

Interpreter Guide to Individual Assessment

Why have I been asked to do an Individual Assessment?

There are several reasons why you may be required to undertake an Individual Assessment (IA) as part of the MoJ Language Services quality assurance process. This may be as part of the onboarding process with a Language Provider, following a failed Planned Assessment, or in response to a complaint about the quality of your interpreting.

Your Language Provider should contact you first to explain why you have been asked to undertake an IA and advise you that The Language Shop (TLS) will then contact you to request your availability for the assessment.

What is the role of The Language Shop (TLS)?

TLS provides quality assurance for the MoJ Language Services and is responsible for organising and facilitating assessments of Language Professionals. TLS is responsible for the assessment process itself; however, we do not manage the wider language service or your bookings with the Language Provider. For enquiries relating to bookings or other aspects of the language service, you should contact your Language Provider directly, as they are best placed to assist you with these matters.

If you are unsure whether your question relates to the assessment process, please contact us and we will be happy to clarify who can best assist you.

What is my role in the assessment?

You will be taking part in a roleplay scenario involving a member of TLS and a script reader who is fluent in the required language. Your role will be to interpret the conversation between the two parties. The roleplay scenarios are designed to reflect real-life MoJ settings and include legal terminology commonly encountered in MoJ bookings. Examples may include police interviews, court proceedings or giving evidence during a trial. You will be advised in advance of the type of roleplay scenario that will be used for your assessment.

What is the difference between the Community IA and the Professional IA?

You will receive an email from us confirming whether you are required to undertake a Community or Professional level IA. MoJ bookings are categorised in the same way. The main differences between the two assessment types are the level of complexity, terminology and length of the assessment. A Professional IA will involve a more complex scenario and may include more advanced legal terminology than a Community IA.

How will this assessment be carried out?

The most commonly used method for an Individual Assessment is via remote video platform. This provides greater flexibility when scheduling assessments and enables us to arrange your assessment as soon as possible. You can request to complete your assessment at an office location if you would prefer. However, please be aware that this may affect how quickly we are able to arrange your assessment, as we need to coordinate the availability of the appropriate script reader and a suitable assessment room. Any costs associated with your time and travel for an IA, where you request an office-based assessment, will not be covered by The Language Shop.

Regardless of whether your assessment is conducted remotely or face-to-face, the assessment will be recorded for quality assurance and assessment purposes. If held remotely, you will be required to have your camera turned on. This is to protect the integrity of the assessment material. Assessments need to take place in a quiet home or secure office environment, where you will not be overheard or have background noise.

Note: We will not be able to conduct the assessment if your camera is turned off. You must use a laptop or PC (and not a mobile phone) to undertake the IA.

You will not be assessed live during your IA. The session will be recorded and sent to an assessor after the assessment has concluded. The assessment outcome is based solely on the interpreting demonstrated during the session. To support an objective assessment, the assessor is not informed of the reason for your IA.

How long will this assessment take?

The assessment roleplay durations are:

Community level: approximately 20-25 minutes

Professional level: approximately 30-35 minutes

Note: Significantly exceeding the indicated duration may affect the assessment outcome.

Can I ask for repetition and clarifications during the IA?

You are encouraged to ask for repetition or clarification during the IA where reasonably required. The flow of the conversation should reflect a typical interpreting assignment, so requests should be made where they would be appropriate in a real-life setting. You are also encouraged to take notes as appropriate, to help you accurately retain and interpret key information.

Why do I need to take a pre-IA call?

You will be required to undertake a short call (approx. 10 minutes) via remote video, prior to the assessment date. This is to enable us to run through the expectations for your assessment, assist with any technical issues if you have difficulty connecting, and to check that your connection is stable. The call will also provide the opportunity to answer any questions you may have so that you are fully prepared for the assessment.

The pre-IA call must be held in the same place you will be connecting on the day of assessment, so please ensure you are in a quiet location either at home or in a secure office environment to ensure no disruptions will occur during the assessment.

Note: The assessment can only proceed if the pre-IA call has been completed at least three days prior to your assessment.

How is the assessment outcome determined?

Your assessment outcome is determined against rigorous, standardised assessment criteria. The same criteria are applied to all IAs, regardless of complexity, enabling assessors to evaluate your interpreting performance consistently and objectively against the required standard. All assessments undergo an internal quality check before the outcome is issued.

You will receive one of three assessment outcomes:

- **Pass** – you will be permitted to undertake MoJ bookings.
- **Development Recommended** – you will be permitted to undertake MoJ bookings, but development has been recommended in specific areas to support you in consistently meeting the required standard of interpreting.
- **Fail** – You will be removed from the MoJ Register for the affected language(s) and will not be permitted to undertake bookings. *Further details below.*

What if I fail my assessment?

We will notify you of your assessment result by email. If you fail the Subject Matter and/or Language criteria, you will be removed from the MoJ Register for the failed language only. If you fail the Interpreting Skills and/or Compliance & Professionalism criteria, you will be removed from the MoJ Register for all languages you deliver. You will also receive a development plan outlining the areas identified for development and recommendations to support your improvement.

If this is your first failed IA, you may be eligible for a further IA once you have completed the recommendations in your development plan. You should discuss this with your Language Service Provider, who will confirm with TLS whether you wish to proceed.

If you fail a subsequent IA, a further IA cannot be requested for a minimum of 12 weeks from the date your development plan was issued. This allows time for you to undertake any recommended development and prepare for a further assessment. Your Language Provider will discuss your progress with you and confirm with TLS when you are ready to proceed.

When will I receive my result and what do I need to do next?

Following your IA, the recording is sent to an assessor for assessment. Once the assessment has been completed, the result is reviewed and verified by the QA team. We aim to issue your result within 7–10 working days of your IA. If there are any delays, we will keep you informed and aim to provide your result as soon as possible.

There is no need for you to contact your Language Provider separately, as we will notify all relevant parties when your result is issued. If you have passed your assessment and have questions about bookings, please contact your Language Provider directly, as they will be able to assist you.

Reasonable Adjustments

If you have a disability, medical condition or other circumstance that may affect your ability to participate in the assessment in the usual way, please let TLS know as soon as possible, in advance of your assessment. We will discuss your individual requirements with you and consider whether a reasonable adjustment can be made to support your participation in the assessment process. All requests will be considered on an individual basis.

Can I appeal my assessment outcome?

You have the right to appeal your IA outcome. If you wish to appeal, you must submit your appeal within 10 working days of being notified of the outcome. Your appeal should clearly explain the grounds for the appeal and include any relevant information or evidence you would like to be considered.

Once your appeal has been received, it will be reviewed in accordance with the IA appeals process. You will be informed of the outcome of the appeal once the review has been completed.

How is the assessment stored and shared?

Your assessment recording is stored securely on our Quality Assurance System, with access restricted to authorised QA team members. Appointed assessors are given access for a limited period solely for quality assurance purposes, after which their access automatically expires. The recording will not be shared with third parties, and we are unable to provide candidates with a copy.

Personal recording of the assessment by any individual is strictly prohibited.

Your assessment result will be shared with the Language Provider(s) you are registered with to deliver interpreting services in MoJ bookings. The assessment result will also be shared with the MoJ.

What if I have further questions?

We appreciate that you may feel apprehensive about undertaking an assessment. Please be assured that the purpose of the IA is to assess your interpreting against the required standard, not to catch you out. Our QA team will support you throughout the process and will be available to answer any questions you may have.

Please email us at moj@languageshop.org, or alternatively, you can contact us on 0203 3038 6743 and ask to speak to a member of the MoJ QA team.