



## CANDIDATE'S GUIDE FOR THE CTTIC STANDARD CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION IN TRANSLATION

This guide is for candidates who are planning to sit the Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council (CTTIC) Standard Certification Examination in Translation and who would like further information about procedures.

### Examination

The examination is intended for **experienced translators** who wish to have their competence recognized by their peers. It does not seek to identify aptitude or potential, but rather to attest to a candidate's **professional skills**. A candidate who can produce **a translation that is faithful and idiomatic and requires little or no revision** is deemed capable of practising independently. This is an open book examination: dictionaries and reference works are permitted, but may not be exchanged with other candidates. **All** technological aids are prohibited, with the exception of those required on valid medical grounds.

**THE USE OF ANY TYPE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICE DURING  
THE EXAMINATION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED**  
(Electronic devices include but are not limited to cell phones, pagers, Blackberries®, iPods®,  
laptop computers and tablets). Any such use will lead to the candidate's disqualification; the  
examination will not be marked and the fee will not be refunded.

### Contents

A special committee appointed by CTTIC's Board of Certification selects the examination texts. It endeavours to choose texts that will test candidates' ability to analyse and comprehend, as well as their mastery of the target language. Sample texts from previous years are usually available from the candidate's association.

**The CTTIC Certification examination in Translation is of two hours and thirty minutes duration and is in one part, as follows:**

Candidates must translate two texts of approximately 175-185 words each. This level of output is typically reached after a few years' practical experience.

One of the texts will be compulsory and general in nature. There will also be two other texts, from which the candidate must select and translate one. One of these will be mildly technical/scientific/medical and the other somewhat literary. None of the three texts should require specialized terminological knowledge.

**N.B. IF THE MARK OBTAINED FOR THE COMPULSORY TEXT IS LESS THAN 40% THEN, THE SECOND OR OPTIONAL TEXT WILL NOT BE MARKED.**

**The source and date of the document (e.g. *L'Actualité*, septembre 2001) are provided for information only. You may copy it at the end of your translation but there will be no deduction if you don't.**



### **Disclaimer**

**Before writing the examination, all candidates are required to sign a disclaimer form acknowledging that all examination papers (source text and target text) become the property of CTTIC and will not be returned to candidates under any circumstances. However, in order to allow those who failed to decide whether or not they wish to appeal, they may request to VIEW their exam paper at a location pre-determined by their association. *The disclaimer form is attached to the present document.***

### **Correction**

Markers are recruited for each language combination (French-English, English-French, official-foreign language and vice versa), as far as possible from different provinces. The great majority of markers are experienced certified members, accustomed to translating, revising and evaluating translation work.

For official languages, marking takes place at correction centres weeks after the examination is held. Each paper is corrected by a team of two markers working independently in accordance with the instructions and marking scale established by the Board of Certification. If they disagree, the matter is referred to the coordinator of the correction centre. The pass mark for the Translation portion is 70% and all borderline papers are automatically reviewed.

For foreign language examinations, photocopies of candidates' papers are sent to the two markers selected, who also apply a marking scale, and consult one another before returning the papers to the CTTIC Administrative Director.

### **Marking Scale**

**Errors** are considered to fall into two categories: **Translation** (Comprehension - failure to render the meaning of the original text) and **Language** (Expression - violation of grammatical and other rules of usage in the target language).

#### **Translation** (Comprehension)

Major mistakes (deduction: 10 points)

e.g. serious misinterpretation denoting a definite lack of comprehension of the source language, nonsense, omission of a phrase or more

Minor mistakes (deduction: 5 points)

e.g. mistranslation of a single word, omission/addition affecting meaning, lack of precision, wrong shade of meaning



**Language** (Expression)

Major mistakes (deduction: 10 point)  
e.g. gibberish, unacceptable structure

Minor mistakes (deduction: 5 points)  
e.g. syntax, grammar, ambiguity, unnecessary repetition, convoluted structure, non-idiomatic structure, unacceptable loan translation

Minor mistakes (deduction: 3 points)  
e.g. breach of spelling, punctuation, typographical conventions

**Failure**

A candidate who fails will be advised of his/her mark and provided with a statement of the types of errors (language/translation major/minor errors) which caused his/her failure. Candidates' exams will not be returned to them. However, in order to allow those who failed to decide whether or not they wish to appeal, they may request to **VIEW** their exam paper at a location pre-determined by their association. Candidates are not identified to markers and there can be **no** discussion of problems or mistakes between candidates and markers.

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**Candidates are reminded that their exams papers will NOT be returned after the exam. CTTIC is a certification body, not a teaching institution. The CTTIC exam is only a tool used to assess candidates' knowledge and capabilities, not a development tool. However, in order to allow those who failed to decide whether or not they wish to appeal, they may request to VIEW their exam paper at a location pre-determined by their association.**  
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## Appeal

A candidate who fails may appeal his/her examination results. An additional fee is charged and the appeal is arranged through the candidate's association. The candidate's paper is referred to a third marker who reviews the original marking and may either confirm the original mark or re-mark the paper.

The appeal decision is final and the appeal fee will be refunded if the appeal is successful. Candidates are advised that very few appeals are successful and the trouble and expense of an appeal are usually justified only if the original marks are close to the pass mark of 70%.

## Examination conditions

Candidates can rely on the fairness and credibility of the CTTIC Standard Certification Examination in Translation which offers:

- Identical examination conditions for all candidates;
- Complete anonymity of candidates;
- Impartial marking, since all papers are marked carefully and consistently in accordance with the scale established by the Board of Certification;
- Dual marking, triple in the event of an appeal.

## **Dos and DON'Ts for prospective candidates**

- DO prepare yourself. Practise translating under examination conditions, within time limits, and preferably without preparing a draft that can take precious minutes to copy at the end. If you are used to working on a computer, practise writing with a pen. If you always work in a specialized field, try your hand at more general texts. If you are primarily a linguistic services manager or a revisor, your translation skills may be rusty and you would be well advised to refresh them.
- DO try to be rested and relaxed on the day of the examination.
- DO read and assimilate the source text, noting difficulties as you go.
- DO write legibly and neatly and use the pen provided. Remember that the markers have to review many papers and must work from photocopies. Remember too that anything you have not written on the right-hand page will not be available to the marker.
- DO try to manage your time properly.
- DON'T spend excessive time consulting dictionaries or other references.
- DON'T offer a choice of terms or phrases in brackets. Cross out everything you want the marker to ignore. **Think of your text as work you would send to a client.**
- DO be careful of omissions. The title is often missed sometimes a sentence or even a whole paragraph is left out. Translate everything right to the last word.
- DON'T over-adapt the texts. In trying to demonstrate your skill in paraphrasing, you may well alter the tone and meaning to such an extent that the translation will no longer be considered faithful.
- DO check your translation very carefully. In fact, you should save at least 15 minutes for this final review.



- DON'T leave before the time is up. Perhaps for you the first idea that pops into your head is the best, but any time you have left will be well spent in rereading, revision, and the final touch up.
- DO remember that the exam now includes three texts, one compulsory and two others from which you must select one. Make sure you correctly identify the compulsory text and translate it.
- DO choose which of the two optional texts you think you can translate most comfortably. The choice is yours and the marking is the same.
- DON'T try to translate more than two texts. You won't have time to translate them all properly and you won't get any extra marks for doing it.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE EXAMINATION COORDINATOR  
OF YOUR ASSOCIATION**

*Revised March , 2006*