation skills
TOTAL	25	25	37.5		

Healthcare Interpreter Training II Acquire related knowledge, ability to respond, and interpretation skills necessary for actual interpretation

Class name	Class units	No. of classes	Hours	Goals	Content
Basic knowledge of Japan's medical system	4	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire basic knowledge and vocabulary about types of medical institutions and facilities, medical provider types and roles, medical departments, patient intake at each facility, and the Japanese medical system. Understand the importance of teamwork between healthcare interpreters and other medical staff. 	Characteristics of the Japan's medical system Medical institutions and facilities in Japan Medical providers and their roles Collaborating with the medical team Department names and types Walkthrough of the medical consultation process
		2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire the basic knowledge and vocabulary of the medical insurance system, focusing on details and recipients of medical insurance and publicly funded health care. Compare medical insurance systems through research and group work about countries patients come from. 	Medical insurance system Social insurance system, medical insurance benefits, publicly funded health care International comparison of medical insurance systems
Interpretation skills necessary for healthcare interpreters II	5	5	7.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review glossary based on the content of Basic knowledge of Japan's medical system and related topics. Review and utilize skills acquired during Interpretation skills I through mock interpretations of simple medical consultation dialogues. 	Glossary review Review of Interpreter skills I Note-taking skills Mock interpretation (roleplaying medical consultation scenes)
Understanding the differences between medical staff and patients with regard to culture and social background	1	1	1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand patient rights and responsibilities as well as the psychology of patients and medical staff. Understand the overall situation of foreigners living in Japan, how they receive medical attention, residence qualifications, and visa types. 	Rights and responsibilities of the patient Psychology of the patient and medical staff Life of foreigners in Japan How foreigners receive medical attention Residency and visa status of foreign patients
Communication skills necessary for healthcare interpreters	5	1	1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand cultural and social differences that affect health care and communication such as lifestyle, values, religion, and ideology. 	Cultural and social differences related to health care, medical treatment and communication
		2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain an understanding of communication, including nonverbal messages, and how they are affected by different languages and cultures. Learn characteristics of Japanese communication and how medical staff communicate with patients. Understand the concept of and gain skill in cultural intermediation, which promotes mutual understanding by pointing out and raising awareness of cultural differences in both parties when conflict, misunderstanding, or prejudice arise. Trainees will learn how to intermediate effectively and appropriately in such situations. Also, learn the difference between defending rights and cultural intermediation using real-life examples. 	Communication Multicultural communication Verbal and nonverbal messages Characteristics of Japanese communication
		2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss various issues healthcare interpreters may confront while on duty and understand how to respond to and resolve such situations accordingly. Discuss various issues healthcare interpreters may confront on duty, and understand how to respond to and resolve the situations accordingly. 	How Japanese medical staff communicate How to communicate with patients Cultural intermediation by healthcare interpreters Issues confronted when interpreting and how to respond to them

Self-care for healthcare interpreters	1	1	1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn various ways to stay healthy and fit and understand the need for mental and physical self-care. This includes preventing infection as well as preventing and recovering from stress and burnout. 	Physical self-care for healthcare interpreters
					Mental self-management for healthcare interpreters (understanding and preventing stress and stress-related diseases)
Practical interpretation skills	8	8	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the importance and various methods of preparation and research, and learn how to conduct research on various topics. Understand the effect of an interpreter's positioning as it applies to an interpreting session. Become aware of nonverbal communication and effectively utilize it while interpreting. Learn how to utilize the varied knowledge, abilities, skills, and ethics acquired during training to appropriately respond to actual situations. 	Importance of information gathering and research methods
					Interpretation session walkthrough and learning how to respond accordingly
					The effect of interpreter positioning
					Applying nonverbal communication skills
					Mock interpretations (role-playing medical consultation and diagnosis scenes at various departments, exams, etc.)
Final report and exam	1	1	1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The last assignment is to write and submit a final report. (The report includes: essay questions on themes discussed during the training, how to collect and analyze information for interpretation, and building your own glossary.) 	Draft and submit final report
					Conduct final exam
TOTAL	25	25	37.5		

On-the-Job Training

Class name	Class units	No. of classes	Hours	Content	
OJT Orientation	2	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set goals and draft OJT plan under the supervision of the OJT coordinator. 	Setting OJT goals
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the code of conduct and prepare for OJT. 	Confirm OJT schedule and plan
					Review the code of conduct
OJT Medical Interpretation Training*	20	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how the training site is organized and the functions and roles of each department. Understand how each department collaborates and processes daily business. 	Assignment and Visit to Hospital
		18	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put the knowledge, abilities, skills, and ethics acquired during training into use under the supervision of the OJT coordinator. 	OJT reports/records
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to sustain and improve abilities via OJT reports, records, reviewing performance, and receiving feedback. 	Interpretation practice
Midterm review	3	3	4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review OJT, identify any issues, and revise OJT goals if necessary. 	Setting midterm goals
					Share and discuss case studies under the supervision of medical professionals
TOTAL	25	25	37.5		

*OJT should consist of 30 hours of interpretation, or 20-30 sessions within a two year period. However, this period may be extended due to limited numbers of OJT sites or interpreting opportunities at such sites, or when target language scarcity makes it difficult to secure training time.