

Language Policy

1. What does this policy document cover?

1.1 This document describes London College of Music Examinations' (LCME) policy on language in examinations, including translation and interpretation.

2. Who is the document for?

2.1 This policy applies to candidate(s), parents of candidates under 18 years of age acting on their behalf, and Bookers (teachers, private centres and schools who book examinations on behalf of their students).

3. Language of assessment

3.1 By default, in all countries, examinations and assessments are conducted in English by an examiner who speaks and understands English. In certain circumstances, and by special arrangement, it may be possible to arrange for a candidate to be assessed in another language by an examiner who speaks and understands that language. Please note that this does not change any requirements for particular examination components such as songs or dramatic texts to be performed in English, and is not usually appropriate for Drama and Communication subjects. Please contact your local LCME rep for more information and advice.

4. Drama and communication exams

4.1 **Interpreters and translations are not allowed for Drama and Communication exams**, where direct assessment of the candidate's use of English is a requirement. The exception to this is the optional performance of a piece in a language other than English in Speech & Drama/Acting/Verse Speaking exams, as provided by the syllabus. In this case, it is the responsibility of the candidate or entrant (teacher, parent, etc.) to ensure that any translation is accurate.

5. Vocal exams

5.1 In exams which include a singing component (Classical Singing, Musical Theatre and Pop Vocals), where the syllabus provides for the performance of a song or songs in a language other than the language of assessment, a translation of the words must be provided for the examiner as per syllabus guidelines. It is the responsibility of the candidate or entrant (teacher, parent, etc.) to ensure that any translation is accurate.

6. Written exams

6.1 Translation is not permitted for any written exams (including theory of music, Popular Music Theory, and diplomas by thesis). In certain circumstances it may be possible to administer theory exams in a language other than English. Where this is done, question papers, answers and marking will all be in the same alternative language. For more information please contact your local LCME representative.

7. Interpreters in music exams

7.1 Interpreters are allowed in music exams for candidates whose first language is not English and where the candidate does not have sufficient mastery of the English language for the communication requirements of the exam. Their involvement must be agreed in advance of the exam.

7.2 It is important for candidates to let us know at the point of entry if they intend to use an interpreter. Where this is not done, we may not be able to allow the use of an interpreter. Where the use of an interpreter is agreed, we will confirm this in advance. Where possible, this will be done via a pre-tour meeting.

7.3 An interpreter must be:

- independent of the candidate (so not their teacher or someone related to them);
- free of any potential conflict of interest (i.e. not likely to translate responses or materials in such a way as to advantage/ disadvantage the candidate);
- suitably qualified to undertake the role;
- fluent both in English and the candidate's language;
- familiar with the relevant subject matter and genre;
- able to translate the technical/musical terms that will be needed.

The role of the interpreter

7.4 An interpreter's role is to facilitate communication between two or more people who use different languages – the interpreter is not responsible for what is said by either party, but for ensuring that everything that is said is communicated accurately in the other language. The type of interpretation required will be *consecutive interpretation* (taking turns).

7.5 During the exam, the interpreter must:

- communicate terms and ideas that are on a level with the exam or qualification being taken;
- communicate these appropriately;
- interpret everything that is said during the exam, by both candidate and examiner, as accurately as possible;

7.6 The interpreter must not:

- give any undue assistance in answering any questions;

- explain or re-word anything said by the examiner. If the candidate does not understand, the examiner will re-word the question and the interpreter will then interpret this;
- physically demonstrate any instructions (unless copying the examiner);
- alter the candidate's response in any way when interpreting it back to the examiner.

Information for the interpreter:

- 7.7 We recommend you are familiar with the relevant syllabus before the exam takes place. This is to ensure you are familiar with the sort of dialogue and vocabulary that can be expected in the exam for the required level.
- 7.8 To make the instructions and questions from the examiner to the candidate as clear as possible we recommend that you position yourself next to the examiner. Some of the interpreting needed will be quite simple, e.g. greetings, or 'Would you like to begin?'.
- 7.9 Components of exams which will require more complex interaction between the examiner and the candidate include discussion and aural tests.
- 7.10 The examiner will be prepared to re-word questions using different language if necessary.
- 7.11 You should interpret the words of the examiner as closely as possible in the candidate's language, and should not explain or re-word anything. If the candidate does not understand something, relay this to the examiner, who will re-word what he or she has said, and you should then interpret this to the candidate.

Signed declaration

- 7.12 Interpreters are required to sign a declaration confirming that they have read and understood this guidance. A signed and dated declaration to this effect must be handed to the examiner on the day of the exam. A declaration form is available to download at [\[link\]](#)

8. Translations in digital recorded exams in music

- 8.1 For digital recorded exams in music subjects, where candidates speak in a language other than English, a translation may be provided in the form of a separate written document, as subtitles, or simultaneous live translation.
- 8.2 As well as being accurate, translations must reflect the sense and meaning of the spoken content as closely as possible.
- 8.3 Subtitles should:
- appear at the bottom of the screen, timed so as to match the words as closely as possible;
 - be white or another light colour, on a black background;
 - use a font size which is easy to read but not too big and does not obscure the candidate(s). A wide font is recommended, e.g. Verdana.

There are several good websites to visit for technical advice, including:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/academy-guides/how-do-i-create-subtitles>

- 8.4 Where live translation is provided on video, this should not interfere with the normal running and flow of the exam.
- 8.5 It is the responsibility of the candidate or entrant (teacher, parent, etc.) to ensure that any translation is accurate and adheres to this guidance.

Signed declaration

- 8.6 Translators are required to sign a declaration confirming that they have read and understood this guidance. A signed and dated declaration to this effect must be submitted by the candidate with their assessment materials. A declaration form is available to download at [link]

9. Sign language

- 9.1 A sign language interpreter may be used for a candidate who is deaf or hard of hearing. This should be arranged via our reasonable adjustment procedures (lcme.uwl.ac.uk/information/equality-of-opportunity-reasonable-adjustment-and-special-consideration/)

10. Other information

- 10.1 The candidate is normally responsible for all arrangements and costs of an interpreter or translator.
- 10.2 LCME cannot accept responsibility for any dispute between the candidate and an interpreter / translator. LCME does not endorse any interpreters or translators and cannot intervene in any disputes.
- 10.3 With respect to assessment, all candidates are treated equally and will be marked in the same way. Every attempt is made to minimise any effect of the use of translation on the marking; however, it is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that they have worked through any potential problems with their interpreter / translator and are ready for the exam / are happy with the translation.

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