EUROPEAN MASTER'S IN TRANSLATION
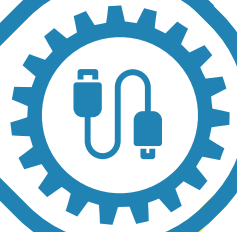
Competence Framework 2022

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

TRANSLATION

TECHNOLOGY

PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL

SERVICE PROVISION

European Commission

Foreword

The European Master's in Translation (EMT) network published its framework for translator and translation competence in 2009, followed by a substantial redrafting in 2017. This has now become one of the leading reference standards for translator training throughout the European Union and beyond, both in academia and industry. While the basic principles laid down in 2017 still stand, the framework required a minor update to reflect the priorities of European translation programmes, as they prepare graduates for a dynamic and highly technologized workplace.

Technology has an ever-increasing impact on the way translation services are performed, but over time its limits have also become more apparent. Consequently, human intelligence, knowledge, and skills are still the key factors in delivering quality translations and the growing range of language services which translators and translation companies can provide. This updated framework reflects the need for these human skills by reiterating the importance of linguistic, sociolinguistic, cultural, and transcultural skills. This does not mean a narrower focus, but rather an awareness of human skills as a differentiator in a technologized employment market, where linguistic, critical, and ethical competences can combine to produce a transversal skill set to equip graduates for the future.

The translation market is multifaceted, with needs that have evolved, encompassing an expanding range of translation processes appropriate to the content type, and the continuing expansion of English as a lingua franca creating new needs that can only be met by reversing the traditional 'mother tongue' principle in some translation environments. Catering to a diverse audience necessitates a focus on accessibility in both the production and reception of multilingual, multimedia materials. These changes need to be taken on board in academic translator training programmes, so that future graduates become aware of both the challenges and opportunities that they represent and can adapt their skills and practices, enabling a greater inclusion of a diverse global public.
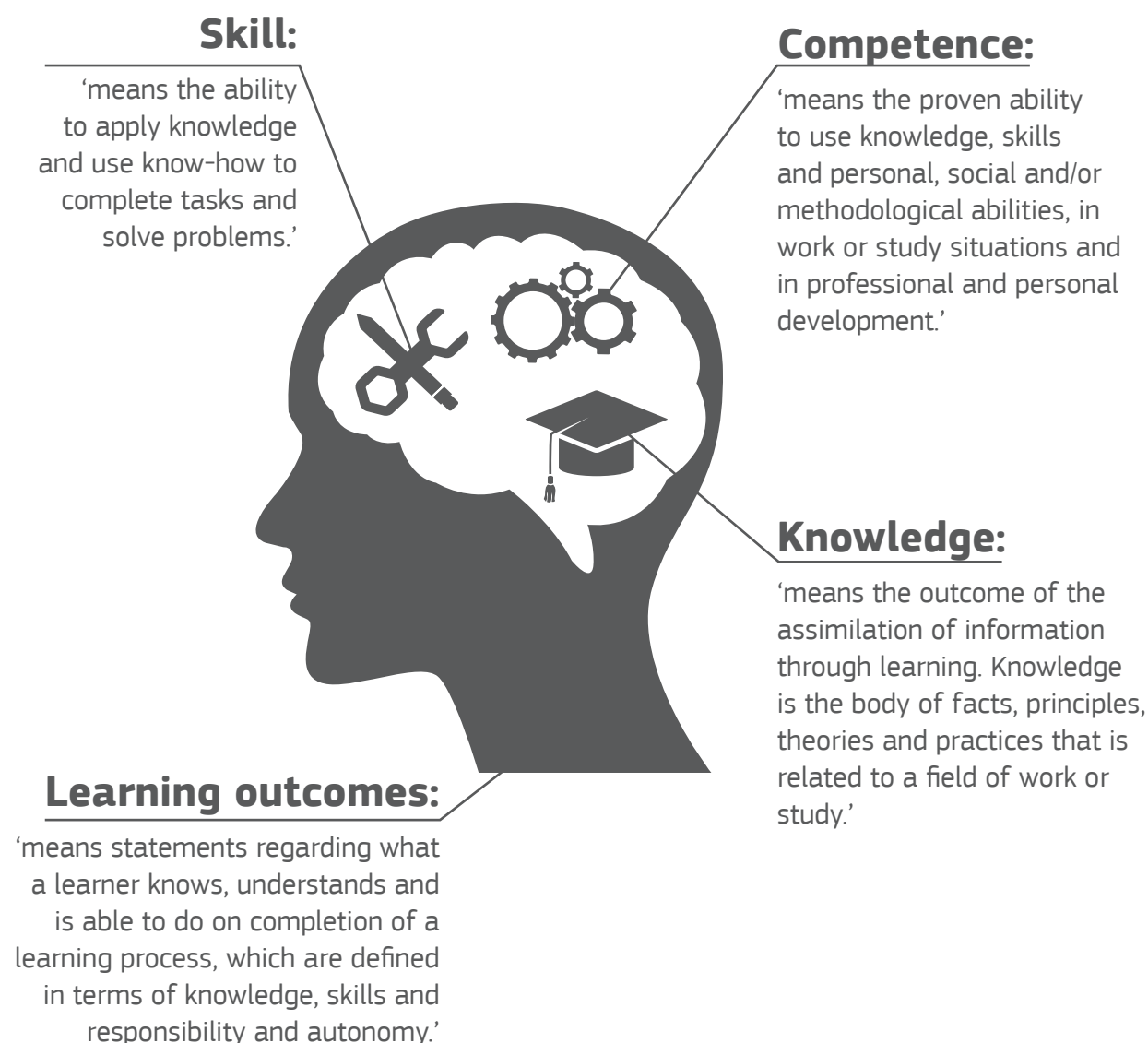
In April of 2022, with future translation graduate employability firmly in mind, the EMT Board was given the remit of updating the existing EMT competence framework, adjusting the key competences and skills required to best equip and empower future translation graduates. The remit also meant retaining a simple, functional competence framework that could be used to assess the delivery of a common set of learning outcomes by universities wishing to join the EMT network in the next round of applications. Following a consultation process involving the network membership and language industry stakeholders, a draft updated framework was produced. This has now been adopted as the EMT competence framework for 2023-2028.

October 2022, The EMT Board and Competence Task-Force

This **competence framework** aims to consolidate and enhance the **employability of graduates of master's degrees in translation** throughout Europe. It is based on the EMT's founding principles set out by the Expert Group in January 2009. It also takes into account the research outcomes on translation and translator competence reported by the translation studies research community and the changes that have affected the language services industry since then.

Note: The terms 'competence', 'skill,' 'knowledge' and 'learning outcomes' are used here in accordance with the *European Qualifications Framework* (https://europa.eu/europass/en/european-qualifications-framework-eqf)

Skill:
'means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems.'

Competence:
'means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.'

Knowledge:
'means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study.'

Learning outcomes:
'means statements regarding what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and responsibility and autonomy.'
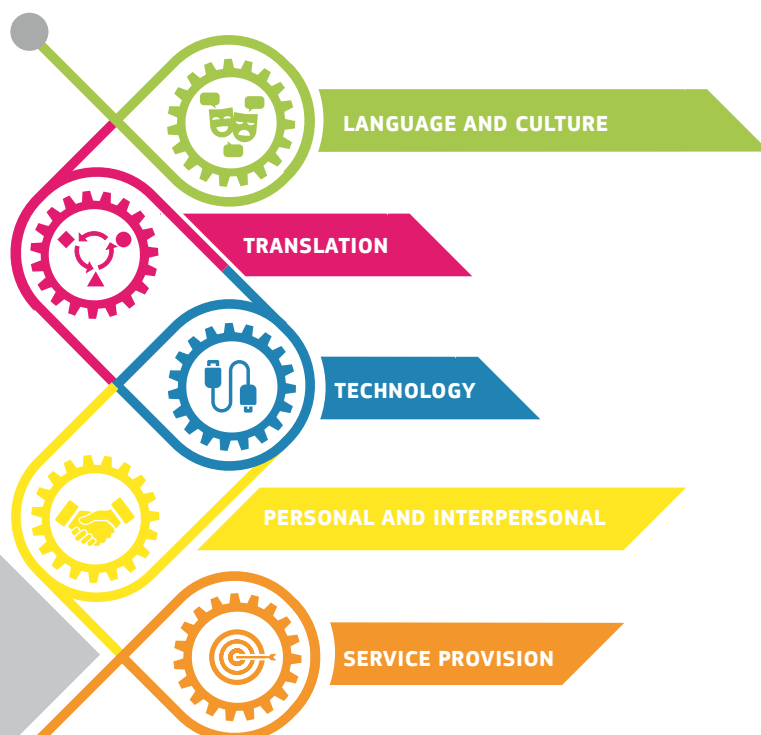
This framework does not claim to provide a comprehensive description or model of all the competences, skills and knowledge that translation graduates should acquire. It does not, for instance, include the theoretical knowledge or the generic research skills that are an integral and important part of many advanced translation studies programmes. As in the original framework, it sets out a common set of learning outcomes for EMT master's degree programmes, described in terms of the general competences and specific skills that their graduates are expected to possess[1]. Individual programmes may, of course, deliver a much wider range of competences, skills and knowledge in areas that are not included in this framework.

The framework is based on the premise that 'translation' is a process designed to meet an individual, societal or institutional need. It also recognises that it is a multi-faceted profession that covers the many areas of competence and skills required to convey meaning (generally, but not exclusively, in a written medium) from at least one natural language to another, and the many different tasks performed by those who provide a translation service.

The framework therefore considers that translator education and training at master's degree level should equip students not only with a deep understanding of the processes involved, but also with the ability to perform and provide a translation service in line with the highest professional and ethical standards.

It defines five main areas of competence:

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

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[1] It assumes that the aim of master's degree programmes is to teach a combination of knowledge and skills, which will enable students to achieve the competences considered essential for access to the translation industry and to the wider labour market.

Within each of these areas, a number of skills are deemed to be essential or important within the context of a master's degree in translation. Although each of them can be viewed separately, and the relevant skills can be applied to different professions beyond the translation industry, the five areas defined below should be considered as complementary and equally important in providing the translation service, which is the ultimate goal of the translation process.

The framework does not attempt to define levels for each of the areas of competence. It is assumed that master's degree programmes within the EMT network expect students to achieve the advanced level of competence required of future language industry professionals.

However, it recognises that some of the competences, skills and knowledge may have been acquired at previous stages in the higher education process (e.g., at undergraduate level) and that master's degree programmes lasting more than one academic year are likely to define different learning outcomes at different stages in the programme. EMT applicants will be asked to specify details if skill levels differ according to modules or progression in the programme.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

(TRANSCULTURAL AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS)

This competence encompasses all the general or language-specific linguistic, sociolinguistic, cultural and transcultural knowledge and skills that constitute the basis for advanced translation competence. It is the driving force behind all the other competences described in this reference framework, and it is thus important and expected that students also perfect their competences in these areas during their studies. These competences should include the ability to
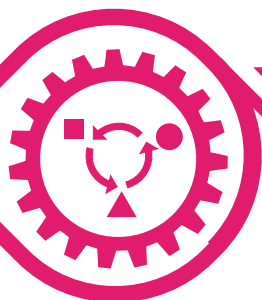
•   Understand the function of language variations (social, geographical or historical) and use the appropriate grammatical, lexical and idiomatic structures of their working languages

•   Identify cultural elements, values and references in the written or oral text (including presuppositions, allusions and stereotypes) and write in accordance with the cultural conventions, and conventions of genre and rhetorical standards

This framework takes as a premise that a high level of language competence in at least two working languages[2] (CEFR level C1 and above or an equivalent level in comparable reference systems) should be a prerequisite for access to any EMT master's degree course in translation[3]. Applicants to the EMT network will be required to show what procedures are used to ensure that students admitted to their master's programme have acquired the necessary level in this area of competence, whether via an undergraduate qualification, or by certification, examination, personal portfolio, interview, or any other means.

The EMT also recognises that within the European context, the number of working languages may differ according to the national and/or professional environment, and that the same *level* of competence may not be achieved (or required) in *all* working languages. Applicants will therefore be required to state the minimum number of mandatory working languages required in the programme, how many other working languages are optional and the levels expected upon admission and upon graduation.

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[2] Defined as the source and target languages that the translator uses in a professional capacity. Generally, the main target language is referred to as language A, the main source language as language B and other source languages as C, D etc.

[3] The EMT recommends that the translator's main target language should be mastered at CEFR level C2 or with native or bilingual proficiency.

TRANSLATION

(STRATEGIC, METHODOLOGICAL AND THEMATIC COMPETENCE)

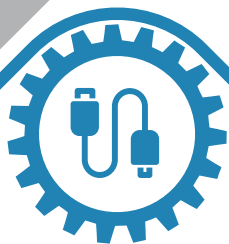Translation competence lies at the heart of the other competences defined in this framework.

It should be understood in the broadest sense, encompassing not only the actual meaning transfer phase between two languages (interlingually), including the use of pivot languages, or within the same language (intralingually), but also all the strategic, methodological and thematic competences that come into play before, during and following the transfer phase per se – from document analysis to final quality control procedures.

Applicants will be invited to specify the different types of domain-specific, media-specific and situation-specific types of translation that are included in their curriculum, including special areas such as public service translation and interpreting, localisation, multimodal translation or audio-visual translation and accessibility. This section also recognises the ability to translate from and into pivot languages. It also acknowledges that machine translation (MT) represents a growing part of translation workflows, and that MT literacy and awareness of MT´s possibilities and limitations is an integral part of professional translation competence.

STUDENTS KNOW HOW TO...

1 Analyse a source document, identify potential textual and cognitive difficulties and assess the strategies and resources needed to reformulate it in line with communicative needs

2 Summarise, rephrase, restructure, and shorten a message and adapt it to market needs rapidly and accurately in at least one target language, using written and/or spoken communication

3 Carry out research to evaluate the relevance and reliability of information sources with regard to translation needs

4 Acquire, develop and use thematic and domain-specific knowledge relevant to translation needs (mastering systems of concepts, methods of reasoning, presentation standards, terminology and phraseology, specialised sources etc.)

5 Implement the instructions, style guides, or conventions relevant to a particular translation

6 Translate general and domain-specific material in one or several fields from one or several source languages into their target language(s), producing a 'fit for purpose' translation

7 Translate different types of material on and for different kinds of media and target audiences, using appropriate tools and techniques

8 Translate and mediate in specific intracultural and intercultural contexts, for example, those involving public service translation (and interpreting), website or video-game localisation and accessibility, community management, etc.

9 Draft texts for specific purposes in one or more of their working languages, taking into account specific situations, recipients and constraints

10 Analyse and justify their translation solutions and choices, using the appropriate metalanguage and applying appropriate theoretical approaches

11 Check, review, revise and evaluate their own work and that of others according to standard or work-specific quality objectives and assess the appropriateness of using tools for the work at hand

12 Understand and implement quality control strategies, using appropriate tools and techniques

13 Edit source text content for processing using a translation tool

14 Post-edit MT output using style guides and terminology glossaries to maintain quality standards in MT-enhanced translation projects

TECHNOLOGY

(TOOLS AND APPLICATIONS)

This competence includes all the knowledge and skills used to implement and advise on the use of present and future translation technologies within the translation process. It also includes basic knowledge of machine translation technologies and the ability to implement machine translation according to potential needs.

STUDENTS KNOW HOW TO…

15 Use the most relevant IT applications, including the full range of office software, and adapt rapidly to new tools and IT resources having critically assessed their relevance and the impact of change on their work practices

16 Make effective use of search engines, corpus-based tools, text analysis tools, computer- assisted translation (CAT) and quality assurance (QA) tools where appropriate

17 Pre-process, process and manage files and other media/sources as part of the translation workflow, e.g., web and multimedia files

18 Understand the basics of MT systems and their impact on the translation process, and integrate MT into a translation workflow where appropriate

19 Recognise the importance and value of translation and language data, demonstrating data literacy

20 Apply other tools in support of language and translation technology, such as workflow management tools

PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL

This competence area includes all the generic skills, often referred to as "soft skills", that enhance graduate adaptability and employability.

STUDENTS KNOW HOW TO…

21 Plan and manage time (including complying with deadlines)

22 Manage workload, cognitive load, stress and critical professional situations

23 Work both autonomously and in virtual, multicultural and multilingual teams, using appropriate communication technologies

24 Use social media responsibly for professional purposes

25 Take account of and adapt the organisational and physical ergonomics of the working environment

26 Continuously self-evaluate, update and develop competences and skills through personal strategies and collaborative learning and acknowledge the importance of lifelong learning

SERVICE PROVISION

This competence covers all the skills relating to the implementation of translation and, more generally, to language services in a professional context – from awareness of clients, commissioners and users and negotiation through to project management and quality assurance.

STUDENTS KNOW HOW TO...

27 Monitor and take account of new societal and language industry demands, new market requirements and emerging job profiles

28 Approach existing clients and find new clients through prospecting and marketing strategies using the appropriate written and oral communication techniques

29 Clarify the requirements, objectives and purposes of the client, recipients of the language service and other stakeholders and offer the appropriate services to meet those requirements

30 Interact at all stages with the client (negotiate deadlines, rates/invoicing, working conditions, access to information, contracts, rights, responsibilities, language service specifications, tender specifications, offer feedback etc.)

31 Organise, budget and manage translation projects involving single or multiple translators and/or other service providers

32 Understand and implement the standards applicable to the provision of a language service

33 Apply the quality management and quality assurance procedures required to meet pre-defined quality standards and manage client feedback and complaints

34 Critically assess and work within the ethical principles (such as confidentiality, fair competition, impartiality) defined in codes of ethics and guides of good practice

35 Network with other translators and language service providers, including via professional associations, events and social media so as to improve individual and collective professional visibility

36 Analyse and critically review language services and policies and suggest improvement strategies as an extension to their social and economic responsibility