

Professional Studies

Professional Studies (PS) are areas of study that directly pertain to interpreting. Exploration through these studies enhance the work of interpretation and deepen interpreters' abilities to provide excellence through their work.

RID members must earn a minimum of 6.0 PS CEUs during each Certification Maintenance Cycle in topics such as, but not necessarily limited to, those listed in this section.

The Professional Studies Categories:

- Language and Cultural Development
- Settings-Based Studies
- Cognitive Processes of Interpreting
- Professional Interpersonal Interactions
- Ethical Considerations
- Supporting Knowledge and Skills
- Studies of Healthy Minds and Bodies
- Power, Privilege, and Oppression

Professional Studies categories are described below, and lists of likely topics are provided. Some topics may appear in multiple categories. The topics suggested are not exhaustive, and CMP Sponsors are encouraged to consider other topics that seem appropriate, and document their rationale.

Language and Cultural Development

This area of study focuses on language, culture, and human behavior. The focus is likely to be around languages that interpreters use, and how interpreters continue to develop their linguistic and cultural competency for the work they do as interpreters. These studies may address linguistic structures of languages; dialogic patterns in a language; language history and language change; rare forms of language; contrastive analysis across two or more languages; languages in a world context, including the power dynamics that affect their speakers; how one or more languages/cultures interact with and affect one another; human behavior and interaction; cultural mores and tenets; social rules, manners, and etiquette; etc.

This type of study may also include the language(s) and culture(s) of specific consumers with whom interpreters are working (e.g., Deafblind people, people from specific backgrounds, etc.).

This type of study may also include the study of other languages and cultures which broaden interpreters' understanding of people and the world, and in which interpreters do not currently provide interpreting work. These studies may be introductory or advanced.

In the case of Academic Coursework (AC), interpreters should only count advanced studies of language and culture (beyond the introductory levels) for PS CEUs.

Certified ASL/English interpreters may not earn PS CEUs for ASL classes that are offered at the undergraduate level, or for equivalent community-based classes, which are presumed to be a prerequisite to achieving interpreter certification.

Topics and areas of study may include, but are not limited to:

- Studies of Language Mechanics and Linguistics
 - Phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse
 - Language variation and language change
- Sociolinguistics
 - Language and power
 - Language and cognition
 - Language in society (including variation amongst different cultural groups)
- Linguaculture and Cultural Studies (Note: linguaculture refers to language mechanics and the use of language, including cultural components that inform the use of language, such as history and traditions. Term attributed to anthropologist Michael Agar.)
 - Cultural Studies
 - Deaf culture, and the many subcultures
 - American culture, and the many subcultures
 - Other foreign culture studies
 - Religious Studies
 - Intracultural dynamics
 - Communication studies (e.g., interpersonal communication)
 - Studies of group dynamics
 - Language, power, and social capital
 - Intercultural dynamics
 - Studies of power, privilege and bias
 - Studies of social justice
 - Cross-cultural studies
 - Minority group dynamics
 - Language domination, suppression and elevation
- Studies for Language Learning and Development
 - Advanced development of languages in which an interpreter provides interpreter services:
 - Specifically, ASL and English; as well as other languages, in the case of trilingual and multilingual interpreters
 - Introductory language studies do not qualify
 - Studies might include, but are not limited to, specialized vocabulary; grammar development; analysis of linguistic register; exploration of language use in various settings; exploration of language styles used for different purposes, etc.
 - Other languages studies: e.g., Protactile Language, Spanish, Diné (Navajo), Japanese, Somali, Hmong, Langue des Signes Francaise (LSF), Deutsche

Gebärdensprache (DGS), Kata Kolok (Benkala Sign Language, Balinese Sign Language), etc.

Setting-based Studies

This type of study focuses on the places where interpreters work and all that happens in those environments. It includes specialized settings. It also includes in-person or virtual settings. It might address the purpose of the environment, the protocols of that environment, typical participants, the content and terminology that is specific to that environment, power dynamics, discourse patterns in that environment, skills and knowledge that interpreters need to have, etc. (E.g., legal settings, medical settings, educational settings, substance-abuse recovery settings, etc.).

Topics and areas of study may include, but are not limited to:

- Educational settings where interpreters are working, and the challenges therein (e.g., philosophies of Deaf education; graduate research strategies; undergraduate mathematics; classes in foreign language; etc.)
- Rehabilitation Services settings
- Legal settings (e.g., courtroom protocol; mediation law; the role of Proceedings Interpreters and Table Interpreters; etc.)
- Medical or mental health settings (e.g. medical terminology; anatomy & physiology; strategies for medical professionals to inquire about patients' mental and physical health; etc.)
- Substance abuse recovery programs
- Technical areas
- Ethics as applied in specialized settings, etc.

Cognitive Processes of Interpreting

This area of study focuses on the process of interpretation and how it happens in the mind. This type of study is concerned primarily with interpretation: navigating consumers' creation of messages (which have meaning and intent, and which include or reflect mood and affect, as well as implied social attitudes, among other metalinguistic information); how interpreters access messages and analyze them to extract meaning; how interpreters make decisions about the interpretation; how interpreters endeavor to express equivalent messages; etc.

The study of interpretation is separate and distinct from the study of languages in which interpreters provide interpreting services.

Topics and areas of study may include, but are not limited to:

- Message analysis - how meaning is accessed, identification of aspects of messages, etc.

- Exploration of the representation of meaning in the mind (nonlinguistic representation)
- Exploration of different types of interpreting strategies and their application (e.g., consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting, escorting, etc.)
- Exploration of effective use of working memory and its applications
- Exploration of effective problem-solving
- Exploration of effective decision-making - identifying needs and conditions, and considering options, and possible outcomes
- Exploration of cognitive flexibility
- Etc.

Professional Interpersonal Interactions

This area of study focuses on how interpreters interact with colleagues and consumers. It might address how interpreters work together as teams; interpreters' differing expectations about the task of interpreting; implicit biases and beliefs that interpreters hold about others; and the human psychosocial underpinnings of professional interactions, which includes the studies of human interaction broadly. It also includes studies of how best to support emerging interpreters, as well as mentorship.

Topics and areas of study may include, but are not limited to:

- Exploration of teaming and how interpreters work together
- Exploration of social etiquette in a variety of settings, and how interpreters navigate situations where multiple etiquettes are present and might conflict
- Frameworks for mentoring, and the exploration of effective mentoring techniques
- Exploration of power and empowerment, and how to maintain empowerment without detracting from others' empowerment
- Ethical behavior in complex social situations
- etc.

A note on mentoring: Mentoring as an area of study should explicitly relate to the individual's own learning and growth.

In the case of mentors, they may explore effective strategies for mentoring and their application, and they should reflect upon outcomes and how to refine their mentoring approach. They may also explore and reflect upon their own changing understanding, attitudes, beliefs about interpreting, and upon the way their own practice as interpreters has shifted as a result of mentoring experiences. Studies for mentors do not qualify for CEUs if the focus is only on the mentee/protégé's learning and development, and educational goals for the mentor themselves are not identified.

In the case of mentees or protégés, they may also be exploring effective strategies for mentoring, identifying what might lead to their own learning and development, and learning to identify effective mentors. They may also explore and reflect upon their own changing

understanding, attitudes, beliefs about interpreting, and upon the way their own practice as interpreters has shifted as a result of mentoring experiences.

Ethical Considerations

This area of study focuses on how interpreters think and view the world. It might address moral judgment, personal orientation to morality, and ethical theories and their application.

Topics and areas of study may include, but are not limited to:

- Ethical decision-making in specific settings
- Exploration of ethical frameworks
- Exploration of one's own personal ethical framework and its application
- Etc.

Supporting Knowledge and Skills

This area of study focuses on the activities, knowledge, and skills that interpreters need in order to function professionally, or that allow the field to grow and develop, but that might not be directly concerned with the act of interpreting.

Topics and areas of study may include, but are not limited to:

- Theoretical studies
 - Theories of learning, development, and change;
 - Theories of thinking and decision-making;
 - Theories about interpreting, and interpreting models;
 - Theories of translation, and translation models;
 - Theories and frameworks around mentoring;
 - History of and issues in interpretation;
- Studies of the work of translation
 - Common and best practices
 - Exploration of the similarities and differences between interpreting and translation
 - Emerging trends and needs for translation work
- Studies of the business of interpreting
 - Business practices;
 - Tax law that affects independent contractors;
- Studies of world trends and new developments that affect the interpreting field
 - New and existing technologies that affect interpretation, interpreters, and consumers (e.g., how best to capture video and audio signals for high-quality interpretation provided remotely, or captured on camera)
 - Artificial Intelligence as a tool, and in its impact on interpretation and the interpreting field
- Studies of Engagement in Professional Organizations

- Personal and social empowerment for effective engagement in professional organizations;
- Frameworks for effective and transformational leadership;
- Credentialing processes;
- Etc.

Studies of Healthy Minds and Bodies

This type of study focuses on overall wellness of interpreters and how they support, or minimize the detracting of, the wellness of others.

The work of interpreting is often physically and mentally demanding. Interpreters work with people, necessitating personal and social awareness. Society has become much more aware of and engaged in physical, mental, and social wellness. It is important for interpreters to gain an understanding of these topics to sustain and refine their work, and for their own good health. Studies may include, but are not limited to:

- Physical Studies - developing awareness and understanding of the physical wellness of the body; exploring ergonomics; exploring the types of physical problems that interpreters are prone to, as well as the remedies to common problems, and ways to guard against their onset; exploration of the physical manifestation of trauma; exploration of the development of a physical wellness plan; etc.
- Mental and Cognitive studies - developing awareness and understanding of the mind and thinking; exploring the effects of stress and trauma on thinking and decision-making; exploring methods for maintaining mental clarity, and general brain health; exploration of the development of a mental and cognitive wellness plan; etc.
- Studies of Social and Emotional Well-being - developing awareness and understanding of the impact of emotions on thinking and decision-making; identification of indicators of emotional distress; exploration of the management of emotional wellness in social environments, and while alone; exploration of the impact of witnessing difficult situations while at work and how to manage the experience; exploration of direct and vicarious trauma; exploration of personal and professional boundary-making; exploration of ethical decision-making in complex situations; exploration of methods for maintaining emotional wellness; exploration of the development of a social and emotional wellness plan; etc.

Interpreting work can be demanding. Studies of Healthy Minds and Bodies can directly support the work we do and is an area worthy of our study; however, this area of study is not intended to document the personal development we do as individuals. This area of study does not include when interpreters engage in activities that might maintain wellness, such as, but not limited to:

- Taking a yoga class
- Getting a massage
- Going to the gym
- Eating a healthy diet
- Doing meditation
- Attending therapy and counseling sessions for oneself
- Etc.

Power, Privilege and Oppression

This area of study focuses on exploring systems of power and privilege in society, personal and systemic bias, opportunities to wield privilege to reduce (and work towards eliminating) oppressive harm, and the impact of systems on society, the Deaf Community, interpreters, and our organizations. It may also address the impact of trauma on consumers and colleagues and trauma-informed interpreting.

Power, Privilege & Oppression refers to the phenomena by which members of a society are unfairly advantaged and may be unaware of - or unwilling to recognize - the advantage. The result is oppression at the systemic, societal, and individual level wrongfully limiting another's access to resources. This is rooted in the perception of entitlement - or lack thereof- based on social group membership and may manifest in covert and overt practices/behaviors that seek to keep that advantage, and result in abuse of assumed power and privilege. All of which contribute to perpetuating the privilege, individual biases, and social and systemic oppression.

These behaviors can be but are not limited to:

- Narratives/perspectives of fear and hate/stereotyping by those who are privileged
- Assumed authority/dominance over “others” (internalized biases)
- Agent & Target group membership (e.g., exclusionary/preferential practices)
- Control over social mobility
- Unearned advantages and conferred dominance
- Systems of oppression (e.g. ableism, ageism, audism, classism, racism,sexism, heterosexism, transgender oppression, vidism, etc.)
- Dynamics of oppression (e.g. institutionalized oppression, prejudice, vertical and horizontal violence/bullying, etc.)
- Stereotyping
- Marginalization
- Support of the status quo
- Avoidance of conversations about “-isms”
- Creation of barriers (e.g. poverty, unemployment, and the school to prison pipeline)
- Unbalanced (or inequitable) access to wealth, professional/educational opportunities, social status
- Internalized supremacy

Consistent with the RID Code of Professional Conduct, interpreters are required to develop the sensitivity needed to identify such phenomena, and build competence and knowledge in the following areas with a goal of promoting and practicing social justice and dismantling oppressive systems.

Education in this sector should include, but not be limited to:

- Challenging injustice
- Respecting and valuing diversity
- Respecting and valuing humanity
- Protection of equal access
- Identifying and embracing individual “filters”
- Identifying and acknowledging individual perceptions of privilege
- Changing the narratives of compassion and respect
- Promoting inclusion, freedom and equality
- Challenging the status quo
- Engaging in conversations about “-isms”
- Removal of barriers
- Social Justice/Liberation studies
- Cultural competence
- Identity
- Intersectionality
- Invitational communication/interaction
- Accountability
- Trauma-informed approaches to interpreting

Some Clarifying Notes about PPO CEUs

Programming that has the PPO designation should delve into content that covers systems of power, privilege, and the matrix of domination that create oppression, and how participants affect and are affected by these systems.

Targets of oppressive systems can include, but are not limited to, people who are Black or Brown and/or identify as Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC); people who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups; members of the Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, Hard-of-Hearing, Coda, and Late-Deafened communities; people with disabilities; people who are neurodivergent; women; people from religious minorities; members of the LGBTQIA+ community; people from minority political ideologies (e.g., Marxists); immigrants and New Americans (in the US); people whose first language is not English (in the US), etc.

PPO programming entails a praxis - putting theory into action - where participants reflect on their own relationship to systems of power, privilege, and oppression. Programming that focuses primarily on presenters or panelists sharing their personal and professional lived experiences is not sufficient to earn the PPO designation.

In order to meet the requirements for the PPO CEUs programming content area, programming must create opportunities and processes for participants to:

- practice identifying and understanding systems of power, privilege, and oppression;
- engage in conversations, not only within the context of professional development, but also more broadly with other people about systems of oppression in society and how to work toward dismantling those systems in service of a more egalitarian society;
- and develop a practice where participants assess the contexts they find themselves in, and identify for themselves how they wield their own power and privilege when making decisions in order to reduce their own contributions to systems of oppression.

Sponsors should consider the following questions when reviewing proposed programming, which include, but are not limited to:

Does this programming ask:

- Are participants aware that systems of power, privilege, and oppression treat different groups in society differently?
- Are participants aware of the matrix of domination and how it creates oppressive harm, which impacts individuals and groups in different ways?
- Are participants aware of examples of oppressive harm?
- Are participants aware of what bias is, and are they aware of their own biases?
- Are participants aware that systemic biases exist?
- Are participants aware of how their own biases might, or do, exacerbate situations that are already oppressive toward some individuals?
- Can participants identify and describe ways in which they have been targets of oppressive systems? (not all participants will have had this experience)
- In retrospect, can participants identify ways they have knowingly or unknowingly negatively impacted others within already-oppressive situations?
- Can participants identify tools and resources to help them assess contexts and identify ways to wield their power and privilege when making decisions in order to reduce their own contributions to systems of oppression?
- Can participants identify tools and resources to help them minimize (and, ideally, eliminate) oppressive harm in situations?
- Can participants identify tools and resources to help them minimize the power of (and, ideally, eliminate) oppressive systems?