



# Guidelines for Student Internships in Conference Interpreting

Internships have become an integral part of interpreter education and should be based on established best practice.

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AIIC Training and Professional Development.  
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## **1. Aims**

Internships are a very useful way for trainees to acquire skills and acclimatise to the demands of the professional world while enjoying the pedagogical support that a training course offers.

Internships now feature in many of the courses listed in the AIIC Schools Directory of Interpreting Schools & Programs. In view of the close link between effective training in Conference Interpreting (CI), the success of interpreting schools and their internships, and the reputation of the profession, we here aim to provide guidance on internships on the basis of international best practice.

1.1 These Guidelines are addressed to Conference Interpreting Schools and/or Programs who may organise internships for their students as well as entities receiving interns.

1.2 These Guidelines aim to ensure the best learning environment for conference interpreter interns, and prevent abuses of their position as interns.

1.3 Internships should be assessed and approved/accepted or rejected by Interpreting Schools and/or Programs depending on whether they comply with the criteria outlined here.

## **2. What is an internship?**

2.1 A CI internship is any period (from 0.5 days to several weeks) in which a student interpreter is present in situations where interpreting takes place.



An internship should offer a student interpreter the chance to experience a real working environment in which they can: observe and listen to professional interpreters working; talk to and get advice from those interpreters and their own trainers, and practice interpreting.

The nature of Conference Interpreting is such that internships differ from those in other professions, notably as to when and for how long internships run, and the provision of the service (or not) to a customer - cf. 6. below.

2.2 Conference Interpreting internships are done by student interpreters during an initial (post-graduate) Conference Interpreting Program and not afterwards, as is the case in other professions.

In exceptional cases recent graduates of Conference Interpreting Programs may be considered interns where the internship has been arranged and/or approved by their Interpreting School and/or Program.

For guidelines on unpaid assignments for graduate interpreters see AIIC's Guidelines on volunteering.

2.3 The purpose of an internship should be to advance the training of the student interpreter, not financial benefit for the parties involved.

2.4 All student assignments organised by interpreting schools or students themselves should be for training purposes and are considered internships.

2.5 The interpretation at an event at which interns are present may be provided by professional interpreters (in which case the intern listens & observes and/or works in a dummy booth).

2.6 The interpretation at an event at which interns are present may be provided by the intern (as long as the points under 6. are met).

2.7 The languages of the meetings attended by the intern interpreter should, where possible, correspond to the intern's own language combination (i.e. include 2 languages from that combination one of which is intern's A language).

2.8 An internship should offer the requisite experience to enhance the intern's possibilities of future employment with the host organisation and/or other organisations (examinations and accreditation tests notwithstanding).

### **3. Host Organisations**



3.1 Internships (and the meetings which interns attend) may be hosted by non-profit organizations, universities or national and international institutions.

3.2 Businesses may also offer internships on the assumption that no live interpreting is done (dummy booth and/or observation only).

#### **4. The meetings**

4.1 The events at which interns are present should correspond to the students abilities and their pedagogical goals - where possible, very technical subjects, read presentations etc should be avoided.

4.2 The conference organizer should provide documentation in advance for preparation purposes.

4.3 The conference organizer should ideally provide an in-person briefing for intern interpreters to explain the background, context of the meeting and any terminological issues.

4.4 At least one professional interpreter (if possible who is also an interpreter trainer) should be on site to advise, assess, mentor and monitor working conditions. See also 6.7

#### **5. Practical considerations**

5.1 Students should be sufficiently advanced in their training and competent before being approved for participation.

5.2 Interpreter trainers should be responsible for: the suitability of students for; students' preparation for; and the follow-up to, the internship.

5.3 Students should only work in language combinations for which they are formally training as Conference Interpreters.

5.4 Any recordings made will only be for pedagogical use by the interpreting school or the interns. There will be no webcast or web-streaming.

#### **6. Live Interpreting**

6.1 Live interpreting is interpretation, in consecutive or simultaneous modes, for a client who is listening to, and using, the interpretation to follow the discussions.



Internships outside Conference Interpreting tend to involve the intern observing a professional and/or carrying out small isolated parts of the professional skill. Any work produced for customer consumption would be heavily supervised. In Conference Interpreting this cannot apply as once you turn on the microphone no one can check your work before it reaches the client.

For this reason points 4.2 and 4.3 on preparation above and the points below should be given particular attention when intern interpreters are doing live interpreting.

6.2 Internships in international institutions should not involve live interpreting.

6.3 Student interpreters should not do live interpreting work in real conferences unless the assignment is organised and/or approved by their Interpreting School or the conference itself has as its primary goal the training of interpreters.

6.4 Internships in commercial businesses should not involve live interpreting.

6.5 Internships may not include live interpreting where participants (listening to interpreting) have paid a fee to attend (unless 6.2 is met).

6.6 The standard of interpreting of an interpreting student intern should not be equated to that of a professional interpreter.

6.7 The host should agree in advance that working conditions will at least be in line with those recommended by AIIC.

6.8 Interpreting teams on internships should not include both student and professional interpreters. (This might give the incorrect impression that the interpreting is being provided only by professionals.)

6.9 The host shall inform participants that the interpreting is being provided by student interns.

## **7. Payment**

7.1 Students should not be paid for their interpreting services. They should have their costs covered (transportation and meals) if the conference is not local to them or be paid an allowance to cover accommodation and meals if the internship involves more than 1 days away from their home city.



7.2 Interpreting Schools & Programs may not benefit financially from assignments worked by their students (AIIC Conference interpreting training programmes best practice).

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