

Handling of Rare Languages

In July 2019 NRPSI published a news story about beginning a dialogue with those Registrants interested in developing changes in how Rare languages are handled. There was then an article published in the August 2019 NRPSI newsletter which said:

'We received a fantastic response to last month's news piece about Rare languages. Thanks to all those who have entered the dialogue. Many Registrants have much to contribute to our discussions with training institutions and examining bodies about how to handle Rare languages more effectively.'

If you have any further requests or comments regarding Rare languages, please get in touch with us at admin@nrpsi.org.uk using the subject line 'Rare Languages Comments'. We look forward to hearing more from you as we continue this vital work to help improve standards in our language community.'

Through the autumn and winter of 2019/2020 NRPSI continued the dialogue with the Chartered Institute of Linguists and other interested bodies regarding how to move forward with a more effective way of managing Rare languages, and a number of Registrants were involved in ensuring their points were included as part of these consultations.

Unfortunately, we were all affected by the pandemic and the first lockdown which began in March 2020, which slowed many initiatives down, including the work we had begun on Rare languages. Later in 2020, the Chief Executive of the CIOL announced she was resigning and we then had to wait for the appointment of a replacement before revitalising these discussions.

John Worne is now in situ at the CIOL and we have an agenda of issues and challenges to address, including reviewing the way in which Rare languages are handled.

In late December 2020 a Registrant wrote to NRPSI asking for the following statement to be made public to Registrants. We are delighted to publish it as there is much still to be discussed regarding best way forward to manage Rare languages, where no level 6 qualifications in public service interpreting exists.

The Registrant proposed to act formally asking NRPSI to scrap the current requirement to liaise with the CIOL, and open a consultation with Registrants to find a different way forward.

To confirm, NRPSI is, and has been, open to consultation on the handling of Rare languages as evidenced by dialogue with many of you following the July 2019 news story and the August 2019 newsletter article as well as activity through the autumn and winter of 2019/2020.

The Registrant said:

Re: Renewals for rare language

Dear colleagues

I know that some of you, like me, have grown increasingly frustrated over the last few years with the requirement to provide evidence that NO qualification exists in the rare languages for which we are registered. Thus far NRPSI has accepted an email from IOC to the effect that they have no such qualification – apparently the purpose of this is to encourage IOL to offer qualifications in those languages.

This requirement is as ridiculous as it is discriminatory, as interpreters of mainstream languages are not subject to such a requirement. Nor does it appear to have had the desired effect, because IOC now refuse to provide such an email. Quite apart from the fact that by forcing us to do their advocacy work on their behalf, NRPSI is abusing the relationship we have with our regulator.

Nevertheless, in the absence of formal qualifications, there is a justification for the regulator seeking to verify our skills in other ways.

NRPSI is committed to finding the best way forward in managing Rare languages and welcomes any and all input from Registrants, so please do not hesitate to share your views by writing to mike@nrpsi.org.uk, heading your email 'Rare Languages Comments' as we will be following up with the CIOL in coming weeks and months, albeit through remote meetings ensuring we all stay distanced, stay safe and keep well.

If you wish to pass on your comments to the Registrant who wrote the above, then I will of course forward them on – just ensure you ask me to do so.

POSTSCRIPT: In the interests of clarity, currently the CIOL has continued, and is continuing, to let Registrants know whether there is or will be a DPSI qualification in a particular language.

Mike Orlov
Executive Director and Registrar
7th January 2021