



Translator - Using language skills to translate one written language into another, retaining the meaning of the original text as closely as possible

<https://www.atanet.org/client-assistance/translator-vs-interpreter/>

Entry requirements:

You can become a translator with a degree in any subject, providing that you're fluent in two or more languages. However, certain degrees may increase your chances of securing work and these include:

- translation studies with languages
- modern European and/or non-European languages
- business, law or science with languages.

Although you don't necessarily need a postgraduate qualification, a Masters in Translation or a professional qualification such as the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL) Level 7 **Diploma in Translation (DipTrans)** can be useful as competition for jobs and freelance work is strong. A postgraduate qualification may be particularly useful if your first degree is in an unrelated subject. Research courses carefully to make sure they meet your career aims.

[Search postgraduate courses in translation.](#)

If you have no relevant qualifications but a proven record of excellent language skills, you may still be able to gain translation work. Whether you have official qualifications or not, it's useful to have knowledge of the area in which you may wish to translate, e.g. medical or business.

What you will do:

- read through original material and rewrite it in the target language, ensuring that the meaning of the source text is retained
- use translation memory software, such as Wordfast, memoQ, Across, Trados Studio and Transit NXT, to ensure consistency of translation within documents and help efficiency
- use specialist dictionaries, thesauruses and reference books to find the closest equivalents for terminology and words used
- use appropriate software for presentation and delivery
- research legal, technical and scientific phraseology to find the correct translation
- liaise with clients to discuss any unclear points
- proofread and edit final translated versions
- provide quotations for translation services offered
- consult with experts in specialist areas
- retain and develop knowledge on specialist areas of translation
- follow various translation-quality standards to ensure legal and ethical obligations to the customer.

What you will earn:

Salaries for translators in the UK vary widely and freelance rates are often calculated according to the word count. Your income will depend on a range of factors including your experience and qualifications, the nature of the work you're translating (general or specialist) and the level of demand for the languages.

Translation of highly specialised texts, from or into unusual languages, demands higher rates than general translation

Working hours and environment:

Working hours for in-house translators are usually 9am to 5pm. If you work as a freelance translator, your hours can be flexible but you'll need to organise them to make sure you can meet fixed deadlines.

Part-time work is possible and short-term temporary contracts are available. You may need to juggle several freelance projects at one time.

Skills required:

You will need:

- fluency in two or more languages (source and target)
- a good understanding and in-depth knowledge of language/country-specific cultures (localisation)
- excellent writing skills and command of grammar
- subject matter knowledge specific to the content you'll be translating
- attention to detail and accuracy
- time management skills as you may be working with different clients at one time
- the ability to work quickly to meet deadlines
- the ability to use initiative in a commercial context
- proficiency in the use of a range of computer packages - knowledge of translation-oriented applications and software is helpful, though not essential
- self-motivation, particularly if working as a freelancer
- enthusiasm for acquiring knowledge.

Career path and progression:

- Career development can be quite varied, depending on the sort of work/life balance you would like.
- Developing a successful career as a freelance translator requires a proactive approach to networking. This means keeping in touch with key professional bodies, translator groups and potential employers, both nationally and internationally. You should also try to attend workshops and seminars to find out more about sources of work and work providers.
- There are various factors that can affect your career prospects, such as how many commonly used modern languages you know, the number and type of clients you work for, the specialist area you work in, and the rates of pay you are able to command.
- Developing AI technology and improving machine translation software means that there are some different opportunities available to translators who now edit and refine work that has been translated initially by a machine.
- Increasing globalisation has meant there is more demand for transcreation and opportunities to combine your translation and copywriting skills to provide material appropriate for audiences in particular countries.
- With several years' experience, it may be possible to set up your own translation agency. Some translators who do this also include interpreting services as part of their business, drawing on the services of translators and interpreters to meet client needs.
- Some limited opportunities exist in academia for teaching translation skills and theory if you have completed a postgraduate degree.