

IoL EDUCATIONAL TRUST

DIPLOMA IN PUBLIC SERVICE INTERPRETING

CHIEF MODERATOR'S REPORT 2010



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CHIEF MODERATOR'S REPORT 2009/10

1 Introduction and overview of the examination

1.1 *The function of the DPSI*

The DPSI examination, set and administered by the IoL Educational Trust (IoLET), fulfils an important public function. Unlike many of its European neighbours, the United Kingdom does not require translators and interpreters to pass a state authorised examination before they can practise, but the IoLET diplomas have become recognised nationally as vocational qualifications which indicate competence to fulfil the minimum translating and interpreting requirements which arise increasingly frequently in many spheres of the public and social life of the community. The DPSI is the key to registration on the National Register of Public Service Interpreters, an invaluable source for identifying individuals suitably qualified to perform public service interpreting tasks. This means that to pass the examination, candidates should demonstrate communicative, professional and interpreting competence in English and in one other language. The content of the source language text should be conveyed in the translation without errors and omissions which might impede understanding and prevent successful communication.

The DPSI has been accredited by Ofqual (Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator) and entered onto the Qualifications and Credit Framework at Level 6 (BA – degree level).

1.2 *Historical overview of the number of DPSI candidates*

The number of candidates who entered for the examination for the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting in June 2010 was 998 (including resits of individual tasks), 69 candidates more than in 2009, when the number was 929. This is an increase of 6.9% from 2009. The increase in candidate numbers may be due to the examination having become modular from June 2010 i.e. a candidate can sit any part or parts of the examination, and to attain the DPSI qualification all units need to be passed within 5 years of the first attempt. This change is also reflected in the number of Letters of Credit awarded this year.

Table 1 shows the figures for the current year and for the previous ten years.

Year of examination	Number of candidates
2010	998
2009	929
2008	995
2007	1091
2006	1088
2005	1108
2004	1138
2003	1131
2002	973
2001	987
2000	733

Table 1: DPSI Examination: candidate numbers 2000-2010

1.3 Profile of candidates and options (options will be called pathways from 2011)

Table 2 provides an overview of the number of candidates by option. With the changes to the examination the name 'option' will be replaced with the name 'pathway'. Data are given for the current and previous year and include both full and part entries.

OPTIONS	2009		2010		Comparison 2009 and 2010
	Number	%	Number	%	%
English Law	615	66.2%	696	69.8%	+8.0%
Scottish Law	68	7.3%	62	6.2%	-8.8%
Health	130	14.0%	112	11.2%	-14.6%
Local Government	116	12.5%	128	12.8%	+9.5%
TOTAL	929	100%	998	100%	

Table 2: DPSI Examination: Candidate numbers per option 2009 and 2010

1.3.1 General trends

The overall number of candidates taking the Law options/pathways was 758 this year, up 75 from 683 in 2009. The number of candidates taking the Scottish Law option was 62, down from 68 last year. The number of candidates taking the Health option has gone down from 130 in 2009 to 112 this year. The number of candidates taking the Local Government option has gone up this year from 116 to 128, but the percentage of all candidates taking the option has stayed more or less the same.

1.3.2 English Law and Scottish Law

The English Law option/pathway remains the most popular option with 69.8% of the candidates taking it. This is an increase of 8.0% from last year. The Scottish Law option decreased by 8.8%, the overall percentage of the candidates taking the law options was 76.0%, which is 2.5% higher than the previous year.

1.3.3 Health and Local Government

The Health option was taken by fewer candidates this year than the Local Government option. There was a slight drop in the number of candidates taking the Health option, down from 130 in 2009 to 112 in 2010, a decrease of 14.6%. There was an increase of 9.5% in the percentage of candidates taking Local Government option.

1.4 Profile of languages

The 45 language manifestations offered for examination in June 2010 are listed in Table 3.

Arabic (MSA)	Gujarati	Pashto	Tamil
Bengali	Hindi	Polish	Thai
Bengali/Sylheti oral	Hungarian	Portuguese	Tigrinya
Bulgarian	Italian	(Brazilian)	Turkish
Chinese/Cantonese	Jamaican	Portuguese	Ukrainian
Cantonese/simplified	Japanese	(European)	Urdu
script	Kurdish (Sorani)	Romanian	Urdu / Mirpuri
Croatian	Latvian	Russian	Vietnamese
Czech	Lithuanian	Serbian(in Cyrillic	
Dari	Mandarin(simple)	script)	
Farsi	Mandarin/trad.	Slovak	
French	script	Somali	
German	Panjabi (Indian)	Spanish	
Greek	Panjabi	Swahili	
	(Pakistani)		

Table 3: Language manifestations offered for examination in June 2010

1.4.1 Language issues

There were no major issues with language variants in the exam materials. There were some complaints about language variants used by interlocutors in the role plays. All language issues raised are being addressed and were taken account of at the marking stage when necessary.

1.4.2 Cultural/conceptual issues

There were no problems with cultural and conceptual issues this year.

1.5 Examination results for 2009/10

The number of candidates who enrolled for the DPSI examination in the session 2009-2010 was 1,027, of these candidates 998 took the exam or parts of the exam; 29 were absent. The largest cohort was for Polish with 236 candidates. The next largest groups were Urdu (all variants) 108, Russian 75, Arabic MSA 68, Mandarin (both variants) 54, Spanish 47 and French 46 candidates.

Table 4 shows the profile of grades achieved by candidates over the last ten years:

Examination results 2000-2010						
	Distinction	Merit ¹	Pass	LC	Fail	Total Pass, Merit and Distinctions
09/10	27.2%			64.3%	5.6%	<i>See below</i>
08/09	0.4%	2.8%	25.4%	44.8%	26.5%	28.6%
07/08	0.2%	2.5%	23.0%	47.8%	26.4%	25.7%
06/07	0.3%	3.9%	28.3%	43.4%	24.0%	32.5%
05/06	0.1%	4.3%	31.3%	41.5%	22.6%	35.7%
04/05	0.3%	4%	32.9%	44.7%	18.1%	37.2%
03/04	0.4%	3.3%	32%	46.8%	17.5%	35.7%
02/03	1%	5%	33%	47%	14%	39%
01/02	0.8%	6.9%	39.3%	39.7%	13.3%	47.0%
00/01	0.3%	8.1%	42.7%	44.3%	8.3%	51.1%

Table 4: DPSI Examination: Profile of grades achieved 2000-2010 (figures available for 2010 refer to overall Fails, Passes (including Merits and Distinctions) and Letters of Credit.; 2.8% of candidates were absent.

Number of Letters of Credit in 2010 was 642 (64.3%). Total number of Fail grades was 56 (5.6%) and the total number of full passes was 271 (27.2%). The large percentage rise of nearly 20% in the percentage of Letters of Credit is due to the new unitised format of the examination. Candidates can take any task/(now called unit) and to attain the DPSI they need to successfully complete all units within 5 years of the first attempt.

Only one overall Distinction (Spanish/English Law), one overall Merit, also Spanish/English Law. A large number of candidates achieved a combination of Distinctions and Merits.

When candidates have successfully completed all the tasks, they are awarded a Diploma. Their overall result is a Pass. We indicate performance in individual tasks to show candidates where their strengths and weaknesses are which helps inform their continuing professional development (CPD) programme.

The Diploma in Public Service Interpreting remains a robust professional examination measuring fitness to practice. Achieving a Distinction shows exceptional skill. Merit awards are also awarded very sparingly.

It is clear from the number of Fails and the comments from the examiners' reports that too many candidates are insufficiently prepared for the examination, but continue to register for the examination and subsequently fail. Centres and those responsible for teaching preparation courses for the examination should be reminded to recommend that candidates in need of further practice and lacking requisite skills should not be entered for the examination.

¹ Please note that the 'Merit' grade was introduced in 2001.

2 Matters arising from DPSI report 2009

The majority of written markers and tape samplers are now providing their comments electronically, this makes moderation much quicker than reading hand-written comments. We would like to thank all written markers and tape samplers for doing this and we hope that the remaining few will do so for the next exam round.

Matters arising from the 2009 report:

Centres and those responsible for teaching preparation courses for the examination should be reminded to recommend that candidates in need of further practice and lacking the requisite skills should not be entered for the examination.

I realise of course that anyone is free to register for the DPSI exam, so this is not fully in the control of the Centres, but the Assessors' reports suggest that a good proportion of candidates are really not ready to take this exam and that they invest both time and money with no result.

3 Moderating the DPSI exam

3.1. Introduction

The process of moderation has two phases:

- i) moderating examination papers and
- ii) moderating the examination

This corresponds to the dual purpose of the moderation process

- i) to ensure, so far as possible, that all candidates sit the "same" exam and
- ii) to ensure, so far as possible, that all candidates are judged fairly on their performance in the exam

The overriding intention is to ensure that anyone who holds the DPSI qualification is able to demonstrate a particular level of interpreting and translating competence: they must interpret and translate accurately; they must produce spoken and written discourse that conforms to the conventions of the relevant genre; and they must produce spoken and written discourse that is fit for purpose.

In the case of both phases, moderation is one of the last stages in the process of examination management, which means that:

- i) a large amount of work precedes moderation and
- ii) the deadline for completion of moderation is tight

3.2. Setting the papers

The IoLET employs a team of experts to set the papers in the three options in Law (English and Scottish), Health and Local Government. The papers are set in English and the 'other language' parts of the papers derive from the original English text.

In the case of task 2A, Sight Translation into English, and task 3A, Written Translation into English, however, the setters produce a skeleton text only. This is used by speakers of the other languages to set an original text for translation into English, though the skeleton ensures that the original texts in each of the languages correspond closely to each other in terms of content and lexical complexity. Each other language text is checked by a second native speaker for accuracy, register and style, and the setters produce a back translation which shows how the text is composed in the other language.

All tasks are set for the June examination round. Tasks 3A and 3B only are set for the Autumn resits. The resits took place in November 2009. The resits were moderated in January 2010.

3.3. Moderating the papers

The papers are moderated by the Examination Manager, a 'Scrutineer' (an expert practitioner in the field) for the respective option, and the Chief Moderator to ensure that the tasks are of the right length, and that the content is suitable, factually correct and not likely to advantage some candidates over others. The syntactic complexity of papers and the incidence in them of specialist and idiomatic terminology and expressions are compared.

The topics are checked across all tasks and previous years' papers to make sure there are no topic overlaps or repeats of previously used topics.

The moderating of the papers again this year was quite demanding because we had to produce three versions of the Law papers, so that the exam could be taken on one of three days. Two versions of health papers were also produced for the examination round 2010, but in the end only one was needed.

3.4. Moderating the examination

Moderating the examination itself involves looking at examiners' reports, looking at complaints and checking that appropriate measures have been taken to ensure that Reasonable Adjustments candidates have had their special needs catered for.

The major part of the process, however, is the moderation of the second marked written examination scripts and of sampled tape recordings of the oral examination. Each year, a random sample of written examination scripts are picked out for marking by a second examiner and a minimum of two oral examinations per examination team are selected for tape sampling by an English and an Other Language tape sampler. This allows the team to check for consistency of marking between examiners and to check examiner performance in terms of how well comments and examples support the grades awarded. Comments about interlocutor performance are also considered at this stage.

If checking the double marking and sampled tapes reveals inconsistent grading (for example that one marker is particularly lenient or strict in his or her marking), or if a tape sampler's comments suggest irregularities in the conduct of the examination, the performance of a full cohort or a subgroup of candidates may be checked. In cases where the potential problem requires language expertise which is not available internally, a third opinion may be sought.

In the 2010 session, the moderation process took fifteen and a half days including the Awards Meeting. Moderation is done in August. It was an enjoyable process, because markers and samplers are becoming increasingly skilled at writing comments on scripts and reports and at illustrating their comments with clear, apposite examples.

The final stage of the moderating process involves looking at borderline papers for final assessment.

I have moderated both the spoken and the written tasks and commented on the performance of all examiners. As in past years, the comments will be included in the feedback provided to examiners by the IoLET. We are doing our best to give examiners as much feedback as possible.

The moderating process in some sense culminates in, though it does not end with, the Awards Meeting. This year, the Awards Meeting took place on Tuesday 24th August 2010 and was attended by examiners, members of the IoL Educational Trust and the Chief Moderator. The minutes of the meeting are sent to all markers. The Awards meeting was very fruitful and productive.

Feedback received from oral examiners, written markers and tape samplers seems to indicate that we have achieved a good balance of topics and the right level of difficulty in the papers we set for this exam round.

Moderation was completed without any major problems this year. Almost all examiners kept to the deadlines given for returning the marking.

3.5 Administration

As ever, IoLET staff have been extremely helpful, even-tempered and good-humoured and made every effort to provide all necessary information in record time.

4 Managing the examinations

The management of the examinations was highly successful for 2009-2010 with relatively few problems. The Institute would like to see 100% candidate satisfaction, which is not yet achieved. However, the IoLET is to be congratulated on the continuing improvement achieved year on year and on its strenuous efforts to ensure that no candidate is disadvantaged by any avoidable problems. An Assessor Report Summary covering Candidates' Performance, Examination Material, Centres, Assessors and Enquiries & Administration was compiled by Daryl Lucas, Examiner Manager.

Recommendation: Examiners should seek to ensure that the voices of all participants are clearly audible on the tapes.

Oral examiners should be reminded in training that it is their responsibility to take action, when the speed of delivery is too fast or too slow.

Example of the right speed of delivery (training DVD) to be included in training and guidelines to be placed on the DPSI website. Appropriate speed of delivery also to be emphasised in interlocutor training.

5 Conclusion

Given the complexity of the task of examining nearly a thousand candidates in 45 language manifestations in Centres spread across the country with numerous paper setters and examiners, I remain very impressed with the dedication shown by both IoLET staff and Centre staff and with the efficiency with which the process is managed. I would like especially to thank Ulrike Heinze and her team for their help throughout the year and Hilary Maxwell-Hyslop for her support. I would also like to extend my thanks to Daryl Lucas and his team for excellent organisation of running the oral examinations. I would like to thank all the setters, markers, tape samplers and interlocutors and all the IoL staff involved in the DPSI for their contribution in making the DSPI a successful examination.

Chief Moderator
September 2010

6 Appendix 1: Advice to Centres

6.1 Managing the examinations

We would like to thank most sincerely the DPSI Centres who ensure the smooth running of the DPSI examinations and especially those Centres whose performance on this score has improved vastly over last year. This year logistical problems were reduced significantly.

6.2 Examiners' Recommendations to Centres

Every year, examiners are asked by the IoLET to provide recommendations to Centres on how candidates may be helped to perform better in the DPSI examination. Although not all candidates taking the examination have necessarily followed any of the associated courses, the examiners would like to provide the following advice to Centres on how they can support their students in their preparations for the DPSI examination.

1. Admissions policies

Centres should check that DPSI candidates' background is likely to provide sufficient basis for them to be able to benefit from a programme of study preparatory to the DPSI examination. They should, for example, have a good mastery of relevant orthography, and they should be competent in both English and their other language, preferably to first year honours degree standard.

2. Programmes of study

Programmes of study should prepare candidates fully for the tasks facing them by:

- covering all tasks tested in the DPSI examination including explaining the new modular format of the examination. See IoL website for details on www.iol.org.uk.
- covering English/Scottish law/local government/health institutions and systems in the UK and encouraging candidates to study the equivalents in the context of the other language. Encourage students to find and make use of web resources (legal proceedings, different types of courts including magistrate's courts etc.)
- emphasising the importance of knowing the format of the examination thoroughly as well as the level of language expected in the exam by referring the candidates to the DPSI Handbook and IoLET website (www.iol.org.uk). A revised version (August 2010) of the Handbook is available from October 2010.
- emphasising the importance of studying the other language as well as English. If lessons in the other language are not possible, encourage candidates to study with others taking the same language
- providing language teaching geared towards the examination but including spelling, grammar and orthography
- encouraging pooling useful websites
- emphasising the importance of case systems for certain languages
- emphasising the importance of consistent, correct use of diacritics for certain languages
- emphasising the difference between formal and informal styles and different

registers

- reminding candidates NOT to provide alternative translations, the most suitable term should be chosen by the candidate
- providing practice in the judicious use of dictionaries and other resources such as corpora, data bases, and original documents for emulation and term extraction and teaching candidates how to cross-reference monolingual and bilingual resources in order to find the correct term or word.
- providing plenty of translating and interpreting practice, critical marking, and exposure to past examination papers (see also Appendices 2a & 2b for Recommendations to Candidates)
- emphasising the importance of understanding the source text properly before beginning to translate
- emphasising the importance of specialist terminology and helping candidates to build up term banks including names of UK institutions
- emphasising the importance of reading and writing formal and informal letters and other documents in the chosen option both in English and the other language
- impressing on candidates the need to write clearly and legibly
- impressing on candidates the need to check through their written scripts for errors and faulty logic
- emphasising the importance of the accuracy of the translation i.e. can the target audience act appropriately based on the translation
- impressing on candidates the importance of translation techniques and conventions including headings, paragraphs etc.
- drawing candidates' attention to the need to use a register appropriate to the task at hand
- encouraging candidates to read as much as possible both in English and in their other language in general and in the chosen topic area in particular
- encouraging candidates to practise timed translations and to practise time management in simulated timed exam-like conditions and reading through the translation thoroughly before submitting it
- emphasising to candidates the need to keep up to date with current affairs and topical issues in their field and by alerting them to the availability of online newspapers for a number of languages (see language specific advice available on IoL website, DPSI/written markers' reports)
- stressing the need for understanding of the specialist subject area (Law; Health or Local Government)
- teaching the conventions of letter writing in both languages
- emphasising the importance of practice to gain confidence
- encouraging candidates to visit open court hearings, hospitals, local authorities and other suitable institutions to observe real life public service interpreting situations, if at all possible, this would enable them to place themselves in the role of the interpreter. If visits are not possible, encourage candidates to read court transcripts from law press or the internet, same with local government (local council meetings, local press, information leaflets) and health issues (NHS websites, government health advice etc.).
- arranging mock examinations if at all possible

6.3 Skills and knowledge requirements

In order to pass the DPSI examination candidates must have the following skills and knowledge in English as well as their other language:

- ◆ a sound command of the structures in both languages, spoken & written, in particular grammar and syntax (specifically the use of tenses), word order, punctuation, stress and intonation, spelling of words and standard and specialist vocabulary
- ◆ the ability to select conjunctions that signal the intended relationship between text parts; selecting the wrong conjunction can alter the meaning of the text completely and fatally
- ◆ the ability to convey the meaning expressed in one language into the other in a coherent manner and avoiding word-for-word rendition
- ◆ conventions for spoken and written language, including the use of formal and informal registers in both languages, salutations and leave-taking formulas in letters
- ◆ a well-developed lexicon of terminology required for the specialist options
- ◆ background knowledge of the specialist option both in the UK and in the country/countries where the other language is spoken
- ◆ time management skills

Other knowledge aspects:

- ◆ knowledge of interpreting techniques and conventions
- ◆ knowledge of translation techniques and conventions
- ◆ the ability to manage the interpreting situation and to take action if the interlocutors make it difficult or impossible for the candidate to interpret effectively
- ◆ appropriate use of dictionaries
- ◆ examination practice, especially in whispered interpreting, time management and checking written work
- ◆ the use of footnotes for annotations and explanations when terms are introduced for which no direct equivalent exists in the target language
- ◆ knowledge of the format and marking criteria of the DPSI examination

Appendix 2a. Recommendations to Candidates by examiners and written markers regarding the 2010 examination papers

General

'Candidates need commitment, diligence and discipline'

'Lack of preparation shows'

'When entering the DPSI, candidates should bear in mind that this is a professional examination at degree level and ensure that they have strong linguistic skills.'

'It would be beneficial to work with past papers'

'Preparing for the examinations candidates would benefit from checking each others' translations and maybe discussing ways of improving the style, i.e. how to make translation flow more naturally'.

'The exam aims to test candidates' potential and tries to find out how fast they can think on their feet; and how creative and resourceful they are'.

'Pay attention to detail'

'Pay attention to accuracy. In the local government task 3B many candidates read "county" as "country"'

'Use your common sense at all times'.

'Although it is good to focus on relevant subject matter when preparing for the exams, for overall improvement of language skills a wider area of subjects is essential. It also makes language acquisition more fun! '

'Always practise writing in both languages.'

'Love your native language and learn its grammar and punctuation rules. '

'The courts are very good at providing a guided tour and take you into an empty court and explain where everyone sits and how the system works. Your tutor might be able to arrange such a visit in advance for the whole class. It will be a really good learning experience.'

'If your language is developing or changing fast you must keep up to date with the developments in your language'

'Parallel translations of court hearings and other legal texts are widely available on the internet'.

'Candidates should prepare for the exam by studying grammar. It is very important to read the text first before starting the translation. It is essential to re-read the translation, to see if it makes sense in the context of the situation being described. Sometimes

fundamental errors could be avoided with a little common sense'

'www.legalweek.com offers specialist vocabulary in English, with news and legal briefing section'.

Use of dictionaries

'A word of warning: a dictionary should be the last resort and not the first port of call. If a candidate tends to consult the dictionary quite frequently it may show that his/her confidence in the language is not sufficient.'

'In some cases, unthinking dictionary use led to inappropriate vocabulary being chosen.'

'Candidates should also be encouraged not to pick the first option suggested in the dictionary when they do not know how to translate a word –it is crucial to fully familiarise themselves with specialist terminology because many terms, especially in law, may carry several meanings and not one option is suitable for all contexts.'

At the start of a written task

'Always assume that your target readers have no knowledge of English.'

'Bear in mind that texts produced in the target language need to meet the requirements of the target language audience who are unfamiliar with the structure of the source language.'

'Read the whole text before you start to translate, check rough copies and make sure that the translation makes sense'

'Before you start any translation, read the whole text to get an idea and mark any strange words or terms which you don't know; then try to find the most suitable translation for the context, using more than one dictionary if necessary, as many words have more than one meaning and that can make a big difference to the translation. For example the word "nut" (Health option task 3B): some candidates looked up the word "nut" in the dictionary and found it translated as "walnut", while in fact it meant the whole group of nuts (hazelnuts, walnuts, almonds, peanuts, cashew nuts and brazil nuts).'

'A rigid adherence to the original can make the text a difficult read: rigorousness has to be coupled with creativity and flexibility in order to produce a good flowing text.'

At the end of a written task

'Leave some time to check your work at the end of the exam.'

'Check number of bullet points, paragraphs, headings, underlinings etc.'

'It might be a good idea not to spend too much time on the rough copy and rewriting the

final version. In one instance, due to the time pressure, the final part of the translation was not transferred to the final copy which resulted in losing points.'

'It is wise to read one's own translation work without looking at the English text and see if one can understand it in the same way.'

'Another point to bear in mind: it is critically more important to get the meaning right of the whole sentence and consequently of the whole passage than to attempt to ensure that each word of the source text has been included in the translation. Please do read your translation once or even twice in totality and see how it feels. If it does not convey meaning to you easily and coherently then it will be much harder to understand by a person who has not gone through your thought process!'

'Make sure you have translated the whole text.'

Interpreting techniques

'Concentrate on interpreting techniques and accumulate specialised terminology. Learn professional jargon correctly. Knowing the topic role-plays a few weeks in advance provides candidates with a golden opportunity to prepare for the examination.'

'Exams can be stressful but so can court appearances and interpreting assignments. Control of the situation is therefore vital. Develop coping techniques that will help ensure good quality of work whatever the circumstances.'

'Pro-actively seek exposure to a range of situations you are likely to come across as an interpreter as well as situations that improve general knowledge and understanding of the environment people live and work in.'

Theory of translation

'Some candidates showed a lack of experience and adequate practice in written translation'

'Some candidates stuck too rigidly to the original text'

'Translation is not a mere substitution of *words* but transference of *sense*.'

'Some useful sources for translation studies: Bassnett, S (1996): Translation Studies London Routledge; Newmark, P.P. (1988): A textbook for Translation Programme Press; Samuelsson-Brown, G (1995): A Practical Guide for Translators.'

Translating names of government institutions and terminology

'Keep the English acronyms'

'Weaknesses among some of the candidates were with the appropriate translation of certain legal and even non-legal terminology such as "conduct", "regulated", "grievance", "assault", "extenuating circumstances", "Crown Prosecution Service", "sued", "court of law", "to lodge a complaint", "the Independent Police Complaints Commission", "Citizens

Advice Bureau”, “criminal damage”, “compensation” and “locate”, “preserve” and “individual” were also mistranslated. In a few cases “breach” has been translated as “branch”. ‘

‘Candidates need to learn specialist vocabulary and bear in mind that there is not always an equivalent for organisations, courts, job titles, court or police procedures, etc. They need to read legal documents in both languages to get an idea of the type of vocabulary and wording used.’

‘Law option: Candidates are advised to bear their target audience in mind when translating. In this case, the audience of their translations is Italian nationals living in England. Therefore, names of organisations, institutions, laws, etc. are only in English and need to be left in English and explained in Italian.’

‘On the subject of institutional names, it should be mentioned that where the same institution is known internationally by different acronyms e.g UN and ONU for the United Nations, then a translation of the acronym is mandatory. When the acronym is specific to institutions of the source language (which is the case in this text) it is common practice to transfer it *verbatim* and add an explanatory note to this effect. Fortunately many candidates were aware of this practice, and dealt with the acronyms in the source text correctly; however, others made the mistake of translating them, providing the intended reader with an invented and confusing acronym which does not correspond to any institution at all.’

‘I think it is very important to emphasise that candidates would fare better if they always included the original English names of institutions and organisations in parentheses because they get lost in translation and any client would have problems with identifying them.

‘One of the main problems was the translation of proper nouns and terms, specifically Police and Criminal Evidence Act, Independent Police Complaints Commission, Citizens Advice Bureau and Crown Prosecution Service. Quite a few candidates translated them but did not leave the original English terms.

Therefore, writing “Legge 1984 sulla polizia e sulle prove criminali” without the actual name in English is not going to be of great help to an Italian reader. The best solution would have been to have left the English terms – possibly in italics (underlined in a handwritten text) - with their translations in brackets next to them, i.e., *Police and Criminal Evidence Act* (Legge in materia di...). ‘

Health Option

‘Candidates need to know how to handle medical brand names’

‘Candidates need to be able to cope with the names of medical devices’

Layout of the text

‘The layout of the text should be preserved because that also serves as creating focus, and by reorganising the paragraphs, the focus is shifted.’

‘The paragraphs conventions were not always followed, creating a completely different

paragraph structure, thus shifting the focus.'

'Remember to translate the heading'

Practical advice for written tasks

'Hand-writing must be legible and any corrections marked clearly'

'Cross mistakes with a line, rather than using Tippex'

'Despite reminding candidates every year about the need to read instructions there were still some this year who did not observe instruction 3 (writing on alternate lines), who did not leave enough margin for the examiner to put their marks or whose presentation was unprofessional. The number of corrections presented problems with legibility and consequently with comprehension.'

'Remind candidates not to make any footnotes or other notes directed to examiners'

'Alternative translations should not be offered. Candidates should not give the reader a pair of bracketed alternatives from which to choose.'

If English is not your first language

'Candidates should check the metaphorical meaning of stock phrases and idiomatic expressions, particularly when they are between inverted commas in the text. They are frequent in English and good dictionaries normally include them.'

'Make sure you understand the meaning of idiomatic expressions'

'Learning colloquialisms is also very important, because literal translations can lead the candidates to a wrong translation. Students should be encouraged to read as much as possible and pay attention to such phrases, also listen to colloquialisms used in spoken English.'

'To make a good impression, a translation has to be coherent, literate, accurate and well presented.'

'Candidates should look at language specific advice from the English written marker's report on task 3A on the website.'

'Pay attention to the use of prepositions in English'

'Omission, i.e. no article at all. e.g. "he stole few of my staff", instead of "a few ", which of course gives a different meaning. (Should be "he stole a few of my staff")

'Using the definite article instead of the indefinite, e.g. "the other businessman in town" which would puzzle the reader, giving the impression that this must be a very small town if there were only two businessmen in it.'

'Using the indefinite article with an uncountable noun, e.g. "an advice" (should be "advice")

'Pay attention to the use of upper case and lower case'

'Pay attention to punctuation especially in letter openings. Exclamation mark is not used in English'

'Pay attention to conventions of written English'

'Be aware of the so called 'false friends'.'

'Letter conventions: candidates should not carry over into English the literal translation of the O/L letter openings and closures, e.g. Arabic "After greeting", or Bengali "Your obedient" as a closing phrase; "Dear respected members" (Farsi), "I remain, Dear Sir or Madam" (French), "Impatiently awaiting your reply" (Portuguese).'

'The main challenge of the text (Local government option) involved getting the right balance of style, as a certain degree of indignant sarcasm was required. It was also difficult sometimes to get the right degree of idiomatic, up to date language, e.g.: "day labourer swindler" (= rogue trader); "truancy" (absenteeism); "to snake on people's telephone bills"; "confidentiality (= privacy); "extra hours benefit fraud" (= false overtime claims); "interdict" (= prevent).'

'The commonest grammatical error in this option was an inability to form direct and indirect questions correctly. In spite of the idiomatic challenges, many candidates managed to produce good translations.'

'Since the main cause of failure at Task 3A is a general weakness in written English at the grammatical level, priority should be given to work on basic grammar, especially tenses, articles and relative clauses.'

'Be aware of your specific weaknesses in English, and make serious efforts to remedy them.'

'Many candidates do not know how to use the imperative (vital when giving instructions), or misuse the conditional (using it when the present tense should be used for instance, or the future tense), and many have great difficulty with prepositions and pronouns. All of these areas are basic, and must be mastered in order to perform satisfactorily.'

Appendix 2b. General recommendations to Candidates taking the DPSI

Preparing for the examination:

- Make sure you know the DPSI exam format (see the DPSI Handbook/loLET website for details and pay special attention to new unitised format of examination) and what the examination entails.
- Check loLET section of the website for any new DPSI information. Frequently asked questions on Fatal errors and Written tasks available on the DPSI website (http://www.iol.org.uk/qualifications/exams_dpsi.asp#links). Keep an eye on the website for new information including written markers' reports with language specific advice.
- Do not sit for the examination unless you have perfect mastery of both the languages involved, including their orthography and spelling rules.
- Keep both your languages up to date by reading, writing and speaking.
- If you are doing the law option, improve your knowledge of legal terminology by attending a court hearing, where your language is used. This will give you a better idea of court procedure and how to use legal terminology. If your chosen option is local government, familiarise yourself with local government institutions and procedure in the UK and the corresponding area in the other language context. If your chosen option is health, visit local health centres, hospitals and read about the NHS and the corresponding services in the other language context.
- Pay careful attention to the specialist terminology relevant to your DPSI option. Build up a glossary of specialist terminology. Read original documents in your chosen option to research your glossary.
- Keep **up to date** with the specialist vocabulary in your chosen field.
- Make sure you **understand** your chosen field and its specialist concepts and notions so well that should a specialist term not exist in one of your languages, you can paraphrase precisely.
- Work at mastering the vocabulary used in the area you plan to work in and maintain that. Dictionaries are useful but, however, on their own they are not enough. Work towards use of language that is accurate but also sounds natural. Pro-actively seek exposure in a range of situations you are likely to come across as an interpreter as well as situations that improve general knowledge and understanding of the environment people live and work in.
- Do not underestimate the power of a good dictionary. It is worth investing in good dictionaries. Use both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. In your preparation a thesaurus is an excellent way to build vocabulary. There are many good quality online dictionaries for most languages. See written markers' reports for individual languages on the website as well as 'General Links & Resources' (<http://www.iol.org.uk/qualifications/DPSI/2008Useful%20LinksResourcesCandidates.pdf>).
- Listen to the radio (e.g. BBC Radio 4 and the World Service.). Remember an interpreter is a facilitator of communication between two persons neither of whom has any knowledge of the other person's language. You have to be proficient in both languages to be able to do your job properly. Programmes

recommended for law option candidates include BBC Radio 4 programmes such as Law in Action, File on Four, Report, Today and PM, all these programmes are also available on the BBC i-player.

- Practise whispered interpreting by interpreting news and factual programmes on radio and television in real time.
- Practice manual writing for the examination. If your computer has integrated software that will automatically correct your spelling, you may not be aware of the areas where you need improvement.
- Read newspapers (including online) as well as other publications and original documents relating to your chosen option regularly in both your languages. This will ensure that you keep up to date with current affairs in both cultures and with what is happening in your subject area.
- Use internet research as a tool to increase your knowledge of your speciality, it is advisable to concentrate on the government, official and university websites, they are more likely to be reliable.
- Watch relevant television programmes in both your languages. Radio and television programmes in most languages are available on the internet. This will help you keep up to date with terminology, and you can practice interpreting while you watch.
- Familiarise yourself with the procedures in your speciality by visiting the appropriate institutions both in the UK and when visiting the countries where your language is used.
- Exams can be stressful, but so can court appearances and interpreting assignments. Control of the situation is therefore vital. Develop coping techniques that will help ensure good quality of work whatever the circumstances. This will make you a better professional.
- Enjoy interpreting. Only if you enjoy it, can you really be proficient. If you are struggling, practise more until you start enjoying it.
- Remember that to be a good interpreter you need to be competent in two languages, as you need to decode the source language and encode the target language. It is not enough to be a native speaker to get a DPSI qualification, you need to be able to act in your chosen specialist field with competence in English and the other language or language variant.
- Practise the tasks involved in the exam under timed exam conditions. This will help you with time management. Practice will help alleviate stress in the exam itself.
- Use the Chartered Institute of Linguists website for up-to-date information and guidance on preparing for the examination.

At the examination:

Role-plays:

- Read the briefing context carefully.
- Remember you can make notes during the interpreting tasks.
- Aim for accuracy - your interpretation provides access to justice, appropriate treatment for a patient or correct advice in local government issues.
- Remember that absolute accuracy is required in interpreting/translating for medical purposes, as a misinterpretation can lead to a misdiagnosis with potentially tragic consequences.

- Pay attention to style (formal or informal).
- Pay special attention to the register of the language and make sure it is appropriate to the situation you are interpreting in or the text you are translating.
- Interpret everything.
- Switch from consecutive to whispered and back to consecutive interpreting as required.
- Concentrate.
- Speak clearly and audibly.
- Maintain eye contact.

Written tasks:

- Pay careful attention to the correct use of grammar, spelling, and vocabulary. Make sure that you know the grammar of English and your own/other chosen language.
- Pay attention to detail.
- Refrain from using transliterated words where there is a good word in your own language. Keep up to date with changes in your own language regarding vocabulary and new concepts.
- Be alert to the kinds of error that speakers of your particular language combination are prone to make when interpreting and translating between the languages. For example, if your language does not have grammatical categories such as articles and tenses, be sure to pay attention to them when interpreting and translating into English; if your language has very elaborate systems of address forms, remember that you may need to simplify considerably when translating and interpreting into English.
- Do not be too ready to use an English term in your other language; although residents in the UK may be able to understand you, visitors and people not living here may not.
- Use the letter-writing conventions in English and in your own language.
- Make sure you have understood the source text before starting to translate. Do not begin to translate a sentence or paragraph before reading all of it; otherwise you run the risk of following the source language word order or sentence structure too closely. Produce a coherent translation.
- Before you start translating a text, remember it has an author and a reader. Identify them first. Who wrote the text? Who will read it and why? Once you have translated the text, put yourself in the place of the reader and see if you can act on the basis of the text, and make sure that the text makes sense.
- Make sure you understand the sense of the text, don't just translate it word by word.
- Leave time to read through your translation at the end of the exam so that you can check for careless spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. When reading through the text make sure that the choice of the words in the target language is made according to the context of the text and avoid the use of English words when the word exists in your language. Make sure that the translated text is clear and reads fluently in your language. This means that a speaker of your language would not only understand the message but that the text conforms to the genre of the original text. Make also sure that the translation is faithful to the original text.
- Pay great attention to accuracy in choosing the right wording when translating

idiomatic terms as they may not have clear-cut equivalents in the target language. It is better to describe/paraphrase the specialist terminology unknown in your language rather than trying to find a single word for it.

- Do not offer two or more alternative translations. This is not good professional practice and will be penalised. It is up to you, not the reader, to select the most appropriate term.
- Complete the task; serious omissions are penalised. Check whether the translation continues over the page (this is always indicated by 'Continued on next page' printed in bold letters).
- Do not add words to the translation, you may distort the original meaning or invalidate the text.
- Make sure you have adequate dictionaries or glossaries for your option, and that you bring them to the examination.
- When consulting a dictionary where more than one term is given for a word, do not use the first term that meets your eye; make sure you select the best term for the context. Where a key vocabulary item is concerned, it is absolutely essential to get it right to obtain a pass. Cross-reference if necessary.
- Be alert to 'false friends'.
- Legible writing is crucial. Illegible handwriting can lead to vital information being missed out or misunderstood.
- Make sure you have time to copy out rough work to a final version.
- Leave politics outside the examination room.
- Bear in mind this check list, when translating from English into the other language Task 3B:
 1. Read the English text thoroughly, marking any unclear paragraphs for further reading. You must understand completely what the original says.
 2. Mark the terminology you do not know and use your dictionaries to clarify.
 3. Think how you would express the meaning of the English in your Target Language, think in terms of meaning, not words.
 4. When you have a first draft check your translation against the English: have you translated everything? Have you made any unnecessary additions?
 5. Read your translation without the English. Does it sound natural to you? Would you have written it like that if you did not have the English in front of you?
 6. Closely revise your text. Is it consistent? Have you missed any accents or commas? Any typos? Is the terminology consistent? Is the text clear and well-presented? etc.
 7. Finally, do not forget to use your logic, if something does not make sense, check it. It is probably a mistake.
 8. Finally read through the translation keeping in mind that the text has to make sense to the reader i.e. the other language speaker.

Appendix 3. Comments and complaints

3.1 Complaints from candidates

There were far fewer complaints in 2010 than last year. The candidate numbers were up this year, but the number of complaints was down, this seems to reverse the recent trend and to show that the exam is well run.

Complaints from candidates usually centre on:

- **Disturbances:** no complaints about disturbances
- **Exam team:** 'interlocutor spoke in a quiet and flat manner'; 'English interlocutor too fast'; 'OL interlocutor too fast'; 'OL interlocutor not a native speaker'; 'could not understand OL interlocutor'; 'interlocutor too quiet'; candidate not told to switch to consecutive interpreting;' incorrect words used during role-play'; 'English interlocutor had a strong accent';
- **Administration:** none
- **Centres:** none
- **Exam:** 'complaint about another candidate mumbling to themselves and disturbing the candidate who made the complaint
- **Exam materials:** 'speech chunks in Law option alternative B too long', 'speech 'chunks too long in local government option'
- **Language issues:** one or two spelling errors in texts

All complaints were investigated and papers moderated.

3.2. Comments from the Written markers

Comments on the examination materials were very positive e.g.

- 'the structure and materials of the exams are well prepared. The layout, font size and type of fonts used are clear and suitable for the materials'
- 'The exam material was good and tested the knowledge at all levels'
- 'I congratulate the exam organisers who work hard behind the scenes and provide exam material for a wide community of languages at a professional standard'
- 'In general, the texts for the three options – Law, Health and Local Government – were of equivalent level, and offered a fair, comparable and consistent degree of challenge across the board. There were no excessively specialist terms which might have been impossible to come up with equivalents of'
- 'The task was entirely suitable for the DPSI, and is the kind of document that could certainly be presented to an interpreter in this kind of situation. It is unfortunately the case that few candidates have a sufficiently good level of writing skills to handle such a task satisfactorily'
- 'I believe the examination material is fit for its purpose and reflects daily materials which interpreters experience in real life'
- 'The text was a good example of a formal informative document produced by a local authority. It offered a good challenge to the candidates in terms of (understanding of) content, lexicon (both general and specialist), grammar and discourse features'

- 'This examination is challenging, but very good for testing a variety of skills'
- 'Very thorough, fair process, which should enable candidates to demonstrate their strengths. The topic for the written task this year was a typical 'real life' topic often encountered by professional interpreters'
- 'I welcomed the inclusion of some aspects of the language such as idiomatic expression, common metaphors and stock phrases which tested and stretched the candidates' ability to cope with unexpected vocabulary and expressions. (LG)'
- 'The overall structure of the exam was good in that it covered a wide range of possible case scenarios, ranging from those that need to address complaints about the police to ones where the police are sought after to give help. There is juxtaposition between antisocial behaviour with other social problems like accommodation and public disorder. Thus the structure provided candidates with an opportunity to use a wide range of vocabulary. This in turn will prepare candidates for real life cases'.

3.3 Reasonable adjustments and special considerations

Reasonable adjustments are made in order to take into account the effect of a disability on (or other impediment to) a candidate's performance. Adjustments are determined according to the particular needs of the candidate. Reasonable adjustments for a candidate do not give him/her unfair advantage over other candidates. See Candidate Regulations on IoL website for full details (www.iol.org.uk). All reasonable adjustments are granted according to UK national guidelines.

The number of reasonable adjustments and special considerations was slightly down in 2010 compared to 2009. There were 12 reasonable adjustments (19 in 2009). All the papers where a reasonable adjustment or special consideration had been granted to the candidates were moderated. All the written tasks were double marked and moderated. There were reasonable adjustments both for oral and written tasks, ranging from mild hearing loss to dyslexia and carpal tunnel syndrome.

No complaints were received regarding granting reasonable adjustments.