



CAN/CGSB-131.10-2008

Certification Preparation Guide



AILIA – Language Industry Association

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1) Welcome

Congratulations on your decision to seek certification under the CAN/CGSB-131.10-2008 Translation Services standard! You are on the road to improving your business and gaining a valuable competitive advantage in the translation marketplace.

CAN/CGSB-131.10-2008 is about more than just your translations; it is also about the service you provide your clients through clearly defined processes and procedures that offer them unsurpassed quality assurance.

The standard was developed by a committee of 29 people, including AILIA, industry, government, academia, professional association, and consumer representatives. The process followed in the creation of the standard was established and guided by the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) and the Standards Council of Canada.

Once the standard was confirmed, AILIA selected an accreditation audit service provider to perform independent, third-party assessments for any Translation Service Provider (TSP) seeking certification under the new standard. Following a committee-based selection process, Orion Assessment Services of Canada Inc. was chosen as the contractor for this service.

This guide is intended to assist you in preparing for your on-site audit with Orion Assessment Services as you pursue your goal of obtaining certification. It will help you get started and move through the process to take your business to the next level.

2) Benefits of Certification

The CAN/CGSB-131.10-2008 Translation Services standard was established in 2008. It was adapted from the European Committee for Standardization's (CEN) standard for translation services, EN 15038; some of the wording and content was adjusted to reflect the Canadian perspective on translation. In other words, CAN/CGSB-131.10-2008 was created to serve the specific needs of the Canadian translation services industry and its clients throughout the world.

The benefits of certification extend beyond the advantages to your credibility. You will find that the preparation process helps you improve your systems and services for more efficient daily operations.

The benefits of certification include:

- A unique selling proposition that will set you apart from many of your competitors
- Added credibility that increases your clients' confidence in working with you
- Increased consistency in process and in quality
- Improved service performance that keeps clients satisfied
- Clearer processes and procedures within your organization, as well as enhanced workflows and role definitions, so clients and staff know what is expected of them
- Methodology to identify non-compliance and further ensure client satisfaction
- Risk management and protection for everyone, including TSPs, clients, individual providers and the public
- Unification of terminology within the translation sector

Gaining all of these benefits is a worthy investment: becoming compliant will require an investment of time, and the audit itself will involve a financial investment. This cost varies depending on the size and structure of your organization. You can request a quote on costing from Orion Assessment Services before committing to moving ahead.

Certification, which was initially aimed at TSP companies, also holds value for individual providers. More and more organizations and companies are requiring their TSPs to be CAN/CGSB-131.10-2008-certified, including freelancers. As a result, independent TSPs may find more opportunities available to them with certification.

3) Getting Started

Your first steps to CAN/CGSB-131.10-2008 certification

Deciding to become certified in the translation services standard is an important decision for the future of your business. Resources are available to help you make an informed decision, and to ensure that you understand both the benefits and the obligations. If you have questions or concerns, or would like to learn more before proceeding, you can explore the information on the AILIA website at www.ailia.ca/TranslationStandard, or contact Orion Assessment Services of Canada at 416-709-8070. You can also visit their website at www.orioncan.com. Orion is the official contractor for providing accreditation services for the CAN/CGSB-131.10-2008 standard.

Get to know the standard

The most important starting point is to purchase the standard and read it, so that you understand exactly what it entails. If you are serious about achieving accreditation, it is important that you work from the full standard document, as guidelines do not provide enough detail to fully prepare you for your audit.

Everything in the standard is based on good business practices for all TSPs. Most TSPs find that once they have read the document itself, their decision to become certified is reinforced in a positive way. The reality is that you are probably already operating within the standard in many ways. You may need to address only a few gaps to become officially compliant, for example in the documentation of procedures.

As you read the standard, be aware of the wording and how it can impact your certification review. For example, the use of “must” and “shall” vs. “should” and “may” signify the difference between absolute requirements and recommended practices.

Once you have reviewed the standard, you can seek clarification on any points you do not understand by speaking with representatives from AILIA or Orion Assessment Services. Then you will be ready to move on to a gap analysis.

Engage your team

As you begin your journey towards accreditation for the CAN/CGSB-131.10-2008 standard, talk to your employees about the process and why you are seeking it. Explain what it means to them, both in terms of the preparations and the audit, as well as its impact on their jobs. In many cases, this impact will be minimal if you already have processes in place. Your staff may also be able to offer insight and assistance to help you prepare. Many of your employees will be speaking with the Orion Assessment Services auditor on the day of the audit, so having an informed and engaged team will work to your advantage.

4) What to Expect in the Standard

The following is a general overview of standard's key sections to help you understand what to expect as you begin reviewing the full standard in preparation for your certification.

Human Resources

As the TSP, you must have a documented procedure for hiring people with the required knowledge and skills, and for ensuring those competencies are maintained and updated.

Translators

This section addresses the specific competencies and documented qualifications of your translators, revisers and reviewers. This includes linguistic skill, research abilities, and cultural and technical knowledge required for technical and contextual accuracy.

Technical Resources

Every business needs hardware and software in today's world, and this section of the standard ensures that you have the tools required to provide not only quality translation services, but also effective project management, financial data, and information security.

Quality Management System

Consistency of quality is a key goal of the standard, and this section details all requirements for your quality management system. Quality objectives for all stages of the translation project must be documented, including post-project follow-up and complaint management.

Client-TSP Relationship

This section discusses the documentation of administrative procedures throughout your relationship with your client. This encompasses the handling of the initial enquiry, assessment of project feasibility, quoting, agreements, invoices, record of payment and dispute resolution.

TSP Project Management Procedures

Documentation of your project management procedures ensures all projects run consistently. It includes all stages: assessment, statement of work, staff assignments, time management, communication, quality management, archiving, verification and invoicing.

Translation Process

You must be able to document that your process includes all the information your staff requires to produce a product that is both technically accurate and stylistically suitable for the intended audience. Accuracy and quality must also be assessed through checking, reviewing, revisions and final reading prior to providing the translation to the client.

5) Conducting a Gap Analysis

What is a gap analysis?

A gap analysis is a comparison of your existing procedures and documentation against the requirements of the standard. This exercise allows you to see what is necessary for certification and compare it with what you are already doing so you can address any gaps in your current structure. As the standard is based on solid business practices for TSPs, you may find some smaller details that you weren't aware were missing from your operations, and you will find opportunities to improve and streamline your business.

How to approach your gap analysis

You can proceed with your gap analysis in a number of ways; there are no specific rules about how to do this, so you are free to find a method that suits your organization. Each organization may have unique considerations, such as outsourced translation providers vs. in-house employees.

The overall provisions of the standard are the same for all TSPs, so the following list of options and tips on performing your gap analysis may be helpful:

- Some TSPs find it helpful to create an overall flowchart of their organization which acts as a roadmap and gives high-level perspective. From there, it is easier to drill down to the areas that require attention.
- Gather all records, forms, documents and documented procedures that you already have in place.
- As you review the standard, walk through your existing process from beginning to end and highlight the sections in the standard that you identify as requiring action to achieve compliance.
- You may wish to create a table or checklist that will assist you with this review, allowing you to make notes on action items, questions, and other issues that arise during your review of your processes.
- Speak with your staff to ensure that documented procedures are followed in daily work, and identify any variances or omissions in your internal practices.
- Make note of procedures that exist but are not formally documented in any way. You may have vast institutional knowledge of your procedures in your mind and that of your staff, only that knowledge has not yet been formally documented.

More detailed information on how to conduct a gap analysis with the standard is available on the Orion Assessment Services website at www.orioncan.com/preparing-for-an-audit.

6) Closing the Gaps

Most TSPs do not need to start from scratch or reinvent the wheel to close the gaps found in the gap analysis. The procedures in the standard are in line with what most are already doing to run their businesses every day, and the certification process allows you to get organized and document those processes.

How long it takes you to prepare will depend on the gaps you have, i.e. where you are vs. where you need to be according to the standard. You may be missing only one point or a number of points, as a wide variety of systems are currently in use among TSPs. It could be as easy as a few hours to get ready if you are already focused on process and quality.

Documenting your procedures

Documenting what you already do is also not necessarily an exceptionally complex exercise. You do need to have documentation as specified in the standard, but there is no rule on how this is to be provided. While it can smooth the audit process and the education of your staff and clients to have all documentation in one place, it is not a requirement. It can be provided in a series of documents and marketing materials, as long as you can show the processes exist and are clear and available to your clients and your team.

Since it is easier for everyone involved to streamline procedures and documentation, you may wish to implement translation management software, project management software and/or a database program to assist you. Such programs offer advantages not only for the audit procedure, but also for added efficiencies in your day-to-day business.

Examples of filling gaps

- For human resources gaps, review HR files to ensure you have copies of employees' degrees, certifications and accreditations; clarify hiring procedures and how freelancers are managed in comparison with full-time staff; have all performance review materials accessible. You may also choose to create a welcome package for new staff that explains your procedures.
- For technical and administrative gaps, ensure your computer systems are well organized for reliable storage and retrieval of all documents, including customer contracts, financial data, etc.; ensure you have reliable backup and security procedures.
- Possibly implement translation management or project management software to track all projects from first request to delivery, including quotes, assignments, feedback, invoicing, project recording, etc.

While this exercise does take time, you may find that it can strengthen and streamline your business. If you are thorough and your procedures are documented, you will not find any significant surprises or challenges when your audit day arrives.

7) What to Expect in Your Audit

How long will your audit take?

The time required to complete an audit depends on the size of your business, but for most average small- to medium-sized businesses, it is usually less than a day. If you have multiple branches, you may require multiple days to ensure that processes are implemented consistently throughout your organization. If you outsource your translation work, you may need additional documentation describing how you work with freelancers, how you protect the security of documents if they are sent outside of the office, etc.

What happens during the audit?

When Orion's auditor arrives at your business, he or she will conduct the review using a checklist based on the standard.

- The audit will begin with a discussion with you and/or your management team about the work your company does, your goals and objectives, and the procedures already in place.
- The auditor will walk you and/or your management team through your process from beginning to end, reviewing the specific requirements of the standard along the way. This will include reviewing documentation on hiring processes, project and quality management, technical considerations, etc.
- Once management has provided documentation and established a benchmark on the procedures, the auditor will interview people at all stages of your operational process, as well as observe the people and processes at work.

The auditor essentially has full access to your place of business and can speak with anyone. This is why it is important to prepare your employees and encourage their buy-in from the start. Many TSPs who have experienced the audit procedure have found that the auditor offered helpful tips and recommendations that improved their businesses.

The results of your audit

If you are found to be non-compliant in any aspects of the standard, the auditor may give conditional approval with a list of issues to be addressed. Once the gaps have been filled, the auditor will return (an additional fee may be charged for this second visit). There is no waiting period to arrange a second visit; however, it must be scheduled in a reasonable time frame to ensure the original review still stands on the sections that are compliant.

When the auditor is satisfied, a Senior Evaluator at Orion will assess the on-site review. If he or she deems that the auditor has given the appropriate recommendation, approval is given to issue your certificate.

8) Maintaining the Standard

Once you have received your CAN/CGSB-131.10-2008 certification, it is your responsibility as the TSP to ensure that your organization and staff continue to abide by the standard at all times. As the contracted auditor to ALLIA and the standard, Orion has the right to perform spot checks at any point in time to verify that the standard is being followed in practice.

It is also the responsibility of the TSP to stay on top of developments in the industry and any changes in the standard. The standard is reviewed once every five years, and it remains highly valid, so it is not anticipated that any revisions are imminent.

Maintenance Assessments

Maintenance assessments are performed by Orion Assessment Services every two years. This assessment follows the same procedure as the first, with all of the same questions and the same checklist.

While the process is not abbreviated for the maintenance assessments, you should not require extensive preparation for this review, provided that your organization has operated in accordance with the approved procedures and therefore the requisites of the standard.

9) Closing Summary

Your decision to become certified under the CAN/CGSB-131.10-2008 Translation Services standard will benefit your business and your clients throughout your working relationship. With this accreditation, you will be more competitive in the translation industry, offering your customers a higher level of confidence in your services.

Complying with the standard can also enhance daily operations for you and your team, clarifying roles, processes and deliverables for more efficient and profitable projects.

Certification under the standard strengthens your business, and your relationships with clients, employees and contractors; it also helps strengthen the public's trust in the Canadian translation industry, here at home and around the world.

If you have any further questions, please contact:

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