



Designation: F3130 – 18

Standard Practice for Language Service Companies¹

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INTRODUCTION

This practice specifies the basic policies, processes, procedures, and resources needed by a Language Service Company (LSC) to provide the quality services required by its clients. This practice is meant to be a general introduction to the requirements of an LSC, but we leave it for future exposition as to the specific standards for specified functions including, but not limited to, translation, interpreting, language training, and language testing.

This practice represents a minimum requirements for all Language Service Companies, but is meant to be supplemented by specific standards pertinent to specific service areas, such as the services enumerated above. By adhering to the requirements of the practice, an LSC will consistently meet or exceed client expectations, and that level of performance will bring substantial benefit to the client as well as greater professional recognition to those companies that are certified to this practice.

1. Scope

1.1 This practice establishes minimum management infrastructure, operations, and development requirements for an LSC to meet the diverse and evolving needs of its clients as expressed in the job specifications for assignments, as outlined in a Job Needs Analysis. The principles presented in this practice are of value to all LSCs and in particular to those companies starting up in the industry and working to achieve the description of an LSC eligible for certification in Section 5 of this practice.

1.2 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

1.3 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F43 on Language Services and Products and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F43.05 on Language Services Companies.

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2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

F1562 Guide for Use-Oriented Foreign Language Instruction
F2089 Practice for Language Interpreting
F2575 Guide for Quality Assurance in Translation
F2889 Practice for Assessing Language Proficiency

2.2 ISO Standards:³

ISO 2603 Simultaneous Interpreting – Permanent Booths – Requirements
ISO 4043 Simultaneous Interpreting – Mobile Booths – Requirements
ISO 9001 Quality Management Systems – Requirements
ISO 13611 Interpreting – Guidelines for Community Interpreting
ISO 17100 Translation Services – Requirements for Translation Services
ISO 18587 Translation Services – Post-editing of Machine Translation Output – Requirements
ISO 20109 Simultaneous Interpreting – Equipment – Requirements

² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

³ Available from International Organization for Standardization (ISO), ISO Central Secretariat, BIBC II, Chemin de Blandonnet 8, CP 401, 1214 Vernier, Geneva, Switzerland, <http://www.iso.org>.

ISO 29991 Language Learning Services Outside Formal Education – Requirements

ISO/TS 11669 Translation Projects – General Guidance

2.3 Other Standards:

CAN/CGSB-131.10 Translation Services⁴

EN 15038 Translation Services – Service Requirements⁵

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.1.1 *client*—the entity which contracts with the LSC and is responsible for paying for the services rendered.

3.1.1.1 *Discussion*—A client may or may not be an end user, that is, one or more individuals who utilize the language service.

3.1.2 *continuous improvement*—the ongoing process of identifying systemic weaknesses in all operations and taking corrective action to eliminate them, or ameliorate them if elimination is not feasible.

3.1.3 *demonstrate*—to provide evidence to an independent certifying body, through mutually agreed upon written documentation, observation, or interview, or combinations thereof, that a task or function can be and, in fact, is performed according to the requirements of the standard.

3.1.4 *evaluate*—to test or measure, or both, skill and proficiencies applicable to a specific function, usually used for language function.

3.1.5 *Job Needs Analysis*—a process which solicits necessary information to identify the language services required by a client and ensures that the job specifications reflect these requirements.

3.1.6 *Language Service*—a tangible or intangible economic good that facilitates communication in written, oral, or visual form between two or more parties where there is insufficient ability by the parties to directly communicate or comprehend, or both, each other linguistically.

3.1.7 *Language Service Company (LSC)*—an organization that provides one or more language services.

3.1.8 *Quality Assurance (QA)*—the Quality Management activities focused on auditing process procedures to provide confidence to management, customers, and third parties that job requirements can be fulfilled.

3.1.9 *Quality Control (QC)*—the Quality Management activities focused on monitoring and assessing performance in real-time to verify job requirements are being fulfilled.

3.1.10 *Quality Management System*—a quality management system (QMS) is a formalized system that documents processes, procedures, and responsibilities for achieving quality policies and objectives. A QMS helps coordinate and direct an organization's activities to meet customer and regulatory requirements and improve its effectiveness and efficiency on a continuous basis.

⁴ Available from Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB), 11 Laurier St., Phase III, Place du Portage, Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0S5, Canada, <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/ongc-cgsb>.

⁵ Available from European Committee for Standardization (CEN), Avenue Marnix 17, B-1000, Brussels, Belgium, <http://www.cen.eu>.

4. Summary of Practice

4.1 This practice describes the essential operating functions necessary for an LSC to satisfy its clients in delivering consistent and reliable value in its language service products.

4.2 This practice establishes the minimum resources necessary for a company to withstand adverse events and successfully deliver value to its clients.

4.3 This practice establishes the principle that an LSC must demonstrate acceptable quality for the delivery of its services or products, or both.

4.4 This practice creates auditable criteria, which are intended to form the basis for certification of an LSC to this practice by an authorized certifying body.

5. General Requirements for Language Service Companies to Certify Specific Language Services

5.1 Experience:

5.1.1 The LSC shall have had at least three (3) years of continuous operation providing the language service(s) for which it is seeking certification without interruption prior to the date on which certification is requested.

5.1.2 For each language service for which certification is sought, the LSC shall provide at least three (3) references that rate the company as satisfactory in performance. The clients who submit references shall, in aggregate, represent at least 15 % of the LSC's billing for that service for the previous three (3) years. No single client shall represent more than 90 % of the LSC's billing for that service for the previous three years.

5.1.3 During each of its three (3) years of continuous operation, the LSC shall have grossed at least USD \$100,000 (or equivalent) per annum or an aggregate of USD \$500,000 (or equivalent), or both, for the language services for which it is seeking certification.

5.2 Human Resources:

5.2.1 The LSC shall demonstrate the ability to recruit employees including but not limited to the ability to publish advertisements for jobs, screen job applicants, and conduct interviews and background checks. Examples of the above shall be subject to review to ensure they comply with all legal and policy requirements including but not limited to avoiding discrimination by age, race, national origin, religion, and sexual orientation. The LSC should consult the referenced ASTM Standards (Guide F1562, Practice F2089, Guide F2575, and Practice F2889), as applicable to the service provided, for additional guidance in the provision of services. The LSC may also consult additional standards and guidance as appropriate.

5.2.2 The LSC will similarly demonstrate the ability to recruit independent contractors as the occasion arises. Such recruitment will include but not be limited to the ability to publish advertisements as well as procedures for screening applicants and conducting interviews and background checks. Examples of the above shall be subject to review to ensure they comply with all legal and policy requirements, insofar as such procedures do not conflict with rules for independent contractor classification. The LSC should consult the referenced ASTM Standards (2.1), as applicable to the service provided,