



## Candidate's Guide for the CTTIC Translation Exam

### 1. Examination (Duration: 3 hours)

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. Paper dictionaries and reference materials in paper are permitted, but may not be exchanged with other candidates.

**Apart from the use of a laptop computer for the computerized exam and a laptop computer or a desktop computer for the online exam, the use of any type of electronic device during the examination is STRICTLY PROHIBITED. (Electronic devices include but are not limited to electronic dictionaries, cell phones, tablets, watches and any wearable devices) Any such use will lead to the candidate's disqualification. The examination will not be marked and the fee will not be refunded.**

Exam Option 1. Handwritten: a pen and paper.

Exam Option 2. Computerized Exam: On candidate's own laptop computer using MS Word or another word processing software capable of reading Word files. Candidates write/save their translation onto a USB drive provided. Internet access and the use of any other software are strictly prohibited.

Exam Option 3. Online: Read the guide in the link below thoroughly.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZUSqV2PnpKckvQBgINpPkEQyiI8hC\\_1NwkbxU6jaO-Y/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZUSqV2PnpKckvQBgINpPkEQyiI8hC_1NwkbxU6jaO-Y/edit?usp=sharing)

### 2. Exam Texts (175-210 words)

- ONE Compulsory Text (Topics - general)
- TWO Optional Texts: Please pick only ONE. The topics in Optional 1 texts are technical/scientific/medical while those in Optional 2 texts are administrative/economic/social-science-related.

None of the three texts should require specialized terminological knowledge.

To provide context, the source of the text may be described in general terms at the bottom of the page in general terms (i.e., general interest magazine, trade journal). This is provided for the candidate's information only and

should not be translated.

Candidates are reminded that their exam papers will NOT be returned after the exam. The CTTIC exam is a tool used to assess candidates' knowledge and capabilities, not a skills development tool. Candidates are forbidden to make copies of the source text and their translations.

3. Writing Style and Usage Exams from any source language into English or French will be marked based on *Writing Tips Plus* or *Clés de la rédaction*. Please refer to the following websites:

<https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/en/writing-tips-plus/index-eng>  
<https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/fr/cles-de-la-redaction/index-fra>

Candidates whose target language is used in more than one country should strive to make their translation appropriate to an international audience and should keep in mind that markers may react differently to regional variants. If candidates choose to use a specific regional variant of the target language (e.g. Mexican Spanish), they must ensure that they are consistent in their usage.

4. Markers Markers are recruited for each language direction (e.g. French to English, English to French, English to Spanish, Spanish to English), as far as possible from different provinces. The great majority of markers are experienced certified members, accustomed to translating texts and revising and evaluating translations.

Each paper is marked by a team of two markers working independently in accordance with the instructions and marking scale established by the CTTIC Board of Examiners. **Each text is marked out of 100. The average mark over the two texts determines the candidate's final score. An average of 70% is required to pass.** If the markers disagree, the matter is referred to the Exam Coordinator. All borderline papers are automatically reviewed.

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

6. Fail Candidates who fail the exam will be advised of their mark and provided with comments sheets showing the types of errors (language/translation; major/minor errors) that resulted in their fail. Candidates' exams will not be returned to them. Candidates are not identified to markers, or vice versa, and there can be **no** discussion of problems or mistakes between candidates and markers.

## 7. Appeal

Candidates who fail the exam may appeal their examination results. An additional fee is charged. The appeal is arranged through the candidate's association. Candidates who wish to appeal may provide a letter listing the points on which they disagree with the marking, or they may simply request that their exam be marked again by a third marker. If the candidate presents an appeal letter listing the points of disagreement, the third marker will see both the letter as well as the marked exam and comments sheets from the original markers. If the candidate chooses not to provide such a letter and just requests that the exam be marked again, the third marker will mark the exam without seeing the previously marked version.

The appeal decision is final.

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

## 8. 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 work in a specialized field, try your hand at more general texts. If you are primarily a linguistic services manager or a reviser, your translation skills may be rusty and you would be well advised to refresh them.
- Try to be rested and relaxed on the day of the examination.
- Read and assimilate the source text, noting difficulties as you go.
- [For handwritten exam candidates] Practise writing with a pen. Write legibly and neatly and use the pen provided. Remember that the markers have to review many papers and must work from scans. Remember anything you have written on the draft page will not be available to the marker.
- Be careful of omissions. The title is often missed, or sometimes a sentence or even an entire paragraph is left out. Translate everything right to the last word.
- Avoid additions. Points are taken off for information not contained in the source text.
- Check your translation very carefully. In fact, you should save at least 15 minutes for this final review.
- Remember that the exam includes three texts, one compulsory text and two optional texts from which you must select one. Make sure that you correctly identify the compulsory text and translate it. Choose which of the

# DON'T

two optional texts that you would be most comfortable translating.

The choice is yours.

- 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 that you want the markers to ignore in the hand-written exam. **Think of your text as work that you would send to a client.**
- 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.
- 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.
- DON'T try to translate more than two texts. You will not have time to translate them all properly and will not get any extra marks for doing so.

## 9. Exam Conditions

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

- Fair 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 CTTIC Board of Examiners;
- Dual marking, or triple marking in the event of an appeal.

## 10. Disclaimer

Before writing the examination, all candidates are required to sign a disclaimer form acknowledging that all exam papers (source text and target text) become the property of CTTIC and will not be returned to candidates under any circumstances.