



**Australian Institute of
Interpreters and Translators Inc**

RECOMMENDED REMOTE VIDEO INTERPRETING PROTOCOLS FOR COMMUNITY INTERPRETING ASSIGNMENTS

Remote interpreting is complex and cognitively taxing. It requires all participants to follow strict protocols in order for successful communication to take place. These protocols aim to provide some basic guidelines to inform current remote video interpreting practice in community settings. AUSIT also has [Recommended Protocols for Telephone interpreting](#). AUSIT recognises that different organisations may have their own specific guidelines that suit their needs. Flexibility and professional judgement may be needed to cater for different settings.

Most interactions are better suited to face-to-face interpreting. However, situations beyond the control of the participants may require the use of remote interpreting. If there is a choice between telephone or video interpreting, provided the technology is adequate and there are no special privacy restrictions, video interpreting should be given preference, as it provides visual cues in addition to the audio feed.

Interpreters with the highest level of qualifications should always be given preference for any interpreting work.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN BEFORE THE MEETING MEETING ORGANISER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The interpreter should be told the nature of the meeting and provided with as much detail and information as possible when they are booked for the assignment. Such briefing and information should be provided well in advance, when possible, in order for the interpreter to adequately prepare.

If it is an emergency assignment, once the interpreter is allocated, they should be given sufficient time before the assignment commences to allow them to find a suitable and private place in which to take the call, making sure they have access to a good computer, good internet connection, good headphones and microphone and a comfortable desk and chair.

The interpreter should be given an indication of the expected duration of the meeting. For assignments that go over 90 minutes, it is advisable to hire two interpreters to work as a team, especially in complex assignments. When such a practice is not possible, interpreters should be given regular breaks, at least every 20 to 30 minutes.

SETTING UP THE MEETING

The meeting organiser should set up the meeting by choosing the relevant options. For example, most video conferencing platforms have password protection, a waiting room, disabled recording by others, etc.

The meeting organiser should appoint a chair to the meeting.

The meeting organiser should send the interpreter the invitation with briefing materials as soon as practicable.

Recording the meeting without the written consent of all involved should not be permitted.

INTERPRETERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Interpreters should ensure that they are in a private place where confidentiality can be maintained.

Interpreters should also consider their positioning and lighting, ensuring that the light faces them and is not behind them.

Interpreters should ensure that they familiarise themselves with the platform being used prior to the assignment and conduct a test call, where possible.

Interpreters should avoid swivelling if seated on a swivel chair.

Interpreters should ensure that they are not distracted by any external noises or other activities.

Interpreters should ensure they have the necessary equipment and technology, including: adequate internet connection, a good computer or other suitable device (i.e. laptop, tablet), relevant video conference/remote interpreting application and headphones with noise cancelling microphone.

It is recommended that computers be connected to the internet by ethernet cable rather than using a WiFi connection, where possible.

Interpreters should dress professionally for the assignment and adhere to the [AUSIT Code of Ethics](#) at all times.

Interpreters may refuse assignments when conditions are not appropriate or when they are not in a position to take the job; or propose alternative arrangements.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN DURING THE MEETING

MEETING ORGANISER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Just before the meeting, the meeting organiser should 'admit' the interpreter first for a briefing. The meeting organiser should brief the interpreter about the meeting, specify any requirements and ask the interpreter to tell the meeting organiser what the interpreter will need in order to perform their duties. The meeting organiser may want to ask the interpreter if there are any cultural differences that the meeting organiser should be aware of.

The meeting organiser should admit other participants and lock the meeting for security.

At the commencement of the meeting, the meeting organiser should ensure there are no technical issues to be resolved.

The meeting organiser should introduce everyone and explain the interpreter's role as *an impartial professional who will interpret everything faithfully and maintain strict confidentiality.*

The meeting organiser should explain the protocols to be followed as they appear below as succinctly as possible.

PROTOCOLS TO BE FOLLOWED

The chair of the meeting should control the communication flow and direct turn-taking by all participants.

The chair may wish to mute all participants and unmute them or ask them to unmute themselves when they are required to speak. This will depend on the number of participants.

Only one person can speak at a time.

For large meetings, any participant who wishes to have the floor may use the 'raise hand' function to ask for the floor or write a comment on the chat board. For small meetings, the above may not be needed.

If there is any written text that will be read out during the meeting, the chair will share the screen so the interpreter can do a sight translation.

The interpreter should be given time to interpret the above protocols to the non-English speaker.

Research recommends that interpreters be given breaks every 30 minutes in face-to-face interpreting interactions and more often in remote interpreting situations, as the latter is more taxing and causes more fatigue for interpreters. However, interpreters can agree with the meeting organiser when they need to take a break.

INTERPRETERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Interpreters should act professionally at all times. If they need to seek clarification, ask for repetition, or report any technical issue, they should use the 'raise hand' function or write a comment on the chat board. In small meetings they may simply conduct themselves as they would in a face-to-face assignment by stating that the interpreter requires a repetition or clarification.

Interpreters may need to take a turn to manage the communication flow if the chair is not adequately coordinating the turns.

Interpreters may need to ask for breaks when needed if they are not given any by the chair.

If possible, interpreters should have a blank or professional looking background. Interpreters may wish to stop their video while they are interpreting so they do not distract the other participants, especially if simultaneous interpreting is used. This should be negotiated and agreed with the other parties.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN AT THE END OF THE MEETING

MEETING ORGANISER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The chair of the meeting should thank the participants and announce that the meeting has ended.

The interpreter should be invited to stay after the non-English speaker has left the meeting in order to debrief, if necessary.

Please Note: Professional Remote Interpreting services are available and recommended.

For protocols on international conference remote interpreting, please refer to the AIIC guidelines: <https://aiic.org/>