



CTTIC STANDARD CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION IN TRANSLATION
CANDIDATE'S GUIDE
(Version: Nov 2024)

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 additional information about procedures.

1. EXAMINATION

- This exam is 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.
- Since this is an **open-book exam**, you are allowed to use **hard copies** of reference materials including dictionaries, glossaries, notes, magazines, newspapers, style guides, and other similar resources.
- No materials can be shared or 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, smart phones, pagers, Blackberries®, iPods®, iPads®, tablets, and laptop computers – except for computerized exams. Any such use will lead to the candidate's disqualification; the examination will not be marked, and the fee will not be refunded.

2. CONTENTS

- The texts selected for the exam will test candidates' ability to analyze and comprehend, as well as their mastery of the target language. Sample texts from previous years are usually available from the candidate's provincial or territorial association.
- The CTTIC Certification Examination in Translation has a duration of **three hours**.

- Each candidate must translate **two** texts of about 200 words each. This level of output is typically reached after several years' practical experience.
- In order to test candidates' abilities on different types of text material, as well as to give them a degree of choice in the material to translate, candidates receive **three source texts** for each language combination.
- **One** of these texts is **compulsory** (general in nature), while the other **two** are **optional** (one mildly technical/scientific/medical and the other somewhat administrative/economic/social sciences). None of the three texts should require specialized terminological knowledge.
- For optional texts, candidates selected to translate one or the other, but **not both**.
- The source and date of the document are sometimes provided for information only (e.g. *L'Actualité*, septembre 2001). You may choose to include it at the end of your translation; however, no points will be deducted if you do not.

Disclaimer: Before writing the examination, all candidates are required to sign a disclaimer form acknowledging that all examination papers (source and target texts) 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 provincial or territorial association.

3. REFERENCE

Exams from any source language into English or French will be marked based on the language tools that are currently provided and updated by the **Language Portal of Canada**:

Writing Tips Plus: <https://www.noslangues-ourlangues.gc.ca/en/writing-tips-plus/index-eng>

Clés de la redaction: <https://www.noslangues-ourlangues.gc.ca/fr/cles-de-la-redaction/index-fra>

(Note: These are the updated versions of *The Canadian Style* and *Le guide du rédacteur*.)

4. MARKING PROCESS

- Markers are recruited for each language combination from various provinces and sometimes even from other countries, as necessary.
- All markers are experienced certified members, accustomed to translating, revising, and evaluating translation work. They have all received training in exam marking and been tested or asked to produce additional credentials before being accepted as markers.
- Each exam is marked by a team of two markers who initially mark independently in accordance with the instructions and marking scale established by the CTTIC Board of Examiners.
- Each text is marked out of 100 and the **average score** over two texts determines the candidate's final mark.

- In order to pass their certification exam, candidates **must fulfill two conditions**:
 - (i) Score **at least 60% on each text**, according to at least **one** of the markers.
 - (ii) Attain an overall **average mark of 70%** across both texts.
- No credit or marks will be awarded for translating the third text.
- If the markers disagree over the exam result, the matter is referred to the exam coordinator, who will ask the markers to discuss the discrepancy and review their marking accordingly. If the two markers cannot come to an agreement and a large discrepancy persists following the discussion, the matter will be referred to a third marker.
- All borderline results and instances where one marker decides it is a pass and the other a fail are automatically reviewed.

5. MARKING SCALE

Errors are classified into two categories:

- **Translation Errors (Comprehension):** Failure to accurately convey the meaning of the original text. Points are deducted based on the severity of the error: major (T10), medium (T5), and minor (T3).
- **Language Errors (Expression):** Violations of grammatical rules or improper usage in the target language. Points are deducted according to severity: major (L10), medium (L5), and minor (L3 and L1).

6. FAIL RESULT

A candidate who fails will be informed of their score and provided with a characterization sheet detailing the types of errors (language/translation, major/medium/minor) that led to their failure. Candidates' exams will not be returned. However, to help candidates decide whether or not to appeal, they may request to **view** their exam paper at a location pre-determined by their provincial or territorial association. Candidates remain anonymous to markers, and **no** discussions regarding issues or errors will be allowed between candidates and markers.

7. APPEALS

Candidates who fail may appeal their examination results. An additional fee is charged, which will be refunded by CTTIC only if the appeal is successful. Appeals are arranged through the candidate's association. Appealing candidates have two options:

1. **Appeal with a Letter:** Candidates may provide a letter outlining the issues they disagree with regarding the marking. In this case, the third marker will review the candidate's letter along with the comments and markings from the original markers. The third marker will then address the specific issues raised by the candidate, compare the letter with their own assessment, and write comments and explanations for any identified issues.

2. **Appeal without a Letter:** If the candidate chooses not to provide a letter, the third marker will still review the exam by comparing their marking with the comments and markings provided by the other two markers in their Marking Sheets. The third marker will complete their assessment based on this comparison and will document their comments and explanations accordingly.

Important Note Regarding Appeals: Whether or not the appealing candidate submits a letter, the appeal marker will consider **all** errors they can identify in the text and will not be under any obligation to limit their corrections to the errors identified by the previous markers or the errors highlighted in the letter.

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 candidate has scored **at least 60% on each text**, according to at least **one** of the markers
- The candidate's original average marks are close to the **pass mark of 70%**.

8. 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, available in both formats (in-person and online).
- **Complete anonymity** to ensure candidates' identities remain undisclosed throughout the evaluation process.
- **Impartial marking**, as all exams are carefully and consistently marked based on the scale of errors established by the CTTIC Board of Examiners.
- **Two independent markers** assigned to each exam, with a third marker involved in the event of an appeal.
- **New source texts for every round of exams**, to ensure source texts remain confidential and that they are new to all candidates.

9. DOs & DON'Ts FOR PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES

DOs:

- **Prepare yourself:** Practice translating under exam conditions, within time limits, and avoid preparing a draft that may take up valuable time to copy later. If you usually work on a computer, practice writing by hand unless you plan to take the exam on a computer. If you specialize in a specific field, practice with more general texts. If your primary role is as a linguistic services manager or reviser, refresh your translation skills if they have become rusty.
- **Be rested and relaxed** on the day of the examination.
- **Read and fully understand the source text**, taking note of any difficulties as you progress.

- **Write legibly and neatly**, using the pen provided. Remember that markers review numerous papers and must work from photocopies/scans. Note that anything written on the left-hand page (draft page) will not be available to the marker.
- **Manage your time properly** to ensure you have time for review.
- **Be mindful of omissions:** Candidates often overlook titles, sentences, or even entire paragraphs. Make sure to translate everything right to the last word.
- **Check your translation thoroughly:** Save at least 15 minutes for a final review.
- **Remember that the exam includes three texts:** one compulsory and two optional texts from which you must select one. Ensure you correctly identify and translate the compulsory text.
- **Choose the optional text** that you feel most comfortable translating. The choice is yours, and the marking criteria remain the same.

Important Note: If you are taking the exam online, please **ensure that your computer keyboard** is set to the language you will be translating into.

🚫 **DON'Ts:**

- **Don't spend excessive time** consulting dictionaries or other references.
- **Don't offer a choice of terms or phrases in brackets:** Cross out anything you do not want the markers to consider in a handwritten exam. Treat your text as if it were work being delivered to a client.
- **Don't over-adapt the texts:** While demonstrating paraphrasing skills, you risk altering the tone and meaning, which may lead to the translation not being considered faithful.
- **Don't leave before the time is up:** Even if your first instinct is correct, any remaining time should be used for rereading, revising, and refining your work.
- **Don't attempt to translate more than two texts:** You won't have enough time to translate all of them properly, and you won't receive extra marks for doing so.

NOTE: If you have any questions about this process or what you need to do to prepare, please contact the **examination coordinator** for your association.

If you have any general feedback regarding the CTTIC exam, either now or after you have taken it, please send your comments to the CTTIC Board of Examiners at chair@cttic.org. We would love to hear from you!

Thank you and good luck! 😊