

NAATI and nominating your occupation as a Translator/Interpreter

In talking at universities around Sydney it still surprises us that many international students are still not aware of the advantages of passing the NAATI Professional Translator or Interpreter examinations. In this newsletter we will explain these advantages.

The Skilled Occupation List (SOL) – Translator ASCO Code 2529-15 Interpreter ASCO Code 2529-13

Since the SOL was devised and implemented in July 1999, the occupations as Translator and Interpreter have been overlooked by thousands of international students studying in Australia. Both of these occupations are listed as an occupation worth 60 points and the authorised skill assessment body is the National Australian Association of Translators and Interpreters commonly known in their abbreviation as NAATI.

There are various levels within NAATI but currently the Professional Level (formally known as Level 3) is the one you need to reach in order to obtain the 60 points for migration purposes. It is best to always check the web site of NAATI (www.naati.com.au) to ensure you are up to date with their requirements as they may change since this newsletter is published.

Recognised Languages

There is a specified list of languages where you can gain accreditation as a NAATI Translator or Interpreter. Please refer to the NAATI web site for this list since it can change. It is best you keep your information up to date.

For migration purposes, to nominate your occupation as a Translator or Interpreter, it does not matter which language you obtain the professional accreditation in. Do not confuse this with the Bonus Points in order to gain the extra 5 points where it must be in one of the Designated Languages. Please read our Newsletter Volume 15, Bonus Points – Language ability which you can download from our web site.

50 to 60 points?

The primary advantage in doing the NAATI exam and obtaining the accreditation is about the points gained. For years, many students who have finished their Bachelor Degree qualification in Australia and who can only obtain 50 points using these degrees, look to the NAATI test as a way of increasing their skill level from 50 to 60 points.

Of course this advantage is not just restricted to those who finish their degrees in Australia. Many students can use their Bachelor Degrees or other post secondary qualifications from overseas.

Ways to obtain NAATI Accreditation

There are three ways to obtain the NAATI accreditation necessary in order to obtain the skill level suitable for migration purposes.

- 1) by passing the NAATI test, or
- 2) by successfully completing a Translation and/or Interpreting course of studies approved by NAATI at an Australian Tertiary Institution, or
- 3) by providing evidence of specialised qualifications in translation/interpreting obtained from a recognised tertiary institution outside of Australia, or a membership of a recognised international professional Translation and/or Interpreting association. (You need to check with NAATI to find out which they are).

Two Test Directions!

The NAATI test can be completed in two different directions and you only need to pass in one of them in order to obtain accreditation.

NAATI suggest that you sit the translator test from your 'B' language (second language) to your 'A' language (home language). From their experience candidates are more likely to be successful if you do it this way.

For example if your home language is Japanese and your second language is English then you should sit the one-way Translator test: English to Japanese for your best chance.

If you wish you can sit the test in both directions but this may not be really necessary unless you are seeking the professional accreditation to help you in your career as a Translator.

Eligibility for Sitting the NAATI Test

For the Translator test you must first have at least one of the following;

- Hold a Diploma or Bachelor Degree (or higher), or
- Already have obtained NAATI Paraprofessional accreditation in Australia, or
- Demonstrate relevant work experience and provide an employment reference to support this, or
- Evidence of relevant post high school studies.

For the Interpreting Test

- Hold a Diploma or Bachelor Degree (or higher), or
- Already obtained the NAATI Paraprofessional accreditation obtained in Australia.

Over the years clients have told me that the Interpreting test is much harder than the Translator test so we recommend the Translator test first.

What if I don't pass and I need to apply for my PR?

Please read our Newsletter Volume 24 carefully regarding this issue. It is recommended that you try and pass the NAATI test before you lodge your onshore skilled migration visa (880, 881 etc). This way, you will know that you have the skill level required before the lodgement date.

You can apply without a positive result (onshore only) but you will need to provide it later. How much later will depend when DIMIA asks you and this time frame can vary. You will have at least 28 days after you apply and you may ask for an extension of time from your case officer but they do have to grant it. If you don't pass the test, then the MRT will be open to you as described in Volume 24. Good luck!

Karl Konrad, AILS March 2006 (MARA: 9904238). Copyright