A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS PROCEDURES AND WAIVERS

You have made up your mind. Whether as a beginner or a seasoned interpreter, you are now convinced that joining AIIC will be a good career move for you personally and for the profession as a whole. You've checked out the AIIC website and familiarised yourself with AIIC's values. It is now time for you to apply for membership and have your application examined by CACL, the Commission governing admissions and language classification. The following links will take you to three essential texts referred to in this document

1. [Code of Professional Ethics](#)

2. [Professional Standards](#)

3. [Regulation governing admissions and language classification](#)

The purpose of this guide is to help you understand the system before you fill in the online application. You can jump to the different sections by clicking on the following points:

I. Applications for membership or pre-candidacy

In order to apply for full membership, you need to have worked a minimum number of days. If you are just starting your career, you could consider applying for pre-candidacy (see point VIII).

AIIC does not consider the admissions process to be a "test", or membership to be a „certification" in the strict sense of the word. The Association does, however, pursue the goal of admitting only competent professional interpreters.

By requiring a minimum number of days worked, without exception[1], under professional conditions, AIIC effectively asks you to pass the "test" of the workplace.

By requiring sponsorship by members who have worked with and listened to or observed you for sign languages, AIIC again puts the emphasis on performance in real conference interpreting settings, including RSI. Sponsorship must not be taken lightly. A member who agrees to sign for you is vouching both for your professional competence and your undertaking to abide by time-honoured professional ethics. A potential sponsor, therefore, might very well be interested in talking at length with you and providing information on the profession and the Association. Furthermore, by applying to join AIIC, you make a commitment to abide by our Code of Professional Ethics, Professional Standards and all other rules and regulations.

Start by reading the [Code of Professional Ethics](#) and [Professional Standards](#).

II. Professional address

Members of the Association shall declare a single professional address and any change in professional address shall not be permitted for a period of less than six months. The professional address is used, inter alia, as a basis for setting up regions.

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[1] In the present document, "without exception" means that at least from the moment you decide to join AIIC, you must always work according to AIIC's Code of Professional Ethics, Professional Standards and all other rules and regulations.

III. Language Classification

When you apply to join AIIC, you request a language classification according to the A - B - C system.

Active languages

A: Your native language (or another language strictly equivalent to a native language), into which you work from all your other languages generally in both modes of interpretation, simultaneous and consecutive.

All members must have at least one 'A' language.

B: A language other than your native language, of which you have a perfect command and into which you work from one or more of your other languages. Some interpreters work into a 'B' language in only one of the two modes of interpretation.

Passive languages

C: Languages of which you have a complete understanding and from which you work.

Your classification is not set in stone, and you can always reclassify it at a later stage.

IV. Sponsorship

In general, sponsors must:

> be **active members** of the association (your sponsors must still be active members when the Secretariat receives your application);

> have at least **5 years' seniority** in AIIC for each language pair they wish to sponsor;

> have worked with you and listened to, or observed for sign languages, your work in the **three years prior to vouching** for you;

> **certify** that, to the best of their knowledge, you have worked at least 150 days and observed AIIC's professional ethics throughout the period.

Minimum sponsorship requirements for admission

A minimum of three sponsors is required. Each sponsor must cover at least one of the applicant's language pairs and all the sponsors taken together must cover all of her or his language pairs. One sponsor may vouch for more than one pair. All relevant pairs must be signed for.

- When the target language of the pair is an A, the pair is to be covered by at least 2 sponsors with an A in that language and an A, a B or a C in the source language.

- When the target language of the pair is a B, it is to be covered by at least 1 sponsor with an A and 1 with an A or a B in that language and an A, a B or a C in the source language.

For admissions, a minimum of three sponsors is required and two of the sponsors must have their professional address in the same AIIC region as the applicant. If you are based in a country that belongs to a region that covers more than one country (like the Africa or South-Pacific regions) or if a region has not yet been set up for your country, at least one sponsor must have their professional address in the same country as the applicant, provided there are at least three members in that country who are eligible sponsors by virtue of their seniority and language combination.

If you plan to ask a member to sponsor you, you should inform that member before the meeting where you will be working together. In an ideal world, a potential sponsor will want to work with you on more than one occasion so they can see you working in several conference settings with different subject matters. Sponsors will then be in a better position to judge not only your interpreting skills, but also your booth manners and how you interact with other colleagues and clients.

Minimum sponsorship requirements for reclassification

If you are already a member and wish to **reclassify your language combination**, all that is required for each language pair is at least two sponsors who do not need to be from your own region. Members (but also re-applying former members) who wish to upgrade an existing language to an A language, or add a new A language, will need 5 sponsors for the new A language and must explain in detail the reasons why they are doing so.

To add a new C language, you need at least two sponsors, each with your target language as A or B, and your source language as A, B or C.

V. Practical examples

 The following are examples of different types of language combinations and the sponsorship that would be required by language pair.

- **1st Example**: Applicant X has two active languages: Norwegian A and British Sign B.

  Pair 1 BSL (B) > NOR (A) requires at least two sponsors with NOR (A) and BSL (A, B or C)

  Pair 2 NOR (A) > BSL (B) requires at least two sponsors, one with BSL (A) and NOR (A, B or C), and one with BSL (A or B) and NOR (A, B or C).

Since one sponsor may vouch for more than one language pair if eligible to do so, the applicant will need at least three different sponsors to cover both language pairs.

- **2nd Example**: Applicant Y has three working languages: English A, French B and German C.

  Pair 1 FRA > ENG (A) requires at least two sponsors with ENG (A) and FRA (A, B or C).

  Pair 2 DEU > ENG (A) requires at least two sponsors with ENG (A) and DEU (A, B or C).

  Pair 3 ENG > FRA (B) requires at least two sponsors, one with FRA (A) and ENG (A, B or C) and one with FRA (A or B) and ENG (A, B, or C).

  Pair 4 DEU > FRA (B): Not all interpreters feel comfortable working from C > B but the requirements are the same as for A > B as in pair 3 above.

Since one sponsor may vouch for more than one language pair, if eligible to do so, the applicant will need to find at least three different sponsors to cover all the language pairs.

- **3rd Example**: Applicant Z: Chinese A and Japanese C

  Pair 1 JPN > ZHO (A) requires at least two sponsors with ZHO (A) and JPN (A, B or C) and a third sponsor preferably with Japanese and/or Chinese in his/her combination.

If there are no, or not enough, valid sponsors available for your language pair, the rules allow you to request a waiver and provide one or more sponsors who would normally not qualify (see point VII Waivers).

In this case, for example, after analysing the file CACL could envisage granting applicant Z a waiver and accept a sponsor with Chinese A but no Japanese who has taken applicant Z's relay during the meeting. If you are having trouble even finding eligible members who have taken your relay, you could ask a colleague to at least listen to you, or observe you for sign languages, and sign stating that fact. Another option might be to ask a member

with JPN (A) and ZHO (B or C) (instead of ZHO (A) and JPN (A, B or C) to listen to or observe you for sign languages.

However, it is important that you realise that CACL will only grant waivers if your language combination is such that no valid sponsors are available and if your sponsors have worked with you and can vouch for all other requirements. The important thing here is that colleagues hear or see you work - after all, the classification system is one of the indicators of interpreting skill.

VI. Documenting Days Worked

To satisfy the requirements regarding the number of days worked, conference interpreters wishing to join AIIC must have:

> worked a minimum of 150 days, without exception[2], according to AIIC's rules;

> worked at least 50 days in each language pair.

* "without exception" means that at least from the moment an applicant decides to join AIIC, he or she must always work according to AIIC's Code of Professional Ethics, Professional Standards and all other rules and regulations.

To document your days of work, you must fill in and upload the table provided at the end of the online application. You will be requested to indicate the dates of your assignment(s) and number of days worked, the venue, the subject, the mode, your sponsors, and the language pairs you were recruited for.

The list of meetings should be in reverse chronological order and include every day you worked as a conference interpreter for the period of time covered by the list.

Remember that, for example, a contract to interpret several lectures or workshops for the same client on a Monday count as 1..

Your 150 days of work can be accumulated over a period of more than three years. You do not need to submit contracts with the list, but CACL could ask you to produce them. If an application is challenged due to allegations of failing to comply with our Basic Texts (Code of Professional Ethics, Professional Standards, etc.), one of CACL's policies/prerogatives is to check whether the contracts that the applicant has listed are in accordance with the rules published on our website.

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[2] In the present document, "without exception" means that at least from the moment you decide to join AIIC, you must always work according to AIIC's Code of Professional Ethics, Professional Standards and all other rules and regulations.

If you have worked extensively, or exclusively, for a major international organization, you may either submit a list of meetings as described above or attach a certificate from that institution stating the period of time covered, your language combination, the number of days worked for each language pair and, where appropriate, when you added new languages to your combination.

VII. Waivers

Having problems meeting one or more of the admission or reclassification requirements? Waivers may be granted in exceptional circumstances. All CACL asks is that you include with your application a cover letter explaining your circumstances and requesting a waiver for one or more requirements.

Your request should follow these guidelines:

1. First, get as many signatures you can in accordance with the rules. You may find they are enough and that is always preferable. Remember, waivers are an exception and not designed to make getting signatures easier.

2. Members who do not strictly comply with the sponsorship criteria might nonetheless sponsor you. This may be acceptable provided these members have worked with you and taken your relay, for example, and can thus attest to your language skills and ethics. If you are having trouble even finding people who have taken relay from you, ask a colleague to at least listen to or observed you for sign languages. See Applicant Z in the Practical Examples described under point IV.

3. In a cover letter you should explain why you are requesting one or more waivers. Clearly set out the circumstances that led you to request each waiver and indicate any sponsors you may already have (i.e. the signatures you obtained according to the above-mentioned suggestions).

To sum up, try to come as close as possible to meeting the admission requirements (e.g. at least three sponsors, two of whom must come from your region or comply with article 10 of the Regulation governing admissions and language classification. If you need to request a waiver you must explain why. Upload a copy of any diplomas or certificates

you have earned from an interpreter training programme or school in support of your request. Of course, all requests for waivers are decided on a case-by-case basis.

Typically, waivers may be requested for any of the following reasons:

- **Language waiver**

  For a sponsor who lacks the relevant languages. (See Applicant Z in the Practical examples under point IV).

- **Seniority waiver**

  For a sponsor who has been an active member for less than 5 years.

- **Regional waiver**

  If you cannot find two valid sponsors in your region or who comply with article 10 of the [Regulation governing admissions and language classification](#).

- **Number of days waiver**

  If you have difficulty collecting 50 days of work because of your particular language combination or the environment in which you work.

- **"Article 7" waiver**

  If you do not work from all your languages into your A language(s) for whatever reason (e.g. sign language into spoken language or languages that are so similar that interpretation is seldom or never requested). See Article 7 of the [Regulation governing admissions and language classification](#).

VIII. Pre-candidacy

If you do not yet fulfil AIIC's admission requirements, you could consider applying to become a pre-candidate.

If you have worked fewer than 150 days, and/or if you have not been able to secure the required number of eligible sponsors to apply for AIIC membership you can submit a request to the Committee on Admissions and Language Classification to become a pre candidate.

Such requests should be signed by at least three active members, known as "Presenters", who do not need to have the same language combination as you, nor be based in the same region. Nor do they need to have the 5-year seniority required to sponsor an applicant for membership.

Presenters attest that they know you work as a conference interpreter but are not required, at this stage, to vouch for your ability. However, they do acknowledge that you abide by AIICs Code of Professional Ethics, Professional Standards and all other rules and regulations. Pre-candidate shall have the right to remain on this list for up to five years.

As a pre-candidate your name will appear in the members-only section of the AIIC website, and you can attend AIIC events and get to know members. However, as a pre candidate you agree not to use the AIIC name or logo on your letterheads, business cards, websites, social media channels etc. until you are a full member of the Association. Only mention of your AIIC pre-candidate (or candidate) status is allowed.

IX. The online application process

Applications are filed online. Once you have completed the online application process, the sponsors or presenters (if you applied for pre-candidacy) you have contacted and named will receive an email asking them to confirm that they agree to sponsor or present you. Sponsors are also asked to indicate the last meeting they worked with you and the language pairs for which they are signing. Your application will then be sent to CACL, the Committee governing admissions and language classification.

X. Deadlines and pre-screenings

Dates to remember: 31 May and 30 November of each year

CACL meets twice a year. Applications filed before the end of May are examined in July, those filed before the end of November are examined in January of the following year.

Applications received by the Secretariat at least 6 weeks before the May and November deadlines are pre-screened by a member of CACL to check for completeness but without any decision being taken. If necessary, additional information may be requested.

XI. Publication and challenges

After each CACL meeting, the Secretariat publishes a list of all approved applicants, now classified as "candidates", initiating the challenge period. The list of candidates is published in the CACL Newsletter accessible to members only and is also emailed to all members at the beginning of the 60-day challenge period.

Should there be a challenge during the 60-day period, an enquiry will be conducted by CACL, as stipulated in Annex 2 of its Rules of Procedure. Once the 60-day period has expired without a challenge, the candidate becomes a member. Under exceptional circumstances, CACL may proceed, of its own initiative and after consultations with its members, to carry out an enquiry where the majority of its members are of the opinion that such an enquiry is desirable.

XII. Decisions - Appeals

Any decision taken by the Committee regarding an active or associate member or a candidate or pre-candidate shall be communicated to the person concerned in writing. The decision not to admit an applicant is based on factual elements. The person concerned in a negative decision may submit an appeal against it to the Executive Committee within ninety days of being notified thereof. The written appeal shall be addressed to the President of the Association and shall list all the facts on which the appeal is based. The Executive Committee shall consult the Committee before reaching its decision.

Should you need advice or additional information, the Committee on Admissions and Language Classification is always there to help. Please contact us through the AIIC Secretariat, contact@aiic.org.

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