

# Translating and Interpreting

Autumn 2015

Image courtesy of Routes into Languages Cymru | Routes into Languages [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk)

## Interview with Bridget Spencer MA in Conference Interpreting

Bridget Spencer has loved languages since primary school, ever since her reception teacher gave them a lesson on how to order ice creams in French. It then spiralled out of control at secondary school, to the stage where she took any and every opportunity to learn other languages - Italian classes at lunchtime, Mandarin classes after school and teaching herself basic greetings in any language before she went on holiday. Bridget hopes to become a full-time conference interpreter and her eventual future aim would be staff interpreter for the EU.

### What languages do you speak?

I speak French, German and Arabic fluently, and still remember enough Spanish from school to have a conversation with someone. On my MA course in Conference Interpreting I worked from French and Arabic into English.

### Did you know straight away that you were interested in interpreting?

Yes, I've known since I was about 15 that I wanted to be an interpreter. I loved languages and was looking for an eventual career that would let me use them every day, as an integral part of the job. I was especially inspired watching Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's first live TV interview on Channel 4 News. It was a very tense and important political moment, and could not have taken place without the simultaneous interpreters working behind the scenes.

### How has studying languages helped you obtain a job?

I'm hoping that studying languages will help me to get the job I want eventually, but I also think it's been very important for my own personal development. I know I'm a more empathetic person because of coming into contact with people from so many different backgrounds. When you learn a language and visit a foreign country, you have to walk in someone else's shoes. Taking that back to your own country allows you to relate to anyone.

### What have you done since graduating?

Since graduating I have spent my time in Germany, bringing my German back up to a good standard, so that I can add it as a third language. That's been really good fun and has allowed me to meet some amazing people.

I'm also currently applying to various public service interpreting and translation companies. Although this is not my eventual career aim, I'm hoping that I will be able to continue to improve my interpreting skills and earn some money.

## Routes Live! Working as a translator or interpreter: ask the experts! Employability Webinar - 10th July 2015

Routes into Languages hosted a webinar on 10th July 2015 about working as a translator or interpreter. The webinar is the first in a series covering employability for language students and featured experts in translation or interpreting.

The panel consisted of: [Helen Campbell](#) - Director of the National Network for Interpreting, Routes Into Languages; [Steven Gray](#) - freelance translator who previously worked as an in-house translator; [Liz Harris](#) - Recruitment Consultant for the International Committee of the Red Cross; and [Catriona Howard](#) - freelance conference interpreter and part-time lecturer in Translation and Interpreting, University of Manchester.

The panel discussed a variety of questions, many of which were sent in by viewers via Twitter using [#RoutesLive](#). They covered qualifications, abilities and qualities required to work as a translator or interpreter, as well as the impact of machine translation tools such as Google Translate.

You can watch the webinar at [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/live](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/live). Routes into Languages will be running another employability webinar about language teaching on the 23rd October 2015.

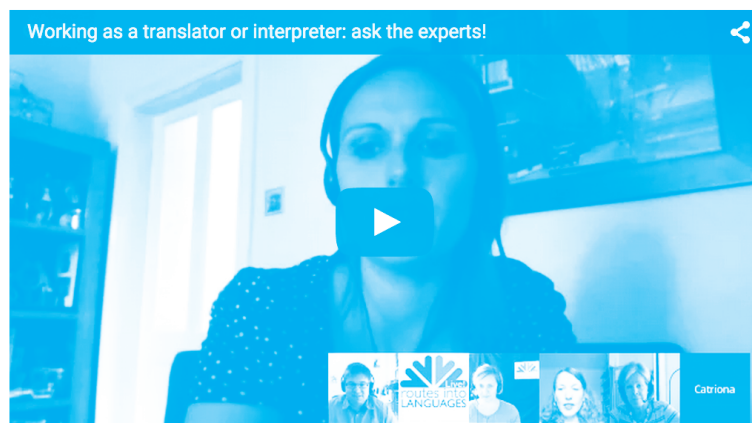
Here are some questions that were discussed by the panel:

**Q. I'm dual heritage with a degree and general work experience of in-house translating, how do I get into freelance?**

S.G. - If you are already working in-house, you must build up a good amount of experience to go freelance. There are new skills which you might have to learn such as keeping records and writing a business plan. It's all about preparation. Once registered with the Institute of Translating & Interpreting, they add you to the database and anyone will be able to search for someone they require. Setting up a website helps build you a professional profile.

**Q. How / where do I get experience to start working as an interpreter?**

C.H. - During your training as a conference interpreter, you do a lot of practical work and are expected to put a lot of time into practising with your peers. Most conference interpreting courses offer the opportunity to dummy booth and interpret from real life material. Volunteering, NGOs and large conference opportunities will come up during the course. Networking is very important in the industry.



Some of the highlights from the [#RoutesLive](#) webinar feed



@Routesintolangs · Jul 10

Next [#RoutesLive](#) Webinar's title is: Routes into language teaching and will be hosted by [@RoutesNE](#) on 23 October 2015. Stay tuned!



@Georgia\_m1010 · Jul 10

Mixing up translators and interpreters "like calling your Dr. a vet" - Steven Gray, Webinar ending on a humorous note! [#RoutesLive](#)



@I\_Hashmi96 · Jul 10

To what extent is cultural/historical/political knowledge a prerequisite to translation/interpreting? [#RoutesLive](#)



@JMHopper · Jul 10

The need for an extremely good memory as an interpreter? [#routeslive](#)



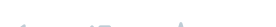
@Rushi\_78 · Jul 10

Really useful webinar, thanks for all the advice! [#RoutesLive](#)



@angegallagher3b · Jul 10

Networking = really important for getting into conference interpreting - Catriona Howard [#Routeslive](#)



@yoli\_lorena · Jul 10

"Once your qualified, there are various options... You need to maximise your opportunities & get experience first." Steven Gray [#RoutesLive](#)



@WineTesseur · Jul 10

Nice to hear colleagues of [@\\_InZone](#) project mentioned in [#routeslive](#) on working as a translator or interpreter <http://youtu.be/DR4muJrmY2Y> [#xl8](#)



@hopeful\_lizbeth · Jul 10

[#RoutesLive](#) Do you have to be the best of the best to become a translator? [@Routesintolangs](#)



## Q. What options are there for people interested in translating and interpreting?

H.C. - There are lots of opportunities and a number of conditions you have to meet. To become a translator or interpreter you need a university degree and to be trained in interpreting or translating. You have to want to do it, make good contacts - practice and experience are the most important things.

C.H. - The joy of interpreting is that you can work anywhere with anyone and get to be part of different people's world for a short period. Many people need interpreters to communicate in different settings.

S.G. - For translation, the market is huge and growing all the time. Make sure you have a post-graduate qualification. I acquired my technical knowledge in my first job. Other people acquire expertise in a particular field and then hone their linguistic and translation skills afterwards. You need to maximise those opportunities and get experience first; pro-bono and charity work are good examples.

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"You need to maximise those opportunities & get experience first." - Steven Gray

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During the #RoutesLive webinar, a question was asked about what ABC languages are. According to Catriona Howard, an interpreter's A language is their mother tongue. Their B language is an "active" language, so they interpret both from language B into A and from A into B. C languages are "passive", meaning that an interpreter will only work from their C to A language.

## Starting Work as a Translator or Interpreter - 6th June 2015

The University of Westminster and the Institute of Translation and Interpreting ran the event "Starting Work as a Translator or Interpreter" on 6th June 2015, with support from Capital L London Consortium and the National Networks for Translation and Interpreting.

Speakers gave presentations on a variety of topics, including public service interpreting, marketing, translation agencies, getting translation experience and working in the EU. They shared their experience of how to get into the profession, how to develop as a competent, engaged translator and also how to promote yourself and your work.

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"There will always be a need for human translators and interpreters." - Sarah Mason

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Sarah Griffen Mason offered her insight into the advantages and disadvantages of working as an in-house or freelance translator. She covered topics such as being a generalist or a specialist and why you might want to become a translator or interpreter.

Rose Campbell is a public service interpreter focusing in the health / legal sector. She touched on the places where Public Service Interpreter's work, different types of interpreting, meeting clients and basic skills.

Rik Grant introduced the concept of "Transcreation" using some familiar examples such as Nike, while Joanna Christian Waller offered advice on 'how much you can earn & how you go about deciding how much you're worth,' as well as doing pro-bono work to gain experience.



### What is 'pro bono'?

- Doing it for free, 'pro bono publico',
- Offering a professional service out of goodwill, rather than for payment
- Payback



What is pro bono slide @ 02:12: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0VdrX-I7GIUQ0ZUMGpFTnVuZ1U/view?pli=1>

Kari Koonin talked about the importance of a compelling CV and networking in her presentation on marketing, available at [prezi.com/5koivy9rz5g2/copy-of-marketing](https://prezi.com/5koivy9rz5g2/copy-of-marketing).

Questions & Answers from the event:

Q. In terms of interpreting, do you think it's worth taking some time to do an intensive course and learn a less common language such as Arabic or Chinese so that you can have a head start?

A. From experience, learning a language involves living in that country for a certain amount of time. If you have the time to do that, absolutely. Bear in mind that in public service interpreting, unlike simultaneous conference interpreting, you are working in both languages. You have to be proficient in your other language not just your mother tongue.

You can listen to the speakers and watch the presentations in full at:

[www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/translation/events/4190](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/translation/events/4190)

## Previous events

### European Graduate Placement Scheme 5th November 2014

The European Graduate Placement Scheme was a one-day event in collaboration with the National Networks for Translation and Interpreting. This took place at the University of Salford in conjunction with Routes into Languages North West. The key aim of the new scheme is to facilitate the mobility and employability of MA students enrolled in translator training programmes at EU level.

Eighty people attended the event, which featured excellent speakers from the industry that provided information about the scheme for both academic institutions and professional partners. Students and employers also presented their experiences of the scheme and its benefits.

### Careers in Translation and Interpreting Event 25th February 2015

The University of Manchester hosted an event in February 2015 about careers in translation and interpreting. 175 participants, mostly undergraduates from local universities, enjoyed sessions on interpreting and audio-visual translation and had the opportunity to network with other students, academics and practitioners.

Gareth Wilson, one of the 175 participants, said: "my overall feedback is that everything was absolutely brilliant. My only criticism is that the event just wasn't long enough!"

### Careers in Translation and Interpreting Event 4th March 2015

Speakers from the European Commission, National Networks for Translation and Interpreting and freelance translators and interpreters gave presentations at an employability event for undergraduates in the North West of England.

## Forthcoming events

### International Translation Day 2nd October 2015

An event to mark International Translation Day is taking place at the British Library on Friday 2nd October 2015. The day will include panel discussions, sessions on professional development for translators and networking opportunities. Tickets and details are available online: [www.bl.uk/events/international-translation-day-2015](http://www.bl.uk/events/international-translation-day-2015)

### Careers in Translation and Interpreting National Event 25th November 2015

A national Routes into Languages event will be taking place at Aston University on the 25th November 2015. More details will be available at: [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/events/](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/events/)

### Starting Work as a Translator or Interpreter 2nd March 2016 (South East Consortium)

Another national Starting Work as a Translator or Interpreter event is taking place in March 2016 at the University of Portsmouth. There will be presentations about career prospects and Q&A sessions, as well as practical sessions on translation and interpreting skills. GCSE, A-Level and university students from Portsmouth and surrounding areas will be invited to attend. You can register to attend here: [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/events/register/4292](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/events/register/4292)

For more information on these and similar upcoming events, please visit: [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/translation/events.html](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/translation/events.html)

National Network for Translation [www.nationalnetworkfortranslation.ac.uk](http://www.nationalnetworkfortranslation.ac.uk) | National Network for Interpreting [www.nationalnetworkforinterpreting.ac.uk](http://www.nationalnetworkforinterpreting.ac.uk)

