



FINNISH NATIONAL BOARD
OF EDUCATION

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR AUTHORISED TRANSLATORS' EXAMINATIONS 2012

Regulations and Guidelines 22/011/2012

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1 Introduction

The Authorised Translator's Examination is based on the Act on Authorised Translators¹ and on the Government Decree on Authorised Translators² and it forms part of the translators' authorisation system. The purpose of the examination is to demonstrate language and translation skills in the examination languages and other skills required of professional authorised translators³. One of the translation languages must be Finnish, Swedish or Saami⁴. Examinations are organised at a date specified by the Authorised Translators' Examination Board at least once a year in locations specified by the Examination Board in different parts of Finland⁵. The qualification requirements, examination languages and their translation directions as well as test assignments are decided by the Finnish National Board of Education⁶.

These Qualification Requirements for Authorised Translators' Examinations determine the language and translation skills required in the examinations, the ability to practise as an authorised translator, as well as the ways of demonstrating the skills and the general criteria for assessment of the examinations⁷. The Qualification Requirements are intended for those participating in the examinations as well as for those involved in preparing and assessing the examinations. Furthermore, the Qualification requirements guide implementation of the qualifications system, different authorities, trainers in the field and users of authorised translators' services.

A person carrying the title of an authorised translator is an expert who has the right to carry out authorised translations. The title may only be used by a person who has been granted the right to practise as an authorised translator in the manner referred to in the Act on Authorised Translators⁸.

The examination is independent of the manner in which professional translation skills were originally acquired. Competencies obtained through education, training and working life are utilised within the examination in order to demonstrate language and translation skills. Test assignments are derived from the world of work and its development needs.

2 Objectives of the examinations

The objective of the examination is to provide the prerequisites for applying to the Authorised Translators' Examination Board for the right to use the title of authorised translator⁹. The examination measures an examinee's functional translation skills, i.e. how fluently a translator can manage different assignments and situations requiring the contents and legal considerations of documents to be conveyed reliably into another language and cultural sphere. In order to allow

¹ Act on Authorised Translators (1231/2007; *laki auktorisoiduista kääntäjistä*)

² Government Decree on Authorised Translators (1232/2007; *valtioneuvoston asetus auktorisoiduista kääntäjistä*)

³ Act on Authorised Translators, section 7

⁴ Government Decree on Authorised Translators, section 5

⁵ Government Decree on Authorised Translators, section 6

⁶ Act on Authorised Translators, section 7

⁷ Act on Authorised Translators, section 7

⁸ Act on Authorised Translators, section 18

⁹ Act on Authorised Translators, section 2

assessment of functional translation skills, the applications, or functions, of translations must be clearly and precisely indicated in the translation assignments used in an examination. Selection of assignments and determination of functions must take the needs of authorised translation into account.

A translation produced by an authorised translator must be considered to be legally valid, unless proven to be erroneous¹⁰. In terms of international document transmission, it is important that citizens and authorities can trust that document translation is based on authorisation supervised by a public body. The purpose of the Authorised Translators' Examinations is to guarantee that the competence required in the examinations is demonstrated in a reliable and sufficiently comprehensive manner.

3 Structure and content of the examinations

The purpose of the Authorised Translators' Examination is to demonstrate language and translation skills in the examination languages and other skills required of professional authorised translators¹¹. The part measuring language and translation skills in an Authorised Translators' Examination consists of two translation assignments. One of the translation assignments is to be performed in the field of law and administration and the other in an optional specialist field determined in the Qualification Requirements¹². The part measuring other skills required for practice of the authorised translator's profession consists of a multiple-choice assignment testing professional translation practices¹³. The Authorised Translators' Examinations are based on the requirements of the core functions of the translator's profession, mastery of operating processes and on extensive professional practices. Special attention will be dedicated to the legal nature of authorised translation work.

Successful completion of an examination requires passing all parts of the examination within the same examination session¹⁴. The parts of the Authorised Translators' Examinations are:

- 1 a part measuring the authorised translator's other skills (auth1)
- 2 a part measuring the language and translation skills in law and administration (auth2)
- 3 a part measuring the language and translation skills in a specialist field (auth3).

Part 1 is a multiple-choice test. The test language is either Finnish or Swedish. Part 2 is a translation assignment in the field of law and administration. Part 3 is a translation assignment in an optional specialist field. The optional specialist fields are business and economy, education, medicine or technology.

¹⁰ Act on Authorised Translators, section 6

¹¹ Act on Authorised Translators, section 7

¹² Government Decree on Authorised Translators, section 5

¹³ Government Decree on Authorised Translators, section 5

¹⁴ Government Decree on Authorised Translators, section 7

4 Language and translation skills required in the examinations, ability to practise as an authorised translator and criteria for assessment

The areas assessed in the examination are language skills, translation skills and an authorised translator's other skills. Assessment is based on assessment criteria, which have been derived from the examination requirements. The assessment criteria are used to verify performance sufficient for a pass or to justify failing the performance.

4.1 Language skills

Examinees must command two languages, one of which must be Finnish, Swedish or Saami (North Saami, Inari Saami or Skolt Saami). The test assignments have been drawn up such that their acceptable completion requires a command of the source and target languages at least equivalent to level C2 (see Appendix 2: Language levels of the Common European Framework of Reference).

| Examination requirements | Assessment criteria |
|--|---|
| <p>Sociocultural knowledge of the source and target languages</p> <p>An authorised translator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is aware of the culturally bound nature of interpreting a text • is well versed in the cultures and social principles and norms of the areas where his/her working languages are spoken to the extent required for his/her work assignments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is capable of interpreting culture-bound language; • demonstrates that he/she masters general knowledge of society through linguistic choices • demonstrates that he/she masters the basic knowledge of and prevailing practices in fields relevant to authorised translation through his/her linguistic choices. |
| <p>Command of the source language</p> <p>An authorised translator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understands structurally and linguistically complex texts • understands professional vocabulary and terms from different fields • understands the perspective of an official or another expert and its effect on the structure of a text • notices deficiencies and discrepancies in the text and treats these in accordance with the commission • is familiar with reliable style and usage resources and references available in the relevant language and cultural area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is able to pick the elements relevant in terms of the assignment from supplementary and parallel texts or other sources • understands different types of texts drawn up by officials or other experts • knows how to analyse different types of texts in terms of the specified communicative goal • notices the emphasis given to topics dealt with in the source text. |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Command of the target language</p> <p>An authorised translator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produces the target language consistently • writes clear and faultless text according to the commission and the style required for the assignment • is able to use terms and terminological phrases from different fields competently. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistently follows a given geographical language variant • masters the structures of his/her examination languages • masters the standard-language vocabulary of his/her examination languages to the extent required for professional translation • masters the stylistic devices of his/her examination languages • masters the grammatical rules and good usage of the target language • is capable of making deliberate structural and stylistic choices according to the aim of the text • masters the usage and terminology of law and administration as specified for each assignment • masters the usage and terminology of education, medicine, business and economy or technology as specified for each assignment • masters general vocabulary and phraseology of the field being translated and the necessary specialist vocabulary to the extent required for the assignment • is able to explain concepts and phenomena that lack sufficient equivalents in the target language in popular terms, as required. |
|---|---|

4.2 Translation skills

Translation skills are assessed on the basis of two translations dealing with different subjects.

| Examination requirements | Assessment criteria |
|--|--|
| <p>An authorised translator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performs his/her assignments conscientiously, demonstrating that he/she has internalised the role of an authorised translator • notices and is able to solve problems relating to translations of specialised texts and general documents • produces a translation that is understandable in terms of content, fluent in terms of language and suitable for the function | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepares an accurate and comprehensive translation, detailed down to nuances, for the purpose specified for the assignment • recognises and avoids such factual mistakes that lead to misinterpretation of the whole text or a relevant passage and, subsequently, to erroneous conclusions • interprets details correctly • avoids amplification of meaning (such as substituting a superordinate term for a subordinate term in a conceptual system) • uses accurate expressions • uses specialist terms instead of standard-language expressions • avoids adding information elements unnecessarily • avoids leaving information elements out without justification • follows the rules of grammar • avoids expressions that are awkward or atypical of the language concerned • follows the style of the specific genre or the writer • avoids disconnected sentences and ideas • is capable of writing translator's notes as required |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knows how to use resources and references as required for the assignment • manages his/her use of time and is capable of working under pressure. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses search engines, electronic dictionaries and encyclopaedias available on the Internet, for example, as well as other resources and references, such as parallel texts, vocabularies, drawings, diagrams, etc., critically, naturally, swiftly and resourcefully • completes each assignment to a high quality standard, such that the translation conveys a polished impression. |

4.3 Other skills

The part of the examination measuring authorised translators' other skills aims to ensure that a translator is able to assess his/her own work and assume responsibility for it. Authorised translators should understand all phases of the work process and, in particular, guidance of

clients, agreement on an assignment and its terms and conditions and ensuring the functionality of a translation. Translators should be able to establish and take into account a client's translation needs and, where necessary, to advise the client on translation arrangements and possible further processing of a translation. They should find out about the authority which will handle the translation and obtain, accept and make use of feedback in continuous improvement of their own work and professional skills. Authorised translators should be able to assess their own work and actions realistically. They should follow developments in society and in the translation industry, understand the importance of professional development and keep their skills and knowledge up to date.

| Examination requirements | Assessment criteria |
|--|---|
| <p>An authorised translator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is able to describe the ethical principles of the translation industry and acts accordingly • functions in a professional manner • is aware of his/her professional role, and related legal and financial responsibilities in particular, and acts accordingly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is familiar with the principles relating to impartiality, confidentiality, secrecy and integrity • is aware of his/her professional responsibility as the medium of other people's messages and ideas • acts without taking a personal stand on the matter being dealt with • understands the significance of accurate translation • knows that he/she may only accept assignments which he/she is entitled and sufficiently qualified to perform • is familiar with the duty to investigate • is familiar with the duty of care • informs a client of any errors left in his/her translation and knows how to correct them • is able to compare his/her activities to those of the authorities |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is familiar with types of documents and statutes governing these • is familiar with general instructions for drawing up documents and applies these to preparing a translation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is familiar with the classification of documents into permanent, temporary, public and private documents and is aware of the significance of different types of documents to preparing a translation • is aware of the requirements of good linguistic usage in and formalities concerning documents (title, factual content, date, confirmation or certification of authenticity, signatures, stamps, etc.) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is familiar with instructions for preparation of legally valid translations and knows how to apply these in work situations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is familiar with the principles of preparing legally valid translations |

| | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is familiar with statutes and regulations governing authorised translators and the Authorised Translators' Examinations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is familiar with the Act and Government Decree governing authorised translators and the Examination Guidelines: Act on Authorised Translators (1231/2007) Government Decree on Authorised Translators (1232/2007) Guidelines for Authorised Translators' Examinations, Finnish National Board of Education Regulations and Guidelines 22/011/2012 • is familiar with the core contents of statutes listed in Appendix 2 or more recent equivalent statutes (see Appendix 2, Effective statutes). |
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5 Ways of demonstrating skills

The language and translation skills required in the examination are demonstrated through two translation assignments, one of which covers the field of law and administration (auth2) and the other the field of education, medicine, business and economy or technology (auth3), as chosen by each examinee. These two translation assignments are also used to demonstrate command of the source and target languages and knowledge of cultures in the language areas, which form an integral part of translation skills. Other skills are demonstrated through a multiple-choice test (auth1).

The examination is to be taken in a supervised area. The translation assignments are performed using a computer. With adequate justification, an examinee may be allowed to perform the translation assignments in writing. Use of written and electronic resources and references (including the Internet) is allowed for translation assignments, however, excluding translation software and e-mail connections or other contacts with other people. The multiple-choice test is to be taken without reference tools. The order in which the examination assignments are to be taken is as per their numbering.

6 Special arrangements

If an examinee requires special arrangements when taking the examination, he or she must, upon registration as an examinee, present an appropriate medical certificate or a statement from another specialist to the Authorised Translators' Examination Board to clarify how the handicap in question affects taking the examination. Based on such a certificate or statement, the Examination Board may grant the right for special arrangements to an individual with visual or mobility impairments, for example.

Regardless of special arrangements, the test performances will be assessed according to the same criteria as are otherwise used to assess performance in the Authorised Translators' Examinations. Examination performance may only be accepted if all parts and assignments have been passed within the same examination session.

7 Assessment of test performances

Examinations are assessed by assessors appointed and trained by the Finnish National Board of Education¹⁵. The translation assignments are assessed by at least two assessors, one of whom is an expert in the source language and the other in the target language. Assessment is carried out in keeping with the assessment criteria for language skills, translation skills and other skills. Test performances are assessed anonymously, which means that the assessors and the examinee will not be informed of each other's identity.

Performance is assessed on the scale of pass/fail¹⁶.

8 Examination certificate

Those passing the Authorised Translators' Examination will be awarded a certificate¹⁷ by the Authorised Translators' Examination Board. Those failing the examination will receive a decision on failed performance.

A certificate awarded for successful completion of the examination must indicate at least the following details:

- 1) the name of the examination;
- 2) the statutes and regulations governing the examination;
- 3) the name of the examination board awarding the certificate;
- 4) the examinee's personal data;
- 5) the examination languages and translation direction;
- 6) the grading scale for the examination; and
- 7) the place and date of award of the certificate.

Certificates are signed by the chair and secretary of the Examination Board or, if the chair is unavailable, the vice-chair and the secretary¹⁸. An examination certificate does not confer the right to practise as an authorised translator. A specific application for the right to practise as an authorised translator must be made to the Authorised Translators' Examination Board on the basis of an examination certificate. The right to practise as an authorised translator is to be applied for using a form confirmed by the Examination Board¹⁹.

¹⁵ Act on Authorised Translators, section 13

¹⁶ Government Decree on Authorised Translators, section 7

¹⁷ Act on Authorised Translators, section 8

¹⁸ Government Decree on Authorised Translators, section 8

¹⁹ Government Decree on Authorised Translators, section 2

9 Legal safeguards for examinees

Authorised Translators' Examinations are to be assessed in such a way that the name of an individual examinee will not be disclosed to the assessors. Examinees are informed of the way in which assessment criteria are applied to their performance in the examination. Assessment is not subject to appeal²⁰. Notwithstanding, a person failing the examination has the right to request rectification from the Authorised Translators' Examination Board within 30 days of the date when he or she has been informed of such decision and of application of assessment criteria to his or her performance²¹.

²⁰ Act on Authorised Translators, section 21

²¹ Act on Authorised Translators, section 21

Appendix 1. Language levels of the Common European Framework of Reference

| | A1 | A2 | B1 |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| Listening | I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly. | I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements. | I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear. |
| Reading | I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues. | I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters. | I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters. |
| Spoken interaction | I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics. | I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself. | I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events). |
| Spoken production | I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know. | I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job. | I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions. |
| Writing | I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form. | I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something. | I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions. |

| | B2 | C1 | C2 |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|
| Listening | I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect. | I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort. | I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent. |
| Reading | I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose. | I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field. | I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works. |
| Spoken interaction | I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views. | I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers. | I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it. |
| Spoken production | I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. | I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion. | I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. |
| Writing | I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences. | I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind. | I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works. |

Source: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Council of Europe 2001.

Appendix 2. Statutes and regulations tested in the part measuring other skills

Effective statutes:

Convention abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents (Hague Convention, Finnish Treaty Series 46/1985, and the consequent Apostille procedure)

Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003; *hallintolaki*)

Section 13 – Privilege

Section 26 – Interpretation and translation

Section 65 – Disqualification of an interpreter or a translator

Section 69 – Breach of privilege

Administrative Judicial Procedure Act (586/1996; *hallintolainkäyttölaki*)

Section 77 – Interpretation and translation

Penal Code (39/1989; *rikoslaki*)

Chapter 33 – Forgery offences

Section 1 – Forgery

Section 2 – Aggravated forgery

Section 3 – Petty forgery

Section 4 – Possession of forgery materials

Section 6 – Definitions

Chapter 38 – Data and communications offences

Section 1 – Secrecy offence

Section 2 – Secrecy violation

Chapter 40 – Offences in office

Section 5 – Breach and negligent breach of official secrecy

Act on the Openness of Government Activities (621/1999; *laki viranomaisten toiminnan julkisuudesta*)

Section 10 – Access to a secret document

Section 22 – Document secrecy

Section 23 – Non-disclosure and prohibition of use

Section 24 – Secret official documents

Section 25 – Seal of secrecy and classification

Language Act (423/2003; *kielilaki*)

Section 10 – The linguistic rights of a private individual before an authority

Section 11 – The linguistic rights of a legal person before an authority

Section 18 – The right to interpretation

Section 20 – Right to a translation of a document containing a decision and other documents

Section 21 – Official translation of a document containing a decision and of other documents

Section 22 – Issuing a document containing a decision and other documents in a foreign language

Aliens Act (301/2004; *ulkomaalaislaki*)

Chapter 1 – General provisions

Section 10 – Using interpreters or translators

Chapter 14 – Miscellaneous provisions

Section 203 – Interpretation and translation

Sámi Language Act (1086/2003; *saamen kielilaki*)

Section 13 – Right to receive documents containing a decision and other documents in the Sámi language

Section 19 – The right to interpretation

Section 20 – Right to a translation of a document containing a decision or another document

Directive 2010/64/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings (Interpretation Directive)

Criminal Procedure Act (689/1997; *laki oikeudenkäynnistä rikosasioissa*)

Chapter 6a – Language used at trial

Criminal Investigations Act (805/2011; *esitutkintalaki*)

Chapter 4

Section 13 – Translation of a document