**CIOL Qualifications Level 7 Diploma in Translation**

**Examiner Report January 2024**

A total of 19 language combinations were assessed, and the qualification was offered in the following source languages:

Chinese, English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish

**Language combination – English into Chinese**

Apart from the compulsory General Translation unit (01), English-Chinese candidates opted to sit the following semi-specialised options: Technology (02A), Business (02B), Science (03D), Social Science (03E) and Law (03F), with Business being the most popular semi-specialised option chosen by the candidates. The overall group pass rate was 63%.

Candidates generally demonstrated high competence in both English and Chinese in terms of reading comprehension. However, they need to improve their Chinese writing skills when expressing English ideas in idiomatic Chinese. This can be achieved by broadening their reading repertoire and consistently practising reading, interpreting texts verbally, followed by written translation and thorough proofreading.

**Language combination – English into German**

Apart from the compulsory General Translation unit (01), candidates opted to sit the following semi-specialised options: Business (02B), Social Science (03E), Law (03F) and Arts & Culture (03G), with Business being most popular semi-specialised option chosen by the candidates. The overall group pass rate was 58%.

Distinction level translations showed an excellent command of the subject matter with a flawless transfer of information and evidence of full comprehension throughout. The choice of language and lexis was fully appropriate to the spirit and intent of the source text, with sentences restructured and rewritten in the target language where necessary. The translations were of a professional standard and ready for publication.

Weaker candidates often tend to translate a text word for word, sticking too close to the structure of the source text. This can result, for example, in grammatically awkward sentences, the use of false friends and an end product that does not read like a text written by a native speaker and therefore also may obscure the meaning for the native reader.

Translators need to be experts in each of the languages they work in. Don't take your native language skills for granted. Being a professional translator requires constant study, research, and keeping abreast of the latest trends and developments in your working languages, the countries where they are spoken, as well as developments that directly affect the profession, such as new technologies, new areas of work, etc. Genuine, all-round familiarity with your working languages will give you the skills

and confidence to translate freely in a style and register appropriate to the target language and any genre of text in your chosen field.

Read as much and as widely as possible in both languages as a matter of course. This is the easiest way to learn the natural rhythm of the language, grammatical structures, syntax, collocations, idioms, etc.

Be careful. Don't neglect technical accuracy, e.g. spelling, punctuation, correct transposition of numbers, or faithfulness to the spirit of the original while searching for the best turn of phrase or idiomatic expression. If your translation needs too much editing before it's of publishable quality, it's not of a professional standard.

When choosing your semi-specialised option, make sure you are thoroughly familiar with the subject matter and terminology. You may be able to understand and translate the meaning, but if you are not familiar with the relevant terminology and jargon, the paper will not be fit for purpose.

## Language combination – French into English

Apart from the compulsory General Translation unit (01), the candidates opted to sit the following semi-specialised options: Business (02B), Literature (02C), Science (03D) and Arts & Culture (03G), with Literature and Science being the most popular semi-specialised options chosen by the candidates. The overall group pass rate was 50%.

Advice to candidates:

Make a habit of reading extensively and across a wide range of genres in both languages. This is one of the most effective ways to familiarise yourself with the language, its grammar, syntax, idiomatic expressions, and typical collocations.

Pay close attention to technical accuracy. Don't overlook details like spelling, punctuation, number formatting, or staying true to the tone and intent of the original text in your effort to craft a fluent, idiomatic translation. If your work requires significant editing before it reaches a publishable standard, it's not yet at a professional level.

When selecting your semi-specialised translation option, ensure you have a solid grasp of both the subject matter and its terminology. While you might be able to convey the general meaning, lacking familiarity with specific jargon and conventions can result in a translation that fails to meet the intended purpose.

**Language combination – German into English**

Apart from the compulsory General Translation unit (01), candidates opted to sit the following semi-specialised options: Technology (02A), Business (02B), Literature (02C), Science (03D), Social Science (03E), Law (03F) and Arts & Culture (03G), with Social Science being the most popular semi-specialised option chosen by the candidates. The overall group pass rate was 86%.

General Translation: For the most part, the candidates showed a good understanding of the source text and its underlying message, although there were a few recurring comprehension errors.

At Distinction level, translations showed an excellent command of the subject matter with a flawless transfer of information and evidence of full comprehension throughout. The choice of language and lexis was fully appropriate to the spirit and intent of the source text, with sentences restructured and rewritten in the target language where necessary. The translations were of a professional standard and ready for publication.

Weaker candidates often tended to translate a text word for word, sticking too closely to the structure of the source text. This resulted in grammatically awkward sentences, the use of false friends and an end product that did not read like a text written by a native speaker and therefore also may obscure the meaning for the native reader.

Translators need to be experts in each of the languages they work in. Don't take your native language skills for granted. Being a professional translator requires constant study, research, and keeping abreast of the latest trends and developments in your working languages, the countries where they are spoken, as well as developments that directly affect the profession, such as new technologies, new areas of work, etc. Genuine, all-round familiarity with your working languages will give you the skills and confidence to translate freely in a style and register appropriate to the target language and any genre of text in your chosen field.

Read as much and as widely as possible in both languages as a matter of course. This is the easiest way to learn the natural rhythm of the language, grammatical structures, syntax, collocations, idioms, etc.

Be careful with technical accuracy, e.g. spelling, punctuation, correct transposition of numbers, or faithfulness to the spirit of the original while searching for the best turn of phrase or idiomatic expression. If your translation needs too much editing before it's of publishable quality, it's not of a professional standard.

When choosing your semi-specialised option, make sure you are thoroughly familiar with the subject matter and terminology. You may be able to understand and translate the meaning, but if you are not familiar with the relevant terminology and jargon, the paper will not be fit for purpose.

## Language combination – Spanish into English

Apart from the compulsory General Translation unit (01), candidates opted to sit the following semi-specialised options: Technology (02A), Business (02B), Literature (02C), Science (03D), Social Science (03E), Law (03F) and Arts & Culture (03G), with Business, Literature and Social Science being most popular semi-specialised options chosen by the candidates. The overall group pass rate was 24%.

Advice to candidates:

A translator needs a broad cultural knowledge of both countries, their histories, customs and societies. This can only be achieved by reading extensively in both their native and target languages.

Keep up-to-date with current affairs in the UK and the Source Language country, particularly in the subjects of specialisation.

Build up knowledge of the relevant terminology. The only way to achieve this is by regularly reading good-quality specialised magazines in both the source and target languages.

Read the source text carefully and try to identify key phrases, hidden "traps" and complicated clauses. Never attempt to start translating without this exercise first.

Beware of false friends/cognates.
Correct collocation of words is crucial.
Make sure that the translation sounds natural in the target language.

## Small Entry Language Combinations

## Group A [from English into Arabic, French, Hungarian, Japanese, Romanian, Russian and Spanish (in total 7 language combinations)]

There were some very good translations where the candidates were able to show good knowledge of both languages and solid translation skills in transferring the information from the source into the target language (TL). There were also examples of candidates presenting the information in a natural way in the TL.

However, there were papers where candidates failed to translate the text and transfer the information adequately into the TL. In some cases, this was because candidates did not have sufficient translation skills and the ability to paraphrase and present the information appropriately. Candidates need to pay more attention to detail and ensure that their translations do not distort or change the meaning (even slightly) of the original text. Some candidates may be advised to complete a course in Translation before sitting this exam, as it is obvious that they did not have sufficient translation skills.

Some candidates may develop their target language skills and the ability to encode the information in a natural way in the TL. They need to learn how to deliver a text without any interference from the SL text.

If the candidates prepare for a specialised translation task, they need to learn more about the subject and know semi-specialised terms regularly used in the field, as well as leading organisations which operate in the field.