

International translator and interpreter training at the Budapest University of Technology and Economic Sciences

1st year – Strasbourg University Diploma

In 1997 the Budapest University of Technology and Economic Sciences and the International Translator and Interpreter Training Institute working with the University of Marc Bloch in Strasbourg signed a co-operation agreement, the aim of which is, with regard to the accession of Hungary to the EU, the training of trilingual international translators and interpreters, primarily for the Hungarian institutions involved in integration.

As well as the central institution in Strasbourg, other well-known translator and interpreter institutes have participated in the formation of our training programmes, such as the Antwerp Catholic Translator and Interpreter Training Institute, the University of Milan, the University of Dublin, the Translator and Interpreter Training School of the University of Graz, and the Marie Haps Institute of Brussels. In addition to these institutions our work is also supported by the interpreting section of the Council of Europe.

The partner institutions and the Council of Europe interpreting section participated from the start in the working out of the curriculum.

The students are admitted to the International Translator and Interpreter Training Institute on completing three complete years in any institution of higher education (in Hungary or abroad). This three years of pre-study assumes, or ensures, that the students have sufficient general knowledge and are familiar with a specialist subject.

In addition to this, successful candidates must demonstrate a high level of knowledge in the chosen combination of languages, that they keep informed and up-to-date, and that they are proficient in their mother tongue. Upon successful completion of the academic year the students receive the Diplôme Universitaire de Strasbourg.

At present the course is run in French, English, German, and Italian, and these main languages may also be combined with Romanian or with Russian.

When working out the list of subjects to be studied, we followed the practice of the partner institutions and the advice of the Council of Europe interpreting section. The majority of the subjects are in line with those available in the translating and interpreting schools of the European Union. At the same time, our autonomy and local needs dictated that certain subjects only taught here in Hungary should be introduced into the training: rhetoric, voice coaching, and Hungarian as a mother tongue.

Making the most of the opportunities afforded by the Technical University, students are given an introduction into technical translations (e.g. in the fields of nuclear physics,

ergonomics, environmental protection); emphasis is given to computer-assisted translation and handling terminology using computers. These latter two are indispensable elements of the training for translators working according to European norms. The students work with Trados software, which is used in most EU institutions today. The knowledge the students gain here pays off when they prepare their diploma translations: they compile the glossary using this software.

Flexibility is a keyword when we put together course material, and we strive to follow the latest events in European and home news.

Our list of subjects is as follows:

Subjects	Lessons	
	1 st semester	2 nd semester
Language subjects		
<i>Translation, foreign language 1</i>	6 (3 × 2)	6 (3 × 2)
<i>Translation, foreign language 2</i>	6 (3 × 2)	6 (3 × 2)
<i>Hungarian as mother tongue</i> <i>Writing skills: 2 lessons/week</i> <i>Rhetoric: 2 lessons/week</i>	2	2
<i>Consecutive interpreting, foreign language 1</i>		2
<i>Consecutive interpreting, foreign language 2</i>		2
<i>Liaison interpreting, foreign language 1</i>	2	
<i>Liaison interpreting, foreign language 2</i>	2	
<i>Communication techniques, foreign language 1</i>	2	
<i>Communication techniques, foreign language 2</i>	2	
Joint subjects		
<i>Theory and history of translation</i>		2
<i>Terminology/Computer Assisted Translation</i>	2	2
<i>Law</i>		2
<i>Specialist areas (nuclear physics/environmental protection)</i>	2	2
<i>Introduction to interpreting</i>	2	
<i>Economics</i>	2	
Σ	30	26

One unusual feature of this course in Hungary, is that all students are required to complete a one-month **field study** in various institutions of public administration, during which they have an opportunity to use in 'real life' the knowledge they have gained in the fields of translation and interpreting, and to learn specialist language and the professional and linguistic challenges of accession to the European Union. The institutions involved include the integration departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Transport and the State Audit Office. Feedback from these institutions is decidedly positive; they are satisfied with students' work and willing to take on apprentices from the Budapest Technical University in the future too, even though it means the employer will have to organise extra professional training.

To date, over four years 75 students have obtained a diploma, and the best of them have been awarded bursaries to continue their studies in Brussels, Strasbourg, or Graz.

II. Masters in Conference Interpreting

In the academic year 2001/2002 a new programme was added to our training profile: the French postgraduate diploma in **international conference (simultaneous) interpreting**.

This new course means that candidates can obtain the highest level diploma in the French university system (**DESS – Masters level**).

The conference interpreter training is available in three language combinations: French-English, French-German, English-German and the mother tongue, and if required these main languages may also be combined with Italian.

This course is also two terms long, and the teaching takes place with the support of the **Marc Bloch University of Strasbourg**, the interpreting section of the European Commission (**SCIC**) and the **French Embassy**.

Only those with a university degree may present themselves at the entrance examination. Candidates with some knowledge of a third language, apart from those above, are given preference.

In accordance with the latest EU requirements, interpreting takes place in two directions: from a foreign language into the mother tongue, and from the mother tongue into a foreign language.

The teachers on the course are well-known, reputable, independent interpreters, or in-house teachers with extensive professional experience.

In addition to financial support, the **French government** assists the course by providing a constant instructor with an interpreting qualification.

The structure of the conference interpreting course is as follows:

Subjects taught	Lessons per week 1st semester	Lessons per week 2nd semester
Language subjects		
<i>Simultaneous interpreting, 1st working language</i>	4 (2 × 2)	4 (2 × 2)
<i>Simultaneous interpreting, 2nd working language</i>	4 (2 × 2)	4 (2 × 2)
<i>Consecutive interpreting, 1st working language</i>	2	2
<i>Consecutive interpreting, 2nd working language</i>	2	2
<i>Hungarian as mother tongue</i>	2	2
<i>Practice</i>	2	2
Total lessons per week	16	16

III. Subsidies and grants obtained:

European Commission, SCIC

- course subsidy for the academic year 2001/2002, 2002/2003
- study bursaries for 3 students for the academic year 2001/2002, for 4 students for the academic year 2002/2003
- participation in the annual SCIC-University forum
- training in Brussels in teaching interpreting
- pedagogical assistance

European Court of Justice – Luxembourg

- 2 paid student traineeships for successful students.

French Embassy

- Cocop project 2001 – 2003 (professional training, financing seminars, student exchanges)
- The creation of the post of instructor in conference interpreting

European Youth Centre – Budapest

- Opportunity for the students to practice in a ‘dummy booth’

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