

National Register of Irish Sign Language Interpreters
Specialisation Panels - Procedures
Sign Language Interpreting Service

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Section 1: Definition of Specialisation Panels

1.1 The Register will establish and maintain Specialisation Panels of interpreters for particular domains of interpreting that take place within particularly complex linguistic or educational settings, require specialised knowledge, skills and competencies, and/or in which there are particular and significant risks to health, liberty, or life outcomes of individuals requiring interpretation services. Members of Specialisation Panels shall possess excellent general ability in interpreting between ISL and English, as well as appropriate knowledge, skills and competencies within the specialised field of interpreting.

1.2 The Register recommends that only individuals who are members of a particular Specialisation Panel be considered appropriate for, or used, as interpreters in that particular domain of interpreting.

1.3 Interpreters with membership of a Specialisation Panel remain members of the generic Register, and must have previously, separately and successfully completed the generic Registration process (with the exception of the registration process for Deaf interpreters; see **Section 3.1.5** below). Non-registered interpreters cannot be considered for membership of a Specialisation Panel.

1.4 Interpreters will undergo a separate registration process to become a member of a Specialisation Panel (with the exception of the registration process for Deaf interpreters; see **Section 3.1.5** below).

1.5 The registration process(es) for Deaf interpreters will, by default, add successful applicants to both the generic Register, and the Deaf Interpreting Specialisation Panel, at the same time.

1.6 Registered interpreters can be members of more than one Specialisation Panel. Each Specialisation Panel membership must be awarded by successfully undergoing each separate application process.

Section 2: List of Panels

1.2.1 Generic register members who are not members of a Specialisation panel shall be labelled **[RG]**.

1.2.2 At the initial establishment of the Register, the following Specialisation Panel shall be established:

- **[RD] Specialisation – Deaf Interpreting**

1.2.3 The following Specialisation Panels shall be established within six months of the Register's establishment:

- **[RH] Specialisation – Healthcare Interpreting**
- **[RL] Specialisation – Legal interpreting**

1.2.4 It is envisaged that the Register will establish the following Specialisation Panels, and others which may be necessary, in the future:

- **[RM] Specialisation – Mental Health interpreting¹**
- **[RC] Specialisation – Conference / Higher Academic Interpreting**
- **[RW] Specialisation – Workplace Interpreting**

¹ It is envisaged that applicants wishing to join a Mental Health Specialisation Panel will have already successfully become a member of the Healthcare Interpreting Specialisation Panel.

Section 3: Criteria for Panel Membership

3.1 One of the following sets of criteria must be met for an applicant to be awarded membership of a Specialisation Panel:

- A. Successful completion of **accredited qualifications in the specialised domain** of interpreting.²
- B. **All** of the following:
- Completion of a **minimum of 10 hours of relevant structured CPD** over the last **ten** years (directly relevant to the domain of specialisation)
 - Completion of a **minimum of 24 hours of interpreting work practice** over the last **three** years in the domain of specialisation
 - Successful completion of a **Skills Check (Specialised)** (if deemed necessary by the Registration Panel)
 - Any **other criteria** (to be defined), depending on the domain of interpreting, the needs of interpreters working in the area, the changing profile of service users, or other factors.
- C. For Deaf interpreters, successful **application to register as a Deaf interpreter**, via either the **standard** or **alternative** routes to registration, shall lead to automatic membership of the **Deaf Interpreting Specialisation Panel**.

² As and when such accredited training becomes available.

Section 4: Application for Membership - Procedure

4.1 The applicant for the Specialisation Panel will be requested by the Registration Panel to submit the following information:

- a) Completed **Application Form** (see Section **XXX**) setting out
 - the reasons for wanting to join the Specialisation Panel
 - the relevant skills and experience of the candidate

- b) A **detailed Log of any structured Continuing Professional Development** carried out over the last ten years, relevant to the domain of interpreting in question. The Log must include:-
 - Date when the relevant structured CPD sessions were attended
 - Name of the trainer / training organisation
 - Title or subject of structured CPD session
 - Copies of attendance forms, or other documents, confirming your attendance

- c) Details of any **relevant accredited qualifications** that the applicant has achieved, relevant to the domain of specialisation in question. You must include
 - the title of the qualification
 - the accrediting body (e.g. college or university)
 - the year the qualification was achieved
 - Photocopies or transcripts of the qualification

- d) **Two reference letters** (from a Deaf service user, an interpreter experienced in the domain of interpreting, or other relevant organisations or individuals), testifying to the abilities of the applicant within the domain of specialisation in question.

- e) **Evidence of 24 hours of interpreting work practiced** over the last three years in the domain of specialisation in question. Evidence supplied can be in any of the forms of documentation below:
 - Letter from an interpreting agenc(ies), employer, or organisation confirming you have completed a set number of interpreting hours/assignments within the specific domain of interpreting
 - Invoices or attendance sheets for work completed (within the specific domain of interpreting)
 - Signature from a co-interpreter at an assignment
 - Other information as may be required by the Panel

4.2 Care must be taken by the applicant that no information on submitted documentation under **Section 4.2.1** above can identify service users or particular interpreted settings. Please ensure that all confidential information is removed and /or ensure you have the informed consent from all parties named in the documentation submitted. Documentation that the Panel feels to contain identifying information will be immediately returned to the applicant and will not be considered further.

4.3 Steps may be taken by the Panel to verify the information provided.

4.4 Canvassing by applicants or by others on behalf of applicants is strictly prohibited.

4.5 Complete the application form (see appendix 1 or 2) and submit by email, attaching the above information, to register@slis.ie. Alternatively, post or deliver in person, with hard copies of the above information, to: **Registration Panel, Sign Language Interpreting Service, Deaf Village Ireland, Ratoath Road, Cabra, Dublin 7.**

4.6 The applicant will be notified in writing (email/post) within 21 days if:

- The application is successful and the applicant is to be awarded membership of the Specialisation Panel
- The applicant is unsuccessful
- The applicant is awarded membership with conditions (see Section 2.4 below)
- The applicant is deemed to require a Skills Check (Specialised), with a statement of reasons why the Panel deem this necessary; details of dates, location etc. for same

4.7 Successful applicants and applicants who are registered with conditions will be provided with

- An **updated Certificate of Registration** with their unique registration number, plus details of their membership of the Specialisation Panel(s)
- An **updated Register Membership Card** featuring name, registration number, and updated details of their membership of the Specialisation Panel(s)

Section 5: Conditional Membership

5.1 An applicant may be awarded membership of a Specialisation Panel with conditions. Examples of conditional membership include:

- a) **Additional structured CPD:** The applicant agrees to successfully complete specific structured CPD within an agreed time period, in addition to the standard CPD requirements for maintenance of registration.
- b) **Mentorship:** The applicant agrees to undergo a defined period of mentorship with an individual approved by the Registration Panel. This mentorship will be structured and specifically geared to the domain of interpreting of the Specialisation Panel in question, and will take place in addition to standard CPD requirements for maintenance of registration.
- c) **Any other conditions** deemed necessary by the Registration Panel.

5.1 All conditions will be determined solely by the Registration Panel.

5.2 All conditions will be put in place for a specified time period. At the expiry of this period, contact will be made with the applicant to verify satisfaction of the conditions.

5.3 If the Registration Panel is of the view that all condition(s) have been complied with after the specified time period has elapsed, the registered member will be awarded membership of the Specialisation Panel in question. See Section 2.3.1.

5.4 If the Registration Panel is of the view that any condition(s) are not complied with within the specified time period, the registered member will be removed from the Specialisation Panel in question.

5.5 An applicant can appeal a decision of the Registration Panel not to accept them for membership of a Specialisation Panel. Appeals shall be made to the Appeals Committee (See Section **xxxx**).

5.6 An applicant can appeal the decision of the Registration Panel to impose conditions on their membership of a Specialisation Panel. Appeals shall be made to the Appeals Committee (See Section **xxxx**).

Section 6: Maintaining Membership: CPD requirements

6.1 Of the total number of hours of CPD that an interpreter must complete yearly, members of any Specialisation Panel must complete a minimum of **one-third** of those CPD hours which are relevant to that domain of interpreting within each calendar year.

6.2 Members of Specialisation Panels must keep records, evidence and explanations of their Specialisation Panel CPD activity as with their regular CPD activity.

6.3 Members of Specialisation Panels must comply with any request from the Registration Panel to audit CPD records.

6.4 Please see *Guidelines for CPD and Evidence of Work Practiced* for more information on how to comply with your requirements, including a CPD Portfolio template and evidence to provide when chosen for audit.

Section 7: Maintaining Membership - Work Practice requirements

7.1 Members of any Specialisation Panel must complete a minimum of 2 hours of interpreting work within the specialisation, in the 12 month period from date of awarding of membership of the Specialisation Panel.

7.2 Members of any Specialisation Panel must comply with requests from the Registration Panel to audit evidence of work practiced. See Section 4.3.

7.3 Please see *Guidelines for CPD and Evidence of Work Practiced* for more information on how to comply with your requirements.

7.4 Approximately 5% of all registered interpreters will be chosen at random annually for a work practice audit. If the registered interpreters selected for audit are also members of a Specialisation Panel(s), their work practise in relation to their specialisation(s) will also be audited (see Section 3.2.1 above).

7.5 The Registration Panel may also request that a registered interpreter be chosen for an audit specific to their work practice as a member of a Specialisation Panel. An interpreter could be chosen for audit if they fail to abide by one or more of the maintenance of membership requirements (see Section 4 above).

7.6 The registered interpreter will be notified in writing if they have been chosen for auditing purposes, and given 3 months to supply the relevant evidence of work practiced.

7.7 If the information provided is not satisfactory, the interpreter will be given a further 3 months to provide evidence of work practiced and submit updated information.

7.8 If the registered interpreter still fails to meet the requirements, the case will be brought to the Complaints Committee for consideration.

7.9 The registered interpreter can appeal the decision of the Complaints Committee (see Section XXX).

7.10 Information to provide if chosen for an audit may include:

- Letter from an interpreting agency confirming you have completed a set number of interpreting hours/assignments.
- Invoices for work completed

- Letter from employer or an organisation confirming you have completed a set number of interpreting hours/assignments.
- Attendance sheets
- Signature from a co-interpreter at an assignment (e.g. conference).
- Other information as may be required.

4.3.2 When submitting evidence of practice work, please ensure that all confidential information is removed and /or ensure you have the informed consent from all parties named in the documentation submitted.

4.3.3 Steps make be taken to verify the information provided.

4.4 Exemptions for work practiced

4.4.1 We are conscious that registered interpreters work in different circumstances and some may not have the same practice work opportunities as others. Registered interpreters who are members of a Specialisation Panel may apply to have the specific requirements of membership of that Panel reduced or suspended for one calendar year.

4.4.2 Applications for exemptions need to be made in writing to the Registration Panel stating:

- Why you are unable to meet your requirements, providing evidence if applicable.
- The amount of work practice you think you will be capable of completing in the calendar year.

4.4.3 Reasons for inability to meet requirements may include:

- Illness
- Injury
- maternity leave
- bereavement

or another issue which affects your ability to meet work practiced requirements.

Section 5: The Published Register – Specialisation Panels

5.1 Specialisation Panels - Information publically available

- 5.1.1 Once awarded membership of a Specialisation Panel, the details of Panel membership will be published electronically, alongside the registered interpreter's name and registration number, on the register which will be accessible at www.slis.ie.
- 5.1.2 The online Register will also display a full list of names of the members of each Specialisation Panel.
- 5.1.3 For more information on what personal data we keep and why, please see our *Privacy Policy*.

Section 6: Leaving a Specialisation Panel

6.1 Cancellation of membership (voluntary)

6.1.1 A member of a Specialisation Panel may at any time leave the Panel by writing to the Registration Panel with a request to that effect. On receipt of the written request, the Registration Panel will take the interpreter's name off the list of members of that Specialisation Panel.

6.1.2 Where a complaint has been made in respect of a Specialisation Panel member, he or she will not be able to voluntarily cancel their membership of any Specialisation Panel until the conclusion of the consideration of the complaint.

6.2.1 Removal from Specialisation Panel

6.2.1 The Registration Panel may send a written notification to a Specialisation Panel member to inform them of the removal of their Panel membership. In making its decision, the Registration Panel may consider the following:

- Any recommendation from the Complaints Committee.
- Whether there has been a failure to abide by maintenance of registration requirements (see Section 4).

6.2.2 Appeals

6.3.1 The Specialisation Panel member will be given 21 working days to appeal the decision of the Registration Panel. If the Specialisation Panel member appeals the decision of the Registration Panel, the case will go to the Appeals Committee.

6.3.2 If the Specialisation Panel member does not appeal the decision within 21 working days or the Appeals Committee upholds the decision of the Registration Panel, the Specialisation Panel member's name will be removed from the list of members of that Specialisation Panel.

6.3.3 For more information on appeals see Section 8.

Section 7: Specialisation Panel - Renewal and Practice Breaks

7.1 Renewal of Registration

7.1.1 Registered interpreters who have met all requirements in relation to maintenance of membership of any Specialisation Panels (see section 4) will have their membership renewed by the Registration Panel and be provided with an up to date Certificate of Registration.

7.2 Practice breaks of less than 12 months

7.2.1 A registered interpreter who has membership of a Specialisation Panel(s), and who takes a break from practising while following the criteria and requirements listed in Section 10.2 of the Registration Scheme Process, shall also retain their membership of the Specialisation Panel(s) for that period.

7.3 Practice breaks of more than 12 months

7.3.1 Should a registered interpreter notify the Registration Panel in writing of a practice break greater than 12 months, the registered interpreter's membership of any Specialisation Panel will also be cancelled.

Section 8: Appeals

8.1.1 Applicants and registered interpreters can appeal a decision by the Registration Panel in the following situations:

- 1) An unsuccessful application for membership of a Specialisation Panel
- 2) An application for membership of a Specialisation Panel resulting in conditions being attached to membership
- 3) Removal from a Specialisation Panel.

8.1.2 Appeals in relation to the above situations shall be considered by the Appeals Committee, as in **Registration Scheme Process, Section 11.**

8.1.3 An appeal must be made in writing within 21 working days of receiving the decision of the Registration Panel. The applicant can include additional information to the Appeals Committee to support their appeal.

8.1.4 Having considered the appeal, the Appeals Committee may

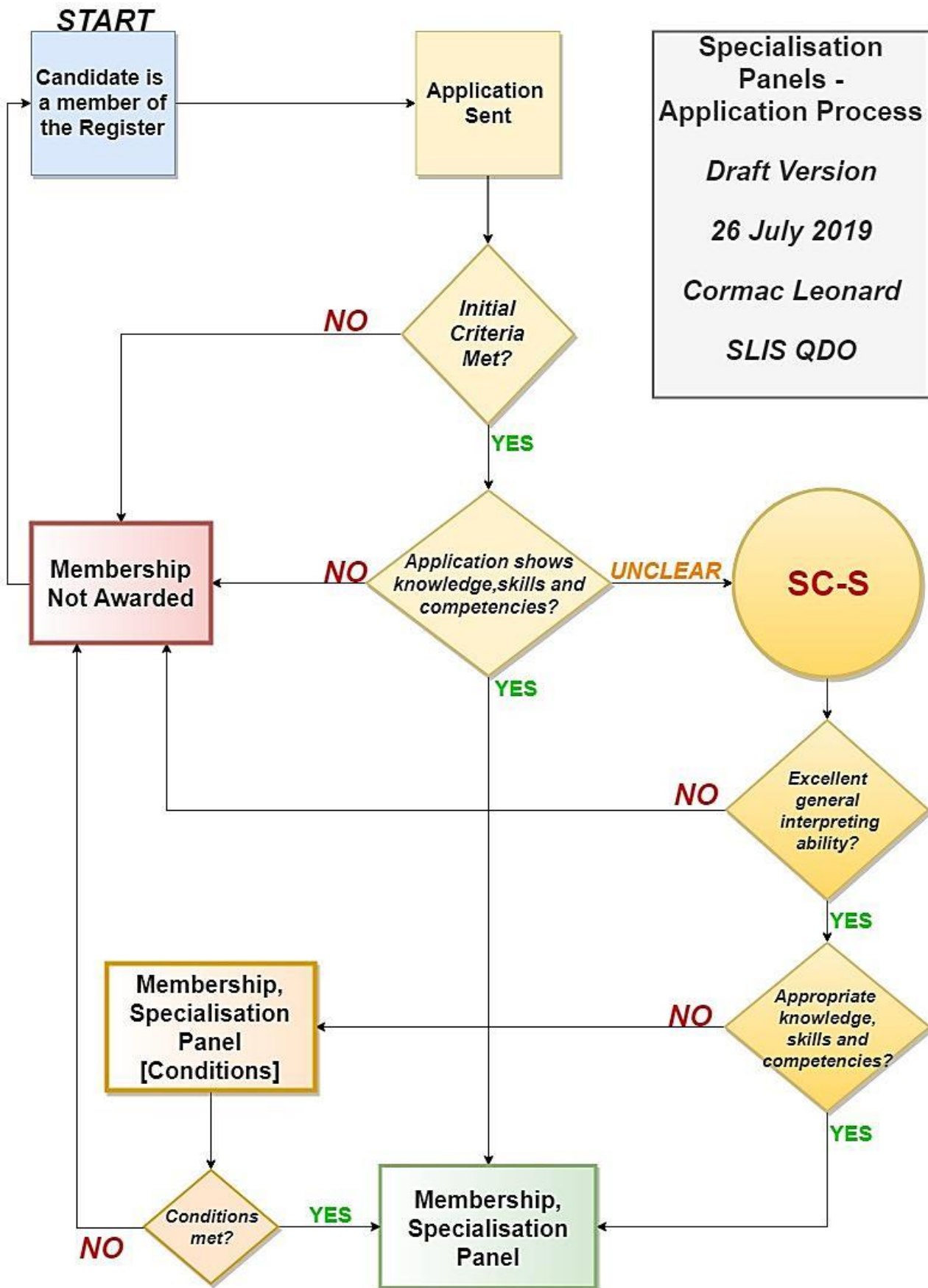
- Confirm the original decision of the Registration Panel
- Change the original decision of the Registration Panel
- Request additional information is provided by the applicant and/or requests the applicant to attend an in-person meeting with the Appeals Committee.

8.1.5 The Appeals Committee will make a decision as soon as possible after the meeting to consider the appeal.

8.1.6 The applicant will be informed the outcome of the Appeals Committee within 21 working days of the decision being made.

For more information see *Appeals Policy and Process*.

Section 9: Flowchart – Application Procedure



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