



BSL First | Qualify

Deaf Interpreter Pathway

Relay-intralingual interpreting and BSL/English translation

Streams 3 & 4 of the Signature Level 6 Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting and Translation

Develop the knowledge, practical skills, professional judgement and supervised experience required to progress towards professional practice in relay-intralingual interpreting or sign language translation.

Level 6

Four six-month cycles

BSL

DEAF INTERPRETER PATHWAY

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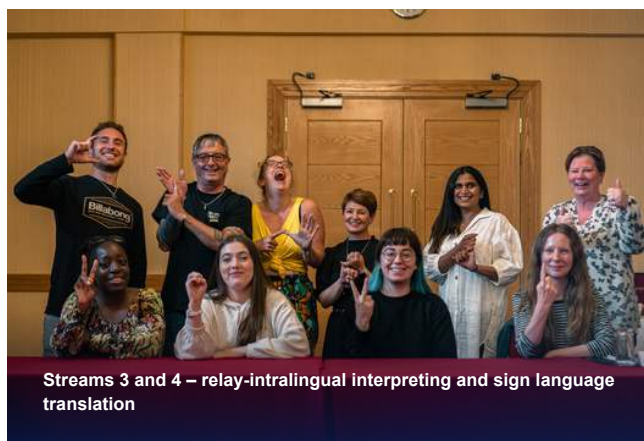
14 Why train with BSL First?

Prepare → Apply → Practice → Assessment

01 Course at a glance

The BSL First Deaf Interpreter Pathway is a structured professional training pathway for people who use British Sign Language (BSL) as their first or preferred language.

It delivers Streams 3 and 4 of the Signature Level 6 Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting and Translation, developing learners from advanced BSL competence through interpreting or translation training and supervised professional practice towards qualification.



QUALIFICATION

**SIGNATURE LEVEL 6 DIPLOMA IN SIGN LANGUAGE
INTERPRETING AND TRANSLATION**

PRINCIPAL LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

BSL

CYCLES

PREPARE → APPLY → PRACTICE → ASSESSMENT

STRUCTURED INDEPENDENT STUDY

**60 HOURS PER CYCLE / 240 HOURS ACROSS THE
PROGRAMME**

DELIVERY

**HYBRID – ONLINE TEACHING, FACE-TO-FACE INTENSIVE
LEARNING, INDEPENDENT STUDY AND PROFESSIONAL
PRACTICE**

PROFESSIONAL OUTCOME

**RELAY-INTRALINGUAL INTERPRETER OR SIGN
LANGUAGE TRANSLATOR**

PATHWAY

**STREAM 3 – RELAY-INTRALINGUAL INTERPRETING /
STREAM 4 – SIGN LANGUAGE TRANSLATION**

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

FOUR SIX-MONTH CYCLES

SCHEDULED TEACHING

**60 HOURS PER CYCLE / 240 HOURS ACROSS THE
PROGRAMME**

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

**MINIMUM 20 HOURS OF SUPERVISED PROFESSIONAL
PRACTICE DURING CYCLE 3**

PROGRESSION

ASSESSMENT AT THE END OF EVERY CYCLE

60
GUIDED

+

60
INDEPENDENT

A 60 + 60 learning model

Each cycle combines 60 hours of scheduled teaching with 60 hours of structured independent study. Learners should therefore plan for a minimum of 120 hours of structured learning within each six-month cycle, before allowing for additional assessment preparation, wider reading, professional activity and, during Cycle 3, supervised professional practice.

The independent-study component is not optional supplementary work. It is an integral part of the programme.

01 Course at a glance

The programme provides 240 hours of scheduled class/contact teaching. The regulated qualification specifies 500 guided learning hours overall, with additional guided activity taking place through assessment activity, tutorials, meetings and other directed work outside scheduled classes. Independent study is separate from guided learning.

Progression is assessed at every stage

Each cycle ends with an assessment of the knowledge, skills and professional readiness developed during that stage. Passing a cycle does not simply mean that you attended the required classes. It means that you have demonstrated that you are ready to begin the next stage of training.

If you have not yet reached the required standard, you will need to repeat the cycle before progressing. This staged approach is designed to prevent learners being moved through the programme before they have established the foundations required for the increasingly demanding work that follows.



02 Is this programme for you?

“ Becoming a professional interpreter or translator requires much more than being a confident signer.

This programme is designed for people who have already developed advanced competence in BSL and are ready to make the transition from language user to professional interpreter or translator.

You will be expected to study interpreting and translation theory, analyse professional practice, complete Level 6 academic work, develop practical interpreting and translation skills, undertake independent research and preparation, respond critically to feedback and progressively take responsibility for your own professional development.



Do not underestimate the commitment

This is a demanding Level 6 professional programme. It should not be approached in the same way as an evening language class or a qualification that can be completed primarily through attendance.

There will be periods when the course makes substantial demands on your time and attention. If your existing work, family or other commitments leave very little protected time for independent study, you should consider carefully whether this is the right time to begin the programme.

Every six-month cycle includes 60 hours of scheduled teaching and 60 hours of structured independent study. Assessments, reading, research, interpreting or translation practice and preparation sit alongside this. Cycle 3 also requires a minimum of 20 hours of supervised professional practice.

The academic workload should be taken particularly seriously. A significant proportion of the qualification requires research, analysis, critical reflection and assessment work at Level 6.

The programme is likely to be suitable for you if you:

- use BSL as your first or preferred language;
- already meet the Level 6 BSL entry requirement;
- want to work professionally in relay-intralingual interpreting or sign language translation;
- are ready for substantial academic as well as practical study;
- can manage sustained independent learning between teaching sessions;
- can respond constructively to detailed feedback;
- are prepared to analyse your own performance critically;
- can make time for interpreting or translation practice and professional experience; and
- are comfortable taking increasing responsibility for your own development.

Professional interpreting and translation training does not begin by teaching you BSL. Advanced language competence is the starting point from which professional competence is developed.

If you are interested in interpreting or translation but are not yet sure whether you are ready to commit to a full professional programme, BSL First also offers an optional six-week Introduction to Interpreting and Translation course. Completion of that course does not guarantee admission to this programme.

If BSL is an additional language and you want to work professionally between BSL and English, the Sign Language Interpreter programme may be more appropriate.

03 Your professional pathway

The Deaf Interpreter Pathway sits within a longer professional pathway:



Trainee professional practice

Where the relevant requirements are met, learners may progress towards the appropriate trainee professional status while completing their qualification.

The exact trainee-registration route depends on the learner's stream and the professional requirements in force at the time. Trainee registration should not be confused with professional supervision or mentoring.

BSL First

BSL First remains responsible for the training programme, progression requirements and qualification assessment. It does not provide ongoing professional supervision or individual mentoring as part of the course.

Learners who want or require additional professional supervision or mentoring are responsible for arranging this themselves. BSL First can signpost learners towards appropriate professional support.

Qualification is a milestone, not the end point

Completing the Level 6 qualification is a major professional milestone, but professional competence continues to develop after qualification. Qualified interpreters and translators are expected to continue learning through professional experience, continuing professional development, reflection, peer networks and appropriate specialist development throughout their careers.



04 How the programme is structured

1 Prepare

2 Apply

3 Practice

4 Assessment

The programme is divided into four six-month cycles:

Prepare → Apply → Practice → Assessment

Each cycle has a distinct purpose. More importantly, each cycle has a defined standard that must be reached before the learner progresses. The programme therefore works as a series of connected developmental stages rather than one uninterrupted course in which progression happens automatically with time.

How cycle progression works

At the end of each cycle, learners complete a progression assessment appropriate to that stage of training. The assessment asks a simple question: are you ready for what comes next?

If the answer is yes, you progress. If your current knowledge, practical competence or professional readiness does not yet meet the required standard, you repeat the cycle and receive a further structured period in which to develop before being reassessed.

Cycle 1 — Prepare

01

Cycle 1 develops the academic, theoretical and professional foundations required for interpreting and translation training. You study interpreting and translation theory, professional ethics, communication, role boundaries, assignment preparation, terminology, reflective practice and the practical systems surrounding professional work. Practical interpreting and translation activities are introduced alongside this work so that theory is connected to professional decisions from the beginning.

The Part 1 professional-development assessments also begin during this cycle.

60 scheduled teaching hours

60 structured independent-study hours

Cycle 1 concludes with a practical interpreting/translation readiness assessment supported by critical analysis and reflection. Its purpose is to determine whether you have sufficiently developed the professional foundations, analytical skills and emerging practical competence required to move into the more intensive application stage.

Successful completion allows progression to Cycle 2 — Apply. If the required standard has not yet been demonstrated, Cycle 1 must be repeated before progression.

Cycle 2 — Apply

02

Cycle 2 focuses on applying the foundations established during Cycle 1. Practical interpreting and translation become more complex, with learners developing simultaneous interpreting, relay interpreting and translation skills alongside analytical, preparation, co-working, self-monitoring and reflective strategies. By the end of the cycle, the work increasingly tests readiness for supervised professional practice.

Part 1 qualification work continues alongside practical development.

60 scheduled teaching hours

60 structured independent-study hours

Cycle 2 concludes with practical assessment activity and professional reflection designed to determine whether you are ready to move from controlled training activities into supervised professional practice.

Successful completion allows progression to Cycle 3 — Practice. If the required standard has not yet been demonstrated, Cycle 2 must be repeated.

04 How the programme is structured

Cycle 3 — Practice

03

Cycle 3 moves the centre of learning away from the classroom and into supervised professional experience. You are expected to become significantly more independent.

Rather than BSL First arranging placements for you, you are responsible for identifying appropriate professional-practice opportunities and suitably experienced practitioners who can support your development. You may work with one experienced practitioner or with several, depending on the opportunities available and your stream. These practitioners act as practice supervisors or tutors while you observe professional work and undertake supervised interpreting or translation practice.

Cycle 3 includes a minimum of 20 hours of supervised professional practice. The practice is structured in blocks of approximately five hours, with three-hour group supervision/reflection sessions interspersed through the cycle. These group sessions allow learners to examine what has happened in practice, discuss challenges and professional decisions, reflect on feedback and identify priorities before the next period of practice.

These are course-based reflective learning sessions. They should not be confused with individual professional supervision or mentoring.

60 scheduled teaching/group learning hours

60 structured independent-study hours

20+ hours supervised professional practice

Following formal observations and supervised-practice sessions, you complete an observation report with the experienced practitioner who has supported the activity. These reports provide structured evidence of what you observed or practised, the feedback received and the professional learning that resulted.

Where the evidence meets the relevant requirements, observation reports may be submitted towards the Part 2 internal assessments, subject to acceptance by the BSL First assessor. Responsibility for collecting suitable evidence remains with the learner.

By Cycle 3, BSL First deliberately becomes more hands-off. The course continues to provide structure, assessment, group reflection and guidance, but learners are expected to take responsibility for finding appropriate practice opportunities, building relationships with experienced practitioners, organising observations and supervised practice, preparing properly for professional activity, maintaining their evidence, identifying their own development needs and seeking additional professional support where necessary.

Cycle 3 progression is determined through the Part 2 internal practical assessment process and associated evidence of professional practice. If you are not yet ready for the external assessment stage, Cycle 3 must be repeated.

Cycle 4 — Assessment

04

Cycle 4 is the summative assessment stage. Its purpose is not to teach substantial amounts of new interpreting or translation content or to repair weaknesses that should have been addressed earlier in the programme.

By the time you enter Cycle 4, you should already have demonstrated through the first three progression stages that you have the underlying knowledge, practical skills and professional readiness required for the final qualification assessments.

The cycle focuses principally on targeted examination preparation, familiarisation with assessment requirements, practice under assessment conditions, final preparation and feedback, and completion of the external INTRA6 Part 2 assessments.

60 scheduled assessment-preparation and course hours

60 structured independent-study and assessment-preparation hours

Cycle 4 is the point at which you demonstrate the competence developed through Prepare, Apply and Practice, rather than begin developing that competence from scratch.



04 Taking a break between cycles

The programme recognises that learners may sometimes need to take an extended break from study because of pregnancy, health, caring responsibilities, extenuating circumstances or other significant life events.

An approved break does not remove the need to demonstrate current readiness for progression. Professional interpreting and translation competence is practice-dependent. A learner may successfully complete a cycle and then experience a substantial period with little BSL, interpreting, translation, academic study or professional practice. For this reason, if you take a break between cycles, you will be required to repeat the preceding cycle and its progression assessment before moving on to the next cycle.

For example, if you successfully complete Cycle 2 and then take an extended break before beginning Cycle 3, you will return to Cycle 2, complete the learning and assessment again, and demonstrate that you remain ready for supervised professional practice.

This requirement is not a penalty for taking time out. It is a professional-readiness safeguard. It gives returning learners a clear structure through which to rebuild, demonstrate readiness and then progress with a realistic chance of success.



05 What you will learn

The curriculum follows the same four-cycle progression as the programme itself. Each stage adds a different layer of professional competence.

Cycle 1 — Prepare: professional foundations

You are introduced to key concepts from interpreting and translation studies and begin connecting theory with practical decision-making. You explore the role of the interpreter and translator, professional boundaries and responsibilities; develop frameworks for ethical decision-making; learn how to research assignments and build specialist terminology; consider the systems required for professional business practice; and develop Level 6 academic, critical-reading and reflective skills.

Cycle 2 — Apply: developing interpreting and translation competence

You build on the foundations established during Cycle 1 through increasingly complex practical work. The cycle develops simultaneous interpreting, relay interpreting and translation alongside ethical decision-making, co-working, interaction management and preparation for professional practice. You also develop experience of sight and immediate translation, in-vision translation, subtitling, transcription and live translation. By the end of Cycle 2, practical training increasingly focuses on whether you are ready to apply your developing competence in supervised professional environments.

Cycle 3 — Practice: professional experience

Cycle 3 is substantially more self-directed and practice-based. You apply the theory and practical skills developed during the first two cycles in authentic professional environments, with your practice and assessment now reflecting either Stream 3 relay-intralingual interpreting or Stream 4 sign language translation.

Observation is an important part of this stage. Working alongside experienced practitioners allows you to analyse professional preparation, language and translation decisions, interaction, co-working and professional boundaries before comparing these with your own developing practice.

Supervised practice then allows you to apply your own decisions in a controlled professional context. Following observations and supervised work, you record and analyse your learning through structured reports.

Cycle 4 — Assessment: summative demonstration

Cycle 4 is the final summative stage. There is deliberately much less new teaching at this point. The focus is on preparing for and completing the formal Part 2 external assessments required by the qualification.

You revisit the required assessment modes, practise under examination conditions, respond to final targeted feedback and prepare strategically for each assessment.

For Stream 3, the final assessments focus on relay-intralingual interpreting across consecutive, two-way, remote, prepared and immediate interpreting tasks.

For Stream 4, the final assessments focus on professional sign language translation across in-vision, live, written-to-BSL, sight and immediate translation tasks.

06 How you will learn

The programme uses a hybrid model because different aspects of interpreting and translation education are best developed in different environments. BSL is the principal language of instruction.



Online learning

Online teaching provides continuity across the programme and is particularly well suited to theory, academic development, structured discussion, remote practical work and regular interpreting and translation skills development.



Face-to-face intensive learning

Scheduled face-to-face learning provides opportunities for immersive practical work, live interaction, observation, co-working, detailed skills feedback and assessment preparation. Current face-to-face locations and dates are published on the website for each live cohort.

60 + 60

Each six-month cycle follows a 60 + 60 model: 60 hours of scheduled teaching or course activity plus 60 hours of structured independent study. During Cycle 3, the minimum 20 hours of supervised professional practice is additional to this core commitment.

Independent learning

Independent study may include academic reading and research, assessment work, terminology research, interpreting and translation practice, source-text analysis, preparation for taught sessions, reflective work, assessment preparation, reviewing recorded material and developing professional knowledge.

The programme becomes increasingly difficult to manage if independent study is repeatedly postponed until immediately before an assessment. Learners should plan protected study time throughout each cycle.

07 Practice, supervision and professional development

Professional development within the programme operates at several different levels. It is important not to confuse them.

Professional observations → Supervised practice → Feedback → Group supervision and reflection → Professional development

BSL First's role

BSL First is the training provider and assessment centre. Its responsibilities include delivering the programme, providing the teaching and learning structure, assessing readiness to progress between cycles, supporting learners with qualification requirements, assessing internal evidence, preparing learners for formal assessment and, where applicable, acting as the learner's Senior Practitioner for TSLI registration.

What the course does not provide

Professional supervision and individual mentoring are not included as part of the course. Learners who wish to establish an ongoing relationship with a professional supervisor or mentor are responsible for arranging this themselves. BSL First can signpost learners towards appropriate sources of support.

Local practice supervisors and tutors

Cycle 3 requires learners to identify one or more experienced interpreters who can support observations and supervised practice in their local area. For the purposes of the course, these experienced practitioners act as practice supervisors or tutors.

After a formal observation or supervised-practice activity, the learner and supervising interpreter complete the relevant observation report together. The completed report may contribute evidence towards the Part 2 internal assessments, subject to review and acceptance by the BSL First assessor.

Group supervision and reflection

Supervised-practice periods are interspersed with three-hour group supervision/reflection sessions delivered within the programme. These sessions create a structured point at which learners can examine professional decisions, difficult or unexpected situations, feedback received in practice, ethical questions, assignment preparation, boundaries and competence, and priorities for the next period of development.

These sessions form part of the educational programme. They are not a substitute for individual professional supervision.

Learning to manage your own career

Cycle 3 represents a deliberate shift in responsibility. At the beginning of the programme, BSL First provides a relatively high level of structure. By the professional-practice stage, learners are expected to organise opportunities, build professional relationships, collect evidence, seek appropriate support and make informed decisions about their own competence.



Cycle 3 represents a deliberate shift in responsibility.

08 Assessment, evidence and feedback

Assessment has two connected purposes within the programme. The first is to determine whether you are ready to move from one cycle to the next. The second is to complete the formal assessment requirements of the Signature Level 6 Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting and Translation.

8.1 Progression assessments

Every cycle has an assessment point:

1

Cycle 1 — Prepare: two-way interpreting/translation assessment activity supported by critical analysis and reflection, measuring whether the professional, theoretical and analytical foundations required for Cycle 2 are secure.

2

Cycle 2 — Apply: mock relay-interpreting and live-translation assessment activity with professional reflection, demonstrating readiness to move into supervised professional practice.

3

Cycle 3 — Practice: Part 2 internal practical assessments and accepted professional-practice evidence, measuring readiness for the final external assessment stage.

4

Cycle 4 — Assessment: formal Part 2 external/summative assessments, demonstrating final qualification competence.

Progression is not automatic. A learner who has attended a cycle but has not demonstrated the required standard does not progress to the next one. Instead, the learner repeats the cycle and its progression assessment.

8.2 How the Signature assessments map onto the cycles

Cycles 1 and 2 — Part 1 professional development

The five Part 1 assessments are developed across the Prepare and Apply stages:

1

Interpreting and translation studies — a 3,000-word written essay or equivalent structured BSL assessment.

2

Professional business plan — demonstrating understanding of the systems and processes required for professional practice.

3

Specialist terminology glossary.

4

Preparing for assignments — evidence demonstrating effective preparation for four interpreting or translation assignments.

5

Professional Development Plan — supported by reflective journals.

08 Assessment, evidence and feedback

Cycle 3 — Stream 3 internal assessment

The six internal assessments are:

- 1 One-way consecutive relay interpreting.
- 2 One-way simultaneous relay interpreting working with another interpreter.
- 3 Two-way face-to-face consecutive relay interpreting, with critical analysis.
- 4 Two-way face-to-face consecutive relay interpreting in a team, with critical analysis.
- 5 Two-way face-to-face relay interpreting using notes, with critical analysis.
- 6 Two-way remote relay interpreting.

Evidence generated through professional observations and supervised practice may contribute towards these assessments where it satisfies the relevant requirements and is accepted by the BSL First assessor.

Cycle 4 — Stream 3 external assessment

The six external assessments are:

- 1 One-way consecutive relay interpreting.
- 2 Two-way face-to-face relay interpreting.
- 3 Two-way face-to-face relay interpreting with notes.
- 4 Two-way remote relay interpreting.
- 5 Prepared/sight interpreting into modified or individualised BSL.
- 6 Immediate interpreting into BSL.

Cycle 3 — Stream 4 internal assessment

The six internal assessments are:

- 1 Text translation
- 2 Pre-recorded in-vision translation
- 3 Extended text translation with critical analysis
- 4 BSL subtitling/transcription with critical analysis
- 5 Consecutive live translation/interpreting with critical analysis
- 6 Live broadcast translation working with other professionals, with critical analysis

Evidence generated through professional observations and supervised practice may contribute towards these assessments where it satisfies the relevant requirements and is accepted by the BSL First assessor.

Cycle 4 — Stream 4 external assessment

The six external assessments are:

- 1 Pre-recorded in-vision translation
- 2 Live broadcast translation
- 3 Text translation
- 4 Text translation
- 5 Sight translation English – BSL
- 6 Immediate translation BSL – English

Formative feedback

Assessment is not limited to formal qualification tasks. Throughout the programme, learners receive formative feedback through taught practical activities, tutorials, peer work, practice evidence and internal assessment preparation.

What happens if you are not ready to progress?

Not passing a cycle progression assessment means that more development is required before moving on. You will therefore need to repeat the cycle and demonstrate the required standard before progressing.

The purpose is developmental rather than punitive. Moving a learner into a more demanding stage before they are ready significantly increases the risk of later failure.

Progression decisions are based on current competence. Where a learner takes an extended break between cycles, the re-entry requirements described in Chapter 4 apply before progression to the next stage.

09 Qualification, course status and professional recognition

RQF Level 6

The programme delivers Streams 3 and 4 of the Signature Level 6 Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting and Translation (RQF). Signature is the awarding organisation responsible for the qualification and its assessment requirements. Stream 3 is the relay-intralingual interpreting pathway and Stream 4 is the sign language translation pathway.

Qualification and professional registration are different

Completing the qualification and becoming professionally registered are related but separate processes. Successful completion of the Level 6 Diploma provides the professional qualification associated with this pathway. Professional registration is governed separately by the relevant regulator and may include additional requirements beyond completion of the qualification.

The programme is designed to support progression towards the professional registration route associated with the learner's chosen stream, subject to the requirements in force at the time of application. Because regulatory requirements can change, the prospectus does not reproduce a detailed registration checklist.

Trainee registration

Where eligibility requirements are met, learners may be able to progress towards the appropriate trainee professional registration during the programme. The exact route depends on the learner's stream and the professional requirements in force at the time.



10 Learning support and resources

Support throughout the programme

Professional interpreting and translation training is demanding. You will be expected to work independently, manage substantial academic study, practise regularly and take increasing responsibility for your professional development.

That does not mean you are expected to do everything alone.

BSL First provides a structured support infrastructure throughout the programme, combining teaching, tutorials, feedback, peer learning, online resources and professional-practice guidance.

The level and type of support changes as you progress. During the earlier cycles, the course provides more structured guidance. By Cycle 3, learners are expected to become increasingly independent and to take greater responsibility for organising their own practice and professional development.

The purpose of support is therefore not to remove that independence, but to give you the structure, resources and feedback you need to develop it successfully.


[Student Hub](#)
[Recorded lectures](#)
[Online library](#)
[Practice clips](#)
[Tutorials](#)

Your Student Hub

Learners have access to the BSL First Student Hub on Moodle, which acts as the central online learning environment for the programme.

The Student Hub gives you access to course materials and learning resources throughout your studies, including recorded lectures, an online library and interpreting and translation practice clips. These resources allow you to revisit taught material, explore topics in greater depth and continue developing between scheduled teaching sessions.

Tutorials

Tutorials provide additional opportunities to discuss your progress outside the main teaching sessions. They can be used to clarify course or assessment requirements, discuss feedback, identify areas requiring further development and consider how you are progressing through the programme.

Tutorials are part of the academic support structure of the course. They do not replace the independent study and practice expected between sessions.

10 Learning support and resources

Feedback and progression support

You will receive feedback throughout the programme rather than only at the point of final assessment. Practical activities, formative work, internal assessments and end-of-cycle progression assessments are used to identify strengths and areas requiring further development.

Because progression between cycles depends on readiness rather than attendance alone, this feedback should help you understand where you are now, what standard is required next, and what you need to work on to get there.

Where a learner has not yet reached the required progression standard, repeating the cycle provides a further structured period of teaching, practice and development before reassessment.

Peer learning

Professional development benefits considerably from learning with other trainees. Peer groups provide opportunities to practise interpreting and translation, discuss course material, compare approaches, analyse professional decisions and support one another between formal teaching sessions.

Peer learning does not replace tutor assessment or professional feedback, but it gives learners additional opportunities to practise, experiment, reflect and develop confidence.

Community Hub

Learners also have access to the wider BSL First Community Hub. This extends the learning environment beyond an individual class and allows students to remain connected with the wider BSL First learner community.

The aim is to support professional connection, peer exchange and a sense of belonging within a broader community of people developing their signed-language and professional practice.

Cycle 3 group reflection

Additional support is built into the professional-practice stage. During Cycle 3, periods of supervised practice are interspersed with three-hour group supervision and reflection sessions.

These sessions provide a structured space in which learners can return from professional practice, examine what happened, discuss feedback and professional decisions, identify difficulties and plan priorities for the next period of practice.

The sessions are educational and reflective components of the programme. They are not individual professional supervision.

Trainee professional support

Where a learner progresses towards trainee professional registration and the relevant requirements are met, BSL First supports the learner with the course and qualification requirements associated with that stage.

This course support is separate from professional supervision and mentoring. BSL First does not provide an ongoing professional supervisor or personal mentor as part of the course. Learners who require or want these additional professional relationships are responsible for arranging them independently, although BSL First can signpost learners towards appropriate sources of support.

Reasonable adjustments

BSL First operates a formal reasonable-adjustment process for learners who require adjustments because of disability or another relevant access need.

Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments can be considered for teaching, learning and assessment in accordance with BSL First policy and the requirements of the awarding organisation.

Adjustments are designed to remove unnecessary barriers to access. They do not change the competence standard that must ultimately be demonstrated for the qualification.

Student benefits

Eligible learners can access TOTUM student membership, providing access to the benefits and discounts available through the scheme.

What support does — and does not — mean

BSL First provides substantial academic, learning and progression support, but professional interpreting and translation training ultimately requires increasing professional independence.

Support from the course does not mean that BSL First completes academic work for you, provides unlimited individual tuition, organises all professional-practice opportunities, supplies an individual mentor or professional supervisor, or guarantees progression simply because you have attended the course.

By Cycle 3 in particular, you will be expected to identify suitable practice opportunities, establish relationships with experienced practitioners, maintain your own evidence, respond to feedback and take responsibility for your continuing development.

A useful way of understanding the programme is: we provide the structure, teaching, resources, assessment and feedback. You are responsible for using them.

That partnership between structured support and increasing learner responsibility is central to the way the programme prepares you for professional interpreting or translation practice.

11 Entry requirements and readiness

This is an advanced professional programme. Meeting the formal language entry requirement is necessary, but it is not sufficient on its own. The selection process also considers whether an applicant has the academic capacity, professional maturity and available time required to succeed.

Formal entry requirements

Applicants should:

- use BSL as their first or preferred language
- hold the required Level 6 BSL qualification, or an accepted equivalent
- demonstrate the language competence required for their intended interpreting or translation pathway

An applicant's hearing or disability status is not an entry requirement.

Academic readiness

The academic demands of the programme must not be underestimated. The qualification requires critical reading, research, academic work, interpreting and translation theory, structured analysis, reflective work and the ability to make evidence-based arguments.

BSL First therefore asks applicants about their previous university study during the application process. Preference is given to applicants who already hold a university degree because previous successful study at this level provides useful evidence that the applicant is likely to manage the academic demands of the programme.

A degree is not a substitute for the signed-language entry requirement or professional suitability. Applicants without a university degree should pay particular attention to the academic requirements and be prepared to demonstrate that they can undertake sustained Level 6 study.

Time and workload readiness

Being academically capable is not enough if you do not have time to complete the work. Every cycle contains 60 hours scheduled teaching plus 60 hours structured independent study, with additional demands arising from assessment and, later, professional practice.

This is not a programme where independent work can routinely be left until the final week before an assessment.

Independent learning

As the programme progresses, the level of direction from BSL First reduces. You will increasingly be expected to plan your own study, research unfamiliar topics, practise independently, organise professional-practice opportunities, identify your own weaknesses, respond to feedback and seek appropriate professional support.

Professional maturity

Professional interpreting and translation involve confidentiality, boundaries, ethical decisions and responsibility for your work. Applicants need to demonstrate an appropriate understanding of the seriousness of professional practice and an ability to reflect on their own limitations.

Digital competence

Because the programme includes online teaching, Moodle resources and digital submission of learning and assessment evidence, learners need sufficient digital confidence to participate effectively.



Meeting the formal language entry requirement is necessary, but it is not sufficient on its own.

12 Application and selection

The application process is designed to assess more than whether you hold the minimum qualification. It considers language competence, academic readiness, professional potential, motivation and whether the programme is the right next step for you.

01

Stage 1 — Application

Applicants submit an up-to-date CV and a BSL video of up to four minutes explaining why they want to become an interpreter or translator.

BSL First reviews qualifications, relevant experience, signed-language competence, motivation and professional potential before deciding whether to invite the applicant to interview.



02

Stage 2 — Online interview

Selected applicants attend an online interview of approximately 30 minutes. The interview includes a 10–15 minute two-way interpreting simulation and a sight-translation task using a written text.

Applicants are not expected to perform as already-qualified interpreters or translators. The activity is used to explore language processing, communication, potential and readiness for professional training.

The interview also includes questions about the applicant's ambitions, expectations, previous study and readiness for the demands of the programme, together with an opportunity for the applicant to ask questions.



03

Admissions decision

Following the selection process, BSL First decides whether the applicant is ready to enter the programme and whether the route is appropriate for their current stage of development. Meeting the minimum entry requirements does not guarantee a place.

Current application availability, live cohort details and current application arrangements are published on the BSL First website.



BSL application + online interview

13 After the programme: progression and careers

Successful completion of the programme provides the Level 6 professional qualification associated with Stream 3 or Stream 4 of the Signature Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting and Translation.

Community

Public
services

Workplaces

Education

Healthcare

Media

Digital
content

Remote work

Professional registration

Graduates may progress towards the professional registration route associated with their chosen stream, subject to the requirements of the relevant professional regulator in force at the time of application. The qualification and registration should not be treated as identical. Learners remain responsible for meeting any additional professional registration requirements.

Where interpreters and translators work

Qualified relay-intralingual interpreters may work across community, public-service, workplace, education, healthcare, meeting and remote environments. Qualified sign language translators may work across recorded, digital, public-information, media, educational and organisational translation contexts.

Interpreters and translators may work on a freelance basis, as employees, or through a combination of professional arrangements.

Working within competence

Qualification does not mean that every interpreter or translator is immediately ready for every specialist setting. Professionals are expected to make responsible decisions about the work they accept and to work within the limits of their current competence.

Some areas of practice require further experience, specialist knowledge, supervision, mentoring or additional professional development after qualification.



Continuing professional development

The end of the course marks the beginning of a new stage of professional learning. Interpreters and translators continue developing through practice, continuing professional development, reflection, peer learning, appropriate supervision and specialist training.

BSL First's wider **Develop** offer provides opportunities for qualified professionals to continue building advanced and specialist practice.

14 Why train with BSL First?

Professional training should develop more than the ability to pass an assessment. BSL First's professional programmes are designed around a connected process of knowledge, application, supervised practice, observation, feedback and reflection.

A measurable contribution to the profession

In 2026, BSL First reported that:

150+

150+ professionals had been trained across sign language interpreting and translation since 2020.

1 in 6

1 in 6 trainees in the national trainee interpreter pipeline were training with BSL First.

14%

BSL First-trained interpreters accounted for 14% of the net growth of the RSLI register since 2021.

10%

BSL First-trained translators accounted for 10% of the net growth of the RSLT register since 2022.

These figures were based on BSL First programme records and published NRCPD registration figures at the time. The RSLI and RSLT percentages compare BSL First-trained professionals with net growth in the relevant national register over the stated period.

Specialist professional training

BSL First specialises in sign language education and professional interpreting and translation training. The curriculum is designed around the particular linguistic, ethical, academic and professional demands of professional interpreting and translation.

A staged route into practice

The four-cycle structure deliberately prevents learners being moved directly from advanced language study into unsupported professional practice. You first Prepare. You then Apply those foundations. You move into supervised Practice only when you have demonstrated readiness. You enter final Assessment once your internal practical competence has been established.

Increasing professional independence

The programme does not aim to make learners permanently dependent on their tutors. Responsibility shifts progressively towards the learner. By Cycle 3, you are expected to organise professional-practice opportunities, develop relationships with experienced practitioners, maintain your own evidence and identify the professional support you need.

Learning beyond scheduled teaching

The Student Hub, recorded lectures, online library, practice clips, tutorials, peer learning and Community Hub support development outside formal class hours. The 60 hours of independent study within every cycle reflect the expectation that professional competence is built as much through sustained work between sessions as through the sessions themselves.

Development beyond qualification

Passing the Level 6 qualification is an important milestone rather than the end of professional learning. BSL First's wider professional-development offer allows qualified interpreters and translators to continue developing advanced and specialist practice as their careers progress.

15 Current course information and next steps

Current course information

For current course dates, fees, payment options, face-to-face locations and availability, visit the Deaf Interpreter Pathway course page on the BSL First website.

The website is the live source for current Deaf Interpreter Pathway cohort information, available streams and application availability.

Before you apply

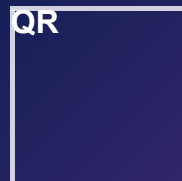
Before submitting an application, you should:

- read the current course information on the BSL First website;
- review the entry and readiness requirements in this prospectus;
- consider realistically whether you can commit to the academic, practical and independent-study workload; and
- consider the optional Introduction to Interpreting and Translation course if you want to explore professional interpreting and translation training before applying to the full programme.

Contact

training@bslfirst.com

<https://bslfirst.com/int-application-form/>



BSL FIRST | QUALIFY

Deaf Interpreter Pathway

Relay-intralingual
interpreting | BSL/English
translation

**Develop your language into
professional practice.**

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