

## MA degree programme in Applied Linguistics (MA AL) Regulations concerning the profession aptitude test for the Specialisation in Conference Interpreting

### 1 General

The aptitude test for the Specialisation in Conference Interpreting comprises three forms: *liaison interpreting (for students with a B language)*, *sight translation* and *consecutive interpreting (see 1.3 Testing programme)*.

#### 1.1 Definitions

A language: native language or equivalent

B language: active foreign language into and out of which the candidate interprets

C language: passive foreign language out of which the candidate interprets

#### 1.2 Content, tasks and assessment criteria

a) Liaison interpreting (interpreting a discussion)  
(only for candidates with a B language)

Duration: 5–8 minutes; assessment: pass/fail

Task: The candidate interprets a short discussion between two people. The candidate will be informed of the discussion topic one hour before the test.

Assessment criteria: Expressive abilities in the native and foreign language, mental agility, linguistic responsiveness, personal presence.

b) Sight translation

Text length: 350–400 words; assessment: pass/fail

Task: The candidate provides an oral rendition of a written text. The text is not read aloud to the candidate, and the candidate is given no time to read through the text before translating it.

Assessment criteria: The translation should be fluent, accurate and linguistically correct.

c) Consecutive interpreting

Text length: 350–400 words; assessment: pass/fail

Task: The candidate provides a consecutive interpretation of an orally-presented text on an unprepared topic. The text is read aloud or spoken freely. The candidate may make notes.

Assessment criteria: The interpretation does not have to include everything, but should be fluent, accurate and linguistically correct.

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## 1.3 Testing programme

Language combination	Liaison interpreting	Sight translation	Consecutive interpreting	Number of test parts
ABC	A-B-A	A-B, C-A	B-A	4
AAC*	A1-A2-A1	C-A1, C-A2	A1-A2, A2-A1	5
ABCC	A-B-A	A-B, C1-A	B-A, C2-A	5
ABCCC	A-B-A	A-B, C1-A, C2-A	B-A, C3-A	6
ABBC	A-B1-A, A-B2-A	A-B1, A-B2, C-A	B1-A, B2-A,	7
ABBCC	A-B1-A, A-B2-A	A-B1, A-B2, C1-A	B1-A, C2-A, B2-A	8
ACCC		C1-A, C2-A	C3-A	3
ACCCC		C1-A, C2-A	C3-A, C4-A	4

In the case of language combinations other than those listed above, the programme director decides on the testing programme.

\*It is not possible to study two A languages in the MA programme. The AAC combination in the testing programme serves solely to establish which of the candidate's two active languages is stronger.

## 1.4 Procedure

1. Candidates with a B language are allowed one hour to prepare for the liaison interpreting test. The topic for the test and the preparation room number are conveyed in writing.
2. Candidates can prepare for this part of the test in a room reserved for this purpose. A laptop with internet access is available in the room.
3. The candidate goes to the examination room at the appointed time and waits outside until called in.
4. The candidate can choose to take the tests of different forms of interpreting specified in the testing programme for the respective language combination in any order. When the tests are over, the candidate leaves the room.
5. The examiners (→ 1.5. Assessment) judge and evaluate the candidate's performance immediately following the test or, if not all examiners are physically present at the testing session, subsequently correspond to reach an agreement on the assessment.
6. The chief examiner informs the candidate in writing of the test result.

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### 1.5 Assessment

1. The candidate's performance is assessed by a panel of examiners comprising:
  - the head of the specialisation (chief examiner) or his/her deputy
  - at least one member of the teaching staff in the language combination(s) being tested.
2. The panel reaches their judgement together. If the lecturer is of a different opinion from the chief examiner, the chief examiner makes the final decision.
3. The result of the assessment is recorded in writing and signed by the chief examiner.
4. The chief examiner briefly records the justification for the results of the final assessment.

### 2 Recording of the tests

- Audio recordings are made of the tests.
- The recordings of the tests are kept at least until the end of the appeals period.
- The recordings are not given to the candidates.

### 3 Resits

If a candidate fails any of the test parts, he/she may resit them one year at the earliest following the first attempt; the resits are scheduled for the next official testing date.

### 4 Requirements for language combinations

The results of the aptitude test for the Specialisation of Conference Interpreting are decisive in determining which of the candidate's languages can be studied as the A language and which as an active foreign language (B language) and/or a passive foreign language (C language). If a candidate selects a language as their B language but does not pass the test, it may be accepted as a C language. If a candidate does not pass a test in a second A language, it may be accepted as a B language.

In order to pass the aptitude test for the Specialisation in Conference Interpreting, candidates must pass at minimum all of the test parts for the language combination ABC or ACCC. In order to be accepted with a B language, all three relevant test parts must be passed (A–B sight translation, B–A consecutive interpreting and A–B–A liaison interpreting). Test results cannot compensate each other: each part must be passed separately.

### 5 Language choice

The current list of languages being offered can be found on the MA in Applied Linguistics website ([www.zhaw.ch/ma-applied-linguistics](http://www.zhaw.ch/ma-applied-linguistics)).

Other languages may be tested on request. The programme director decides when and whether tests for languages not listed on the website are held.

The programme director may decide not to offer a certain course in the study programme if there are too few potential participants. Candidates who pass the aptitude test are not automatically guaranteed a place in the MA programme with their first choice of language combination. Students can only have one A language in the programme.



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**6 Withdrawal**

If a candidate withdraws more than ten days after the invitation containing the exact test dates is sent, the test fee must be paid even if the candidate does not take the test.

Withdrawing less than 24 hours before the scheduled test or failing to provide a valid reason for being absent constitutes a failed test. Valid reasons include acts of God, illness, military service, accident, death in the family and the urgent need to care for a family member. Public transport delays (excluding serious disruptions) are not considered acts of God and are not accepted as a valid reason for being late for the test.

If prevented from attending the test or being punctual, a candidate should inform the programme director of the reason immediately and provide sufficient evidence. If there is any doubt, the programme director decides on the basis of the submitted documentation.

**7 Validity period**

If a candidate passes the aptitude test for the Specialisation in Conference Interpreting, the overall result and those of the test parts are valid for the next official start of the MA programme (start of the semester) and for the start of the programme in the following two years.