

## BRIDGE CODE OF PRACTICE

---

It is essential that you follow this Code of Practice to the greatest degree possible.

### **Briefing**

Prior to the interview you (*the interpreter*) must supply the *professional* with a copy of your code of practice and read this to them, to ensure that the professional fully understands your role in the interview. You should inform the professional that you will need to take time to explain your code of practice to the *client* before beginning the interview.

In some cases you will need to ask the professional for a short briefing about the case prior to the interview to ensure that you are prepared and have the necessary vocabulary for the interview. This can happen via e-mail or phone in the week preceding the interview or in person on the day if the latter is not possible.

### **Code of practice**

#### *1) Introducing*

You must introduce yourself before the interview commences to both parties.

You must ensure that the client is happy to have you as their interpreter, as the client has the right to choose their interpreter. If, for any reason, the client is not happy for you to interpret for them, you must inform the professional immediately so that a substitute can be arranged.

You must not interpret for a member of family as part of a Bridge assignment. If you were not aware that the client was a member of your family prior to meeting them you must inform the professional and explain that you will not be able to interpret for them but will arrange for an alternative by ringing the office.

---

## BRIDGE CODE OF PRACTICE

---

### *2) Confidentiality*

As a registered Bridge interpreter you must remain completely confidential throughout the interview as well as after this. This means that everything heard or seen during the interview must remain confidential at all times, and should not be disclosed to anybody. In relation to Translation work, this includes any information – written material, article or document – that might have come into your possession by virtue of your work. You must not take personal advantage of any information acquired during an interpreting or translation assignment and you must not make use of such information for any purpose other than as authorised. You therefore must ensure that all documents provided to you by Bridge are kept safe and are not copied or shared.

You must maintain the privacy of the client outside the interview and be friendly to create trust between yourself and the client, to ensure that they feel confident and secure to speak about their issues in your presence.

Where the Official Secrets Act 1989 applies, you must comply with it.

### *3) Impartiality*

As a registered Bridge interpreter you must remain completely impartial. This means you need to be neutral and nonbiased towards both parties. Your role as an interpreter is not that of an adviser and you therefore should not advocate on the client's behalf. You must not enter into a conversation with the client during the assignment, except at the start to explain your Code of Practice and check you speak the same language/dialect.

You should not advise the client on what they should say or make suggestions based on personal opinions. You should put aside any beliefs, views or personal opinions even if these are different from those of the client or the professional. If you are unable to remain impartial you must inform the professional immediately and arrange for a substitute by contacting the office.

You should remain detached from what is being said and never get emotionally involved. You should remain calm, especially if hearing unpleasant or controversial stories. At the same time you must be sensitive to the client's experiences. You must be empathetic, not sympathetic.

## BRIDGE CODE OF PRACTICE

---

You must not discriminate against any party (whether it is to their advantage or disadvantage), or act in any way that might result in prejudice or preference based on customs, value, religion, spiritual beliefs, politics, race, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, nationality, disability, HIV status or for any other reason.

You must be even-handed and fair and not behave in a way that is dishonest or deceiving towards clients, services providers and any person you enter in contact with during the course of your work. You must place those who do not speak English on an equal footing with English speakers.

Under no circumstances are you allowed to accept any form of reward or gift, other than the fee agreed with and paid by Bridge.

### *4) Completeness and Accuracy*

You must fully interpret everything that is being said by the client and the professional in complete sentences. In many cases even the tone of voice and spirit of the message can make a difference, therefore you need to try and ensure these are evident in your interpreting.

You must also interpret language that may be offensive. If you are uncomfortable using a particular word you must explain this to both parties and find an alternative way of describing it.

If you are asked to interpret word for word (i.e. during a psychological assessment or a court hearing) you must do so. However, sometimes interpreting word for word may result in meaningless, unclear sentences. As an interpreter you need to ensure that you alter the order of words to form your sentences correctly in both languages without significantly altering the meaning. You need to ensure that the language you use is easily understandable and culturally appropriate to the listener.

You must disclose any difficulties encountered with dialects and/or technical terms used during the interview.

You must speak clearly and loudly to ensure both parties can understand what you are saying.

---

## BRIDGE CODE OF PRACTICE

---

### *5) Intervention*

Whilst carrying out your assignment you must be aware of the cultural differences that exist between the client and the professional. In some cases intervention may be necessary to alert the parties to a possible missed cultural inference.

You must always inform both parties of the reason for the intervention. You should intervene:

- to ask for clarification or if you do not understand a particular technical term
- to point out that either the client or the professional may not have understood something
- to ask for short breaks to assist the interviewing process (only where appropriate)

You may not intervene to offer your opinion on the matter, or to give an answer that you anticipate the client will give or for any other reason than those given above.

### *6) Punctuality*

As a registered Bridge interpreter you will be expected to be punctual at all times to reflect Bridge standards. You must be at your assignment 10-15 minutes prior the interview time to ensure you have time for any briefing and filling of forms. If you expect to be late for more than 5 minutes for any reason, please inform your destination and Bridge ITTS office as soon as possible.

You must inform Bridge office immediately if you are unable to attend or have failed to attend an assignment so a substitute can be arranged.

### *7) Responsibilities of an Interpreter*

As a registered Bridge interpreter you will always be representing Bridge at assignments. Therefore you need to ensure you meet the essential standard of conduct.

You must not withdraw from an interpreting assignment unless with good reasons and reasonable notice.

## BRIDGE CODE OF PRACTICE

---

You must dress appropriately in a professional manner for any assignment. You must ensure that your clothing does not contain writing, pictures or any other article that might offend the client or the professional.

You must not chew gum or eat whilst carrying out the assignment.

It is your responsibility to ensure the professional always addresses the client directly rather than tells you what to say. You must always use first person whilst interpreting (this means never using *he* or *she* when referring to either the client or the professional, but using *I* or *we* instead).

You must ensure that your mobile phone (as well as any other device that may cause disruption to the interview) is switched off whilst you are carrying out your assignment.

You must always carry your Bridge badge with you to confirm your identity.

Under no circumstances should you delegate work or part of a work you have agreed to, to another translator/interpreter or any other person.

Regarding translation assignments, proofreading is the translator's responsibility. You must not consider any translation job complete until proofread thoroughly. You must also comply with deadlines you have agreed to and unless exceptional circumstances, you must not withdraw or fail to complete a translation.

It is your responsibility to notify Bridge of any changes to your details (e.g. contact details, bank details, languages, qualifications, convictions etc.) as well as any leave taken (holiday, illness etc.)

It is also your responsibility to register with the HMRC and pay your own taxes.

### *8) High standard of skills and personal attributes*

As a registered Bridge interpreter / translator you are expected to have the following standard of skills and personal attributes:

8.1 Good knowledge of specialist vocabulary and fluency in both languages.

8.2 Ability to explain culture and put cultural intervention when it is necessary.

## BRIDGE CODE OF PRACTICE

---

8.3 Integrity and reliability.

8.4 Confidence and patience.

8.5 Able to work under pressure.

8.6 Be professional / not get emotionally involved.

8.7 Be polite and friendly / empathy not sympathy (know the limit).

8.9 Be confidential at all times, do not discuss any conversation or translation assignments outside of Bridge to anyone.

8.10 Ensure you undertake relevant continuous professional development in order to guarantee the best service delivery (e.g. gain qualifications, maintain your mother tongue and your foreign languages, etc.)

BRIDGE

## BRIDGE CODE OF PRACTICE

---

### *Glossary*

**Interpreter** (*registered Bridge interpreter*) – a qualified (minimum of Level 3 Community Interpreting, DPSI, or DPI) bilingual individual registered with Bridge providing the interpreting service

**Translator** (registered Bridge translator – a qualified DPSI or Masters in Translation

**Professional** – a service provider or an interviewer (such as a Home Office case worker or a solicitor) who has booked the interpreter

**Client** – an individual who does not speak English and requires the service of the interpreter

**Assignment** – an undertaking that the interpreter has been assigned to do, i.e. attending an interview

**Interview** – a conversation held between the professional and the client

**SIGNATURE:**

**DATE:**