

# European Masters in Translation. A comparative study

Ester Torres-Simón and Anthony Pym  
Universitat Rovira i Virgili

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**Abstract.** The European Masters in Translation is a network of programs selected because they meet quality standards for translator training. An analysis of 67 programs (from 61 universities located in 21 countries) describes how those standards inform actual curricula. The analysis compares the various admission requirements, hands-on language-specific translation classes, courses on the translation profession, internships, and the status accorded to translation theory and research. It is found that there is significant variation between the programs for most of these factors, and a very significant presence of elements that might seem not to be in tune with the strict philosophy of training professionals for a market. In particular, some programs oblige students to do very little language-specific translation practice or internships, which suggests that it is possible to legitimize a Masters in translation in which little controlled translating has to be done.

## 1. Introduction

For students and early-career translators, a Masters program would seem to offer preparation for work on the translation market. There is, however, a great deal of variation in the many programs available, depending on the country involved, the specific language combination sought, and the type and degree of specialization. A major attempt to standardize programs internationally would seem to be the European Masters in Translation (EMT), which has operated since 2009 as a network of selected programs in various European countries. There is nevertheless considerable doubt as to whether the EMT programs conform to a single pattern, whether the selected programs provide a model that could be applied in other parts of the world (cf. He 2009), and indeed whether the intended purpose of the EMT was to introduce any major standardization at all.

This study offers a comparative view of how 67 Masters programs within the EMT network have been implemented in each national context.<sup>1</sup> We compare admission requirements, language-specific practice, the status of translation theory and research, internships, and introductions to translation as a profession. The selection of these factors is motivated by initial suspicion that some of the programs involve relatively few language-specific translation activities, and that this particular variable has resisted

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<sup>1</sup> We extend our sincere thanks to the numerous program coordinators who helped us compile and correct the information, and to the scholars who discussed the text on Academia in March 2017 (250 “attendees”), in particular Michael Betsch, Zelma Catalan, Elena Galvão, Chris Gordon, Kaisa Koskinen, Iulianna van der Lek-Ciudin, Rudy Loock, Enrico Monti, Igor Tyšš, and Catherine Way. Thanks also go to DGT Director-General Rytis Martikonis for making the 2009 strategy document available to us. All attempts have been made to standardize and reproduce the information and many corrections sent to us.

moves toward standardization. It also responds to questions about the extent to which a professional “translation service provision” competence actually takes a central role, especially in what might otherwise seem to be theory-based Masters.

We hope that this basically quantitative approach to the range of options within the EMT will be of assistance to program designers and prospective students, offering an alternative to discourses based on self-promotion or anecdotal case studies (cf. Venuti ed. 2017).

## **2. Methodology**

### *2.1. What is the European Masters in Translation?*

The European Masters in Translation (EMT) was developed in partnership with the European Commission’s Directorate General for Translation (DGT). The relation between the network and the Directorate General is somewhat less than clear. Much as one might suppose that the increase in official EU languages from 11 in 2004 to 23 in 2007 led to a short supply of qualified professionals for high-level linguistic services, none of the programmatic documents presents the EMT as a training ground for the DGT (see European Masters in Translation 2009, 2012a, 2012b). One of the EMT strategy documents describes the network merely as a “quality label for translator training courses at master’s level which can be given to higher education programs that meet commonly accepted quality standards for translator training” (European Masters in Translation 2012a: 1). The assumption that a “quality label” is necessary might be read as implicit criticism of the existing Masters programs, or of their uncontrolled diversity, but this is not spelt out in any of the documents.

The concept of “quality” in the EMT strategy document is clearly *process-oriented*: instead of measuring the quality of products (the graduating Masters students or their translations), the EMT seeks to establish quality standards for the training process (the activities done in the Masters programs). There are thus no exams involved: the assessment of quality is based on each program’s self-report of how it trains its students and organizes its internal assessments. This is done in relation to several clear parameters, the main one being a framework of transversal *competences* rather than any specific content or a particular training methodology. By “competence”, the EMT understands “the combination of aptitudes, knowledge, behavior and knowhow necessary to carry out a given task under given conditions”, which once applied would lead to “the qualification of experts in multilingual and multimedia communication” (European Masters in Translation 2012b: 2). This relatively loose framework thus allows participant programs to adapt to their various national demands and specific market requirements, while still theoretically attaining the same general quality.

EMT membership is revised every five years. At the time of writing, the most recent selection round took place in June 2014, granting EMT status to 67 programs from 63 different universities in 22 countries (EMT 2014). Two of those programs have since been discontinued, leaving a total of 65 EMT programs in operation. The present study has been carried on the 2015-16 programs of the Masters that accepted students in that academic year.

## 2.2. Items for comparison

As mentioned, we have focused on the following items: admission requirements (Which programs set specific language requirements for entry? How do they check those requirements?), hands-on language-specific translation classes (How many hands-on language-specific translation credits are there?), courses on the translation profession (How many credits address issues like accounting, client-professional relationships, etc.?), internships (Are there optional or compulsory internships? How long are they expected to last?), and the status of translation theory and research (Are credits allocated to specific courses on translation theory or research? Is there a dissertation or project involved?).

## 2.3. Data collection

Data was initially collected from the information offered by each Masters on its website. The information was accessed in English when possible, and in the local languages when not. In all cases, the information found in English was checked and compared with the information found in the other languages available.

There was great diversity in the availability of information online. In some cases we were able to access detailed descriptions of each course; most of the times we found the title of the course and its number of credits. In other cases, though, the website gave only a general description of the program and did not provide any details on the contents of specific courses. In those cases, we contacted the program coordinators and asked for more specific information.

The different national educational frameworks, working languages and specializations posed some challenges for data analysis. For example, we set out using ECTS as the unit for calculation of course weightings, but not all universities work with the European credit system. British universities, for example, keep their own credit system, while others provide only the class contact hours or the schedule for the academic year. This was further complicated by the fact that EMT Masters can last for one or two years, which heavily influences the curricula. We therefore decided to work with percentages (number of hours/credits/ECTS of the course in relation to the total number of hours/credits/ECTS of the Masters).

We also noticed that hands-on language-specific translation classes were sometimes core courses and in other cases optional, and this difference obviously influences each student's experience of the program. We have thus analyzed the data accordingly, distinguishing systematically between courses students *must* take (core courses) and courses students *can* take to complete the Masters (optional courses).

In universities where a program offers two different structures or itineraries with major differences between them, both have been analyzed separately. This is the case, for example, of programs offered by Dublin City University, Libera Università di Lingue e Comunicazione (IULM Milan) and the University of Manchester. Some of the itineraries are recognized separately in the EMT list (EMT 2014), others are not. In total, we analyzed 67 programs from 61 universities located in 21 countries.

In all cases, the data was sent to the coordinators of the programs for confirmation. Their answers sometimes added clarifications on the inner workings of the programs.

Our data analysis has not been checked against any databases compiled by the EMT itself, since we have attempted to maintain an independent stance at all stages of our research. To the same point, we are not associated with any program that has applied for admission to the EMT network: we have no institutional axe to grind, merely questions to answer.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Admission requirements

Although admission requirements are not part of the curriculum per se, the students' starting level and specific requirements inevitably condition the contents of each program. In general, one might expect a one-year Masters to require C1 level in all working languages (as defined in the CEFR). Longer programs might then request certification for all B languages and perhaps teach a C language.<sup>2</sup> Depending on their scope, some programs might limit the number of working languages.

As expected, most programs indicate in their description that C level or near-native level is necessary to enter their Masters. Of the 66 programs that gave specific information on entry requirements, 29 not only requested a certain language level but also tested candidates independently. Ten of those universities test translation skills as well, usually with a translation test from a B language into an A language, and sometimes also with a translation into the B language.

The 37 remaining universities request a related BA degree, and sometimes external certification of A or B languages as well. Most universities in English-speaking countries emphasize the need for an adequate level of English. Actually four British universities request a related BA for all speakers and certification of the level of English for all non-native speakers. To a certain extent, this requirement is in line with the national requisite of a C1 level in English (IELTS 6.0) to access any British university degree program. Some universities consider interviews as an alternative when certificates are not available. Among others, French and Finnish universities would also admit students on the basis of their curriculum plus an interview, in exceptional cases where the candidate has no related BA degree. One must bear in mind that the translation market is generally unregulated, which means that many people have gained professional skills without being formally trained in them. This creates a secondary market for courses that can now certify the skills that those people may already have acquired.

In general, admission requirements seem to be country-specific, highlighting an important factor in curriculum design: national standards and expectations.

#### 3.2. Hands-on language-specific translation classes

The centerpiece of the EMT concept of quality is its “competence wheel” (Figure 1), where competences are organized into five groups, all of which converge in the central “Translation service provision competence” (see Chodkiewicz 2012 for a more detailed analysis of the competence wheel). The clear message is that the Masters programs have

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<sup>2</sup> We adopt the standard terminology where the A language is the one the student is the most skilled in with respect to the learning environment (thus not necessarily the student's mother tongue or L1), while the B and C languages are those that the student is less skilled in (see Pym 2011).

to address all these aspects, and not merely the “language competence” area that might otherwise be associated with translation as applied bilingualism. Translators have to know more than languages.

*Figure 1. The EMT competence wheel (from EMT 2012b)*



If “language competence” is just one of five main areas, one might naïvely suppose it should be dealt with by one fifth (20 percent) of each program. Similarly naïvely, since the competence model lists 48 items of knowledge and/or skills as the descriptors of these five areas, and observing that language-specific skills are mentioned in just six of those 48 (three for “production” plus three for language competence as such), the proportion of language-specific skills and knowledge might be as low as 12.5% of the competences to be acquired. Despite its visual symmetry, however, the EMT model does not actually say how much of any program should be devoted to each area, so the percentages are effectively left to each particular program or national model. Hence the interest of checking what actually happens on the ground.

*Table 1. Percentages of compulsory language-specific translation credits in each university*

University of Hull (UK)	0	Diderot, Paris 7 (France)	28
University of Surrey (UK)	0	Rennes 2 (France)	28
Dublin City [technologies] (Eire)	0	Bretagne Occidentale (France)	30
Charles U. (Prague, Czech Rep.)	3	Ljubljana (Slovenia)	30
Porto (Portugal)	8	Salamanca (Spain)	30
Sofia (Bulgaria)	9	Toulouse 2 [translation] (France)	30
Dublin City [translation] (Ireland)	11	Bologna (Italy)	33
Swansea (UK)	11	Haute-Alsace (France)	33
Rīgas Tehniskā (Latvia)	13	Leipzig (Germany)	33
Wien (Vienna, Austria)	13	UNINT Roma [translation] (Italy)	33
Eastern Finland (Joensuu)	15	Valladolid (Spain)	33
Mons (Belgium)	15	Pontificia Comillas (Madrid, Spain)	37
Vilnius (Lithuania)	15	Toulouse 2 [AVT] (France)	38
Aarhus (Denmark)	17	Uniwersytet Warszawski (Poland)	38
Babes-Bolyai (Romania)	17	Charles-de-Gaulle Lille 3 (France)	40
Durham (UK)	17	Eötvös Loránd (Budapest, Hungary)	40
Leeds (UK)	17	Köln (Cologne, Germany)	40
Manchester [interpreting] (UK)	17	KU Leuven (Belgium)	40
Newcastle (UK)	17	UNINT Roma [interpreting] (Italy)	40
Portsmouth (UK)	17	Konštantína Filozofa (Slovakia)	46
Tampere (Finland)	17	Alcalá de Henares (Madrid, Spain)	47
Turku (Finland)	17	Lorraine (France)	47
Universiteit Antwerpen (Belgium)	20	Ghent (Belgium)	47
Aston (UK)	22	IULM Milan [translation] (Italy)	50
Birmingham (UK)	22	Latvijas Universitāte (Riga)	53
ISTI (Bruxelles, Belgium)	22	Aristotle (Thessaloniki, Greece)	53
Roehampton (UK)	22	IULM Milan [specialized] (Italy)	55
Cyril & Methodius (Bulgaria)	23	Strasbourg (France)	55
Jaume I (Castelló, Spain)	23	Stendhal Grenoble 3 (France)	59
Ventspils (Latvia)	23	Trieste (Italy)	60
Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belg.)	23	Adama Mickiewiczza (Poznan, Pol.)	63
Manchester [translation] (UK)	25	Sorbonne Nouv Paris 3 [translation]	65
Institut Libre Marie Haps (Belg.)	27	Sorbonne Nouv. Paris 3 [two lang.]	73

Our aim is thus to assess what percentage of hands-on language-specific translation credits are offered in each Masters. To do this, we exclude all the courses that are clearly “language neutral” (theory, research methodology, ethics, translation as a profession), as well as terminology and culture-related courses that, even when they are divided up according to languages, are not actually on translating in the narrow sense. We also exclude translation classes that cater for more than one language combination (“multilingual practicums”, described elsewhere in this volume). We then distinguish between the compulsory credits (Table 1) and the maximum number of credits that can be taken (Table 2).

*Table 2. Percentages of total language-specific translation credits offered in each university*

Hull (UK)	0	Jaume I (Castelló, Spain)	37
Dublin City [technologies] (Ireland)	6	Diderot, Paris 7 (France)	38
Wien (Vienna, Austria)	13	Uniwersytet Warszawski (Poland)	38
Manchester [interpreting] (UK)	17	Institut Libre Marie Haps (Belgium)	39
Rīgas Tehniskā (Latvia)	17	Newcastle (UK)	39
Turku (Finland)	17	Charles-de-Gaulle Lille	40
Charles V. (Prague, Czech Rep.)	19	Eötvös Loránd (Budapest, Hungary)	40
Porto (Portugal)	20	KU Leuven (Belgium)	40
Tampere (Finland)	21	Köln (Cologne, Germany)	40
Aston (UK)	22	Mons (Belgium)	40
Babes-Bolyai (Romania)	22	Toulouse 2 [AVT] (France)	41
Birmingham (UK)	22	Leeds (UK)	42
Dublin City [translation] (Ireland)	22	Manchester [translation] (UK)	42
ISTI (Bruxelles, Belgium)	22	Vilnius (Lithuania)	42
Cyril and Methodius (Bulgaria)	23	Pontificia Comillas (Madrid, Spain)	43
Ventspils (Latvia)	23	Swansea (UK)	44
Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belg)	23	Alcalá de Henares (Madrid, Spain)	47
Aarhus (Denmark)	25	Lorraine (France)	47
Rennes 2 (France)	28	Konštantína Filozofa (Slovakia)	48
Antwerp (Belgium)	30	UNINT Roma [interpreting] (Italy)	48
Bretagne Occidentale (France)	30	IULM Milan [translation] (Italy)	50
Ljubljana (Slovenia)	30	Salamanca (Spain)	50
Toulouse 2 [translation] (France)	30	Aristotle (Thessaloniki, Greece)	53
Bologna (Italy)	33	Ghent (Belgium)	53
Durham (UK)	33	Latvijas Universitāte (Riga)	53
Eastern Finland (Joensuu)	33	IULM Milan [specialized] (Italy)	55
Haute-Alsace (France)	33	Strasbourg (France)	55
Portsmouth (UK)	33	Leipzig (Germany)	58
Roehampton (UK)	33	Stendhal Grenoble 3 (France)	59
Surrey (UK)	33	Trieste (Italy)	60
UNINT Roma [translation] (Italy)	33	Adam Mickiewicz (Poznan, Poland)	63
Valladolid (Spain)	33	Sorbonne Nouv Paris 3 [translation]	65
Sofia (Bulgaria)	36	Sorbonne Nouv. Paris 3 [two lang.]	73

No reliable information on this factor was retrieved from ISIT Paris. Three universities did not have compulsory hands-on language specific credits (Dublin City University's Translation Technology program, University of Surrey, and University of Hull). At Dublin City University, students in the MSc in Translation Technology who have a language that is taught on the program may take translation modules worth 5 or 10 ECTS.

As shown in Tables 1 and 2, there is a great deal of variation between the programs. In three programs, students could in theory complete the Masters without attending any hands-on language-specific translation class. Of course, this does not mean that students do not enroll for such classes, but it should raise questions about whether the qualification achieved reflects their practical translation skills.

If we look at the total number of credits offered, the only program that does not separate their students by language in any of their translation classes is Hull. According to the Hull syllabus, students carry out commented translations that are then corrected in the group and by the instructors. Further, students have access to language tutors who

provide feedback on their assignments and answer doubts if necessary. But there is no specific course for any of these things.

Several universities offer non-language-specific practicums, usually in technology-related modules like subtitling or localization. The University of Eastern Finland commented that their programs offer 10 to 20 ECTS non-language-specific translation practice on top of their 18 credits of language-specific translation classes.

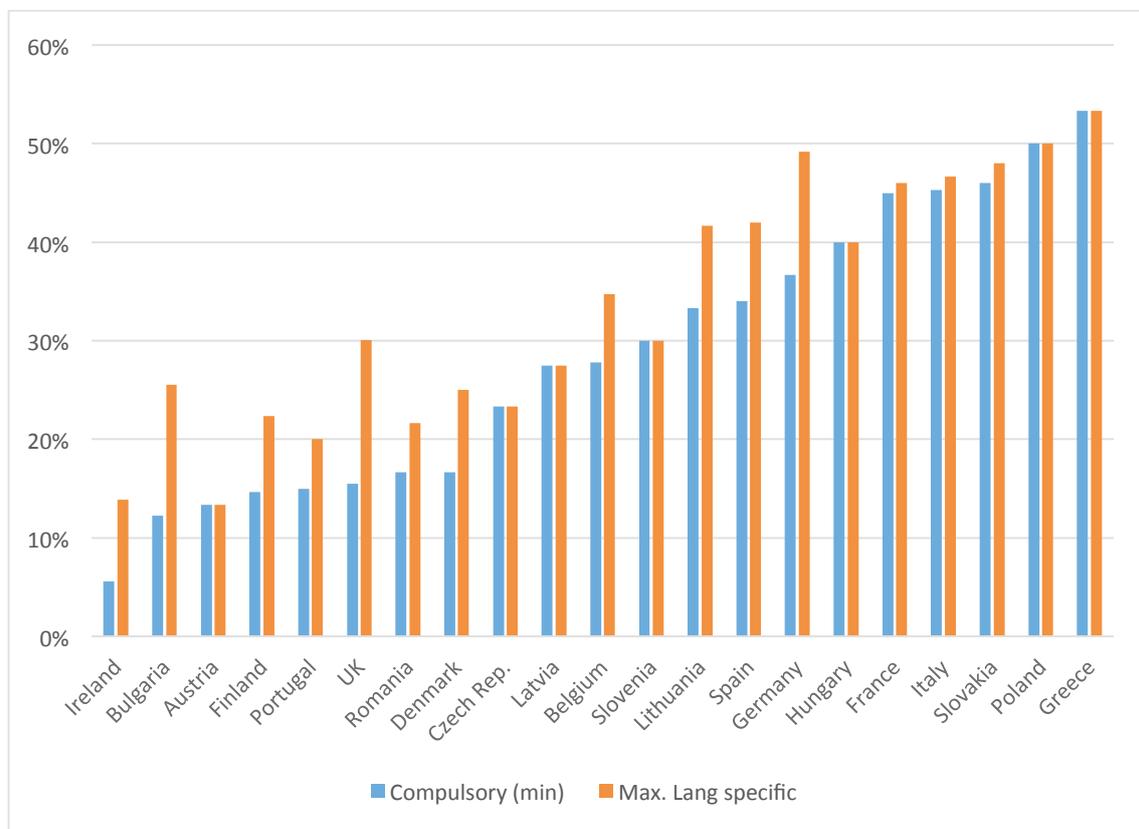
So how can one explain the vast differences in this variable?

In programs where only one language combination is offered, the percentage of language-pair-specific courses is understandably higher. In programs with many languages, the smaller groups and the shortage of experts in smaller languages can lead to considerably higher costs. Those costs can be lowered by raising the percentage of language-neutral courses. There are nevertheless major differences even between the programs where more than one language combination is possible.

In general, the more specialization there is in technologies, the fewer credits are assigned to language-specific translation practice. For instance, courses in audiovisual translation are rarely language-specific.

National standards and requirements also play a role in curriculum design, as can be seen when we look at differences by country (Figure 2). While Masters programs in countries like Spain or Portugal have to undergo quality-control procedures with detailed national standards, other countries, like Ireland or the United Kingdom, seem only to depend on their university's approval to start functioning. In theory, this relative lack of regulation should allow for more diversity (a similar point is noted in Drugan and Rothwell 2011: 158).

Figure 2. Mean percentage of hands-on language-specific translation practice by country



Much as one might be concerned about the possible quality of graduates from a one-year program where language skills are tested in less than 20 percent of the program (a student with poor language skills might still be able to gain the Masters), there are often other checking mechanisms in operation. Most importantly, admission requirements can theoretically ensure that language skills are in place *prior* to the actual teaching. When that is not the case, the EMT model of quality, focused on the training process and not on the graduating student, could be found wanting.

### *3.3. Translation as a profession*

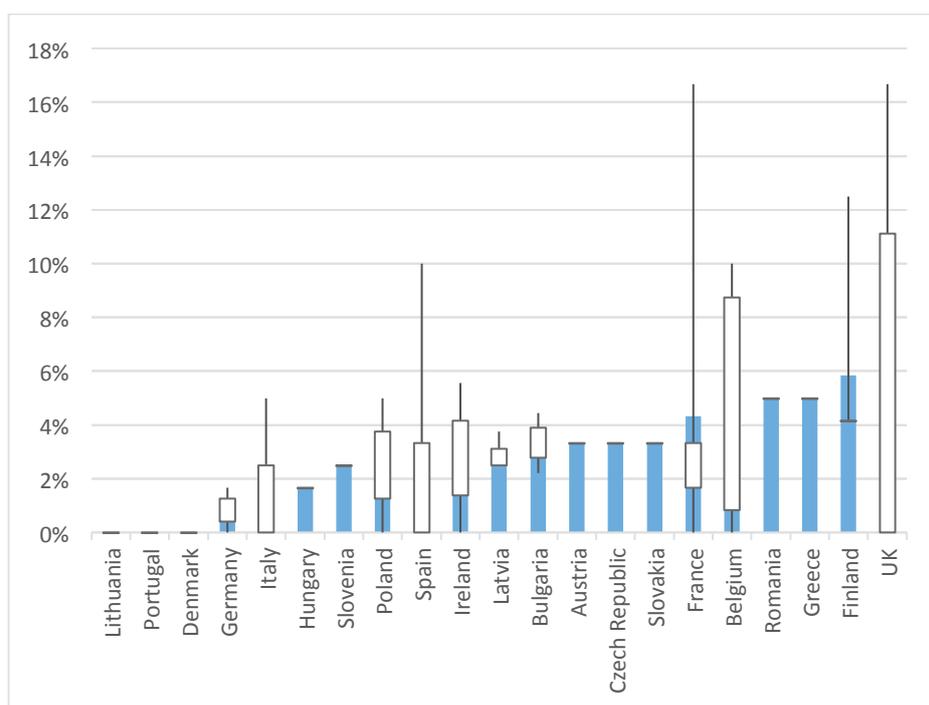
The other main message embedded in the EMT model is the visually central role of “translation service provision” as the competence into which all others feed. The lesson seems clear: the aim of these Masters is to provide professionals for an industry, rather than academics for academia. But is this aim clear to the students themselves? Where do they find out about the industry they are being prepared for?

These questions motivated us to look at the percentage of courses actually on the translation profession or with similar titles (such as “Working Life Oriented Studies”, “Translation Management” or “Professional Seminars and Conferences”). We could not locate reliable information from one institutions (Institut Libre Marie Haps). Some 22 of the remaining 66 programs do *not* appear to include a course introducing the student to the financial and managerial aspects of the translation profession. The other 44 programs have courses that make up from 2 to 17 percent of the total credits of the Masters (see Figure 5).

Table 3. Percentages of credits for courses on translation profession

Eötvös Loránd (Budapest, Hungary)	2	Sofia (Bulgaria)	4
Charles U. (Prague, Czech Rep.)	2	Surrey (UK)	4
ISIT Paris (France)	2	Tampere (Finland)	4
Köln (Cologne, Germany)	2	Adama Mickiewicz (Poznan, Pol)	5
Sorbonne – Paris 3 [translation]	2	Aristotle (Thessaloniki, Greece)	5
Sorbonne Nouv. Paris 3 [two lang.]	2	Babes-Bolyai (Romania)	5
Cyril and Methodius (Bulgaria)	3	UNINT Roma [translation] (Italy)	5
Haute-Alsace (France)	3	Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belg.)	5
Konštantína Filozofa (Slovakia)	3	Birmingham (UK)	6
Ljubljana (Slovenia)	3	Dublin City [both] (Ireland)	6
Paris Diderot 7 (France)	3	Bretagne-Occidentale (France)	7
Pontificia Comillas (Madrid, Spain)	3	Durham (UK)	8
Rīgas Tehniskā (Latvia)	3	Jaume I (Castelló, Spain)	10
Strasbourg (France)	3	KU Leuven (Belgium)	10
Swansea (UK)	3	Universiteit Antwerpen (Belgium)	10
Toulouse 2 (France)	3	Ventspils (Latvia)	10
Toulouse 2 [AVT] (France)	3	Aston (UK)	11
Uniwersytet Warszawski (Poland)	3	Roehampton (UK)	11
Wien (Vienna, Austria)	3	Lorraine (France)	13
Eastern Finland (Finland)	4	Turku (Finland)	13
Hull (UK)	4	Portsmouth (UK)	17
Latvijas Universitāte (Riga)	4	Rennes 2 (France)	17

Figure 3. Percentage of credits of courses on translation as a profession, by country, quartile analysis



If we look at the percentages by country, we again see significant variation (see Figure 3). In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, credits range from 0% to 17%, with an average of 7% of credits assigned to “Translation as a profession”. France and Spain also show some variation in this regard.

The fact that some programs do not include a course on professional aspects does not mean that this field is not taken into account. Some of the coordinators confirmed that there was no specific course on this but they mentioned other strategies were used to make students become familiar with the profession. Stendhal Grenoble, CDG-Lille and Durham organize compulsory seminars by professionals that students attend outside of their curricular obligations. Ghent, Valladolid and Bologna also run workshops and seminars by professionals, although attendance is not compulsory, only highly recommended. Universities like Salamanca, Paris-Diderot and Manchester stress that all courses have a professional orientation, and various aspects of professionalization are dealt with in specific units and seminars. At the University of Warsaw, professional aspects are included in a module called “Sociological Aspects of Translation”. Some Masters programs draw on career-guidance resources available elsewhere in their universities. For instance, Leipzig offers free advice to students who want to freelance or set up a business after graduation (known as “Start-up coaching”).

### *3.4. Internships*

Even when there are no courses on the translation profession as such, the central role of training for an industry may be achieved through arrangements where students earn part of their credits by working as professional translators (in internships, also known as “secondments” in EU parlance, and several other names besides). We thus went looking for programs that include professional internships in their curricula. We attempted to assess the percentage of credits allocated to the internship in each Masters.

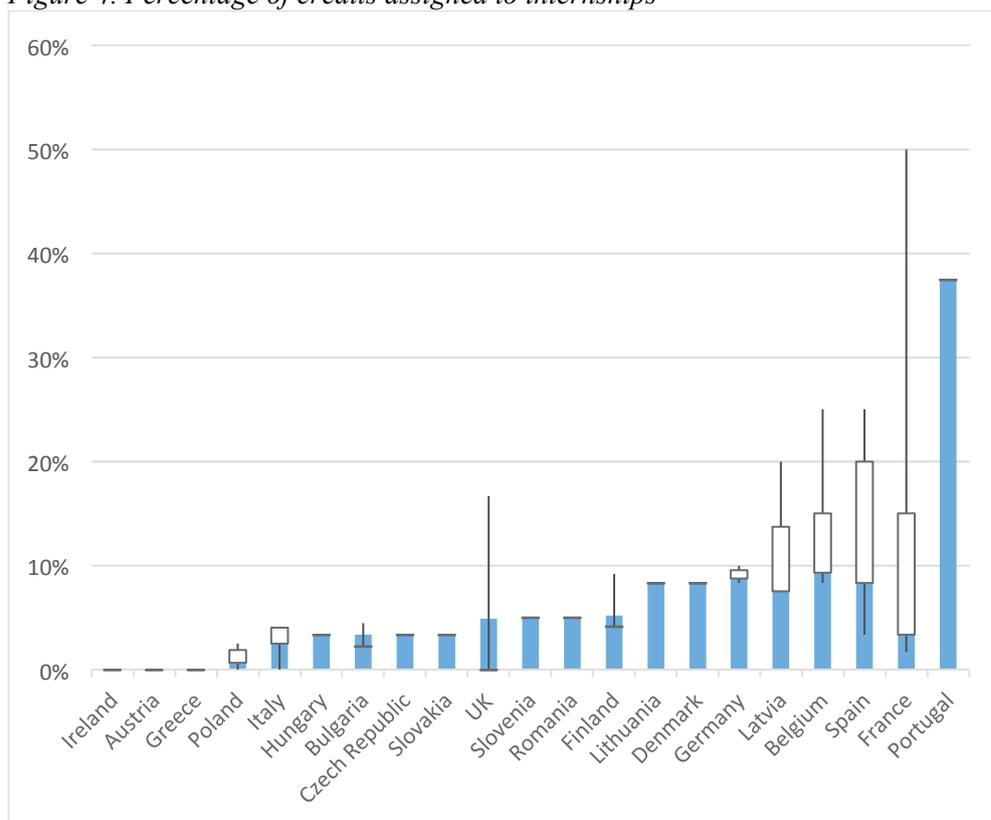
This information was not available for five of the programs. Of the remainder, 11 did not assign specific credits to internships (Aston, Dublin City University - Translation Studies and Translation Technologies, Newcastle, Roehampton, Manchester, Vienna, Birmingham, Leeds, Adam Mickiewicz and Vilnius). In the remaining 52 programs, credits for internships account for from 2 to 50 percent of the total assigned credits, with considerable variation (Table 4).

Table 4. Percentage of credits assigned to internships

Sorbonne Nouv Paris 3 [translation]	2	Durham (UK)	8
Sorbonne Nouv. Paris 3 [two lang.]	2	Ghent (Belgium)	8
Bologna (Italy)	3	Leipzig (Germany)	8
Charles U. (Prague, Czech Rep.)	3	Eastern Finland (Joensuu)	9
Eötvös Loránd (Budapest, Hungary)	3	Mons (Belgium)	9
IULM Milano [specialized] (Italy)	3	Rennes 2 (France)	9
IULM Milano [translation] (Italy)	3	Köln (Cologne, Germany)	10
Konštantína Filozofa (Slovakia)	3	KU Leuven (Belgium)	10
Strasbourg (France)	3	Salamanca (Spain)	10
Toulouse 2 [AVT] (France)	3	Swansea (UK)	10
Toulouse 2 [translation] (France)	3	Universiteit Antwerpen (Belgium)	10
UNINT Roma [interpreting] (Italy)	3	Ventspils (Latvia)	10
UNINT Roma [translation] (Italy)	3	ISTI, Haute École (Brussels)	13
Uniwersytet Warszawski (Poland)	3	Bretagne Occidentale (France)	17
Valladolid (Spain)	3	Portsmouth (UK)	17
Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria)	3	Paris Diderot, Paris 7	17
Hull (UK)	4	Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belg)	17
Sofia (Bulgaria)	4	Latvijas Universitāte (Riga)	20
Surrey (UK)	4	Pontificia Comillas (Madrid, Spain)	20
Tampere (Finland)	4	Haute-Alsace (France)	25
Turku (Finland)	4	ISIT Paris (France)	25
Babes-Bolyai (Romania)	5	Jaume I (Castelló, Spain)	25
Ljubljana (Slovenia)	5	Charles-de-Gaulle Lille 3 (France)	30
Stendhal Grenoble 3 (France)	5	Manchester [translation] (UK)	33
Aarhus (Denmark)	8	Porto (Portugal)	38
Alcalá de Henares (Madrid, Spain)	8	Lorraine (France)	50
Aristotle (Thessaloniki, Greece)	8		

In some cases the internship is optional (as in Durham, for example). Other universities (Jaume I, Porto, Veliko-Turnovo, Swansea) allow the students to choose between doing an internship or writing a research thesis. The second option allows the students to pursue a PhD afterwards, which appears to mean that a research-training track could benefit from the EMT label. In the case of Haute Alsace, the internship report is to be defended as if it were a research thesis, with the content summarizing the work experience. In Portsmouth, no credits are directly assigned to an internship, but work experience during the Masters can be recognized as counting for up to 30 independent learning credits (17 percent of the Masters). Differences in internship length are also considered in Aarhus, where the minimum 10 credits (8%) can be extended to 20 credits (16%). At the University of Eastern Finland, internship credits can vary from 2 to 20 ECTS depending on the duration. The University of Manchester recommends an internship *after* the MA: given that it is a one-year program, the credits that might otherwise be allocated to an internship are assigned to other courses. Programs in Antwerp and Ghent provide the possibility of an “internal internship”, which in Ghent is called a simulated “Translation Office”.

Figure 4. Percentage of credits assigned to internships



In this case, there are fewer countries that show variation, although France and Spain, which are otherwise examples of centralized national standardization, do show significant variation here. In Spain, a student must have completed 50% of the Masters in order to register for an internship, so the way those credits are allocated in the second semester is closely linked to the organization of each particular program.

In sum, there are numerous ways of organizing internships, but it is difficult to allow much time to them in a one-year Masters program.

### 3.5. Courses on translation theory and research

As noted in our discussion of internships, some of the Masters programs seek to provide academic as well as vocational training. This is of interest because academic training does *not* figure among the main competences in the EMT model. The EMT selection criteria nevertheless specify at the very end: “Though not taken into account in the selection decision, the following are considered assets: cooperation with higher education institution at an international level or participation in national networks; effective quality assurance systems; *research activities*” (European Masters in Translation 2012b: 2, emphasis ours). So are theory and research part of the Masters model or not?

To answer this question, we looked for credits allocated to courses on Translation Studies or translation theory, as well as credits for a piece of research.

### 3.5.1. Courses on translation theory or Translation Studies

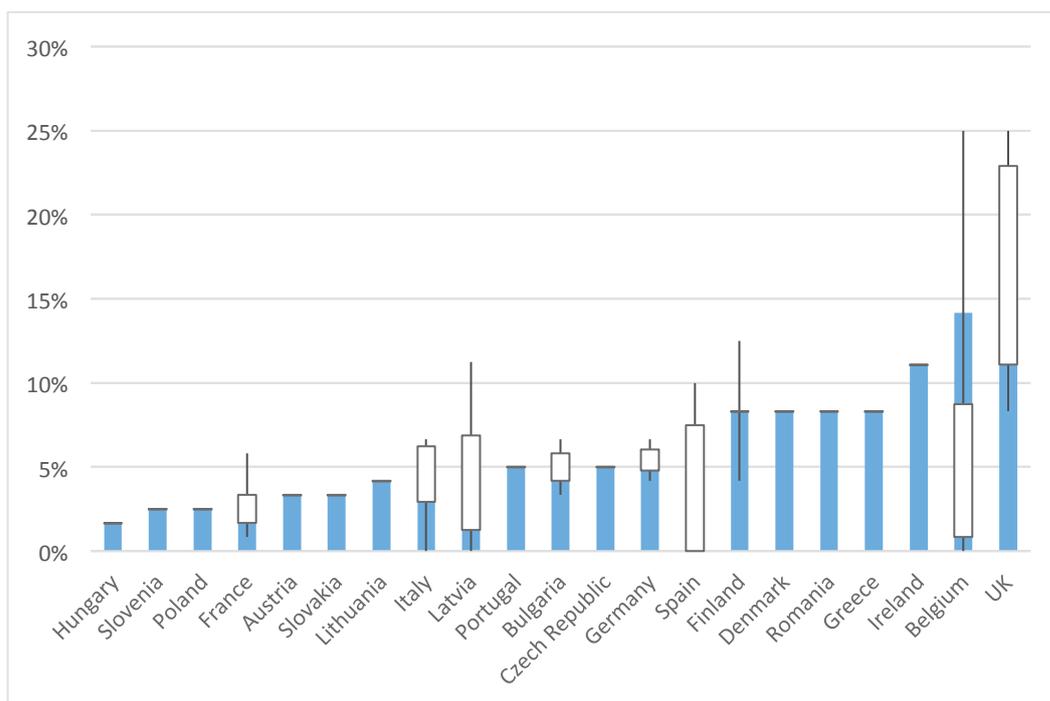
With respect to courses on translation theory or research, we were not able to confirm information on the credits offered at ISIT Paris. In three cases we found that a course in translation theory exists but we were not able to confirm how many ECTS were assigned to it or whether the course was obligatory or optional (Strasbourg, Adam Mickiewiczca and Institut Libre Marie Haps). Four universities do not include translation theory or Translation Studies in their curricula (ISTI Bruxelles, IULM, Alcalá de Henares, and Ventspils). The remaining 59 do (see Table 5).

*Table 5. Percentage of courses on theory or research in EMT Masters*

Toulouse 2 [translation] (France)	1	Sofia (Bulgaria)	7
Toulouse 2 [AVT] (France)	1	UNINT Roma [interpreting] (Italy)	7
Eötvös Loránd (Budapest, Hungary)	2	UNINT Roma [translation] (Italy)	7
Rennes 2 (France)	2	Pontificia Comillas (Madrid, Spain)	7
IULM Milano [translation] (Italy)	3	Tampere (Finland)	8
Konštantína Filozofa (Slovakia)	3±	Aarhus (Denmark)	8
Latvijas Universitāte (Riga)	3	Jaume I (Castelló, Spain)	8
Ljubljana (Slovenia)	3	Babes-Bolyai (Romania)	8
Paris Diderot, Paris 7, UFR	3	Aristotle (Thessaloniki, Greece)	8
Sorbonne Nouv Paris 3 [translation]	3	Charles U. (Prague, Czech Rep.)	9
Sorbonne Nouv. Paris 3 [two lang.]	3	Bretagne Occidentale (France)	10
Stendhal Grenoble 3 (France)	3	Salamanca (Spain)	10
Uniwersytet Warszawski (Poland)	3	Dublin City [technology] (Ireland)	11
Vilniaus (Lithuania)	3	Dublin City [translation] (Ireland)	11
Wien (Austria)	3	Newcastle (UK)	11
Bologna (Italy)	4	Roehampton (UK)	11
Eastern Finland (Joensuu)	4	Birmingham (UK)	11
Hull (UK)	4	Manchester [translation] (UK)	11
Leipzig (Germany)	4	Swansea (UK)	11±
Rīgas Tehniskā (Latvia)	4	Turku (Finland)	13
Surrey (UK)	4	KU Leuven (Belgium)	15
Charles-de-Gaulle Lille 3 (France)	5	Universiteit Antwerpen (Belgium)	15
Haute Alsace (France)	5	Portsmouth (UK)	17
Porto (Portugal)	5	Leeds (UK)	17
Trieste (Italy)	5	Aston (UK)	22
Universiteit Ghent (Belgium)	5	Durham (UK)	25
Valladolid (Spain)	5	Manchester [interpreting] (UK)	25
Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria)	5	Mons (Belgium)	25
Lorraine (France)	6	Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belg)	25
Köln (Cologne, Germany)	7		

±Half of these credits are optional.

Figure 5. Percentage of courses on theory or research in EMT Masters, by country, quartile analysis



We thus find that at least 93 percent of the programs include theory courses of some kind, despite this not being a major category in the EST model. This is perhaps as one might expect from programs that are located within universities.

### 3.5.2. Research work

Most programs have some kind of research-oriented credits in their final semester. We were not able to confirm this in one program (Institut Libre Marie Haps), and three programs do *not* assign credits to a major piece of research work (Babes-Bolyai, Bretagne Occidental, and Adam Mickiewicz). The remaining 94 percent (63 universities, see Figure 6) offer this possibility, although this does not necessarily involve academic research as such.

Where there is research work, most variation seems to be influenced by national standards or tradition (see Figure 6 for the overview of the subject by country). For example, in Italy these credits appear to be optional. Several UK universities accept research work or commented translations (as in Durham, Newcastle and Portsmouth), while Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa defines the research project as work on comparative literature. In St Cyril and St. Methodius University in Veliko Tarnovo in Bulgaria, students can either complete a research thesis or sit for state exams. Lille, Lorraine and Rennes request a major written work based on the compulsory internship experience (and those ECTS are included in the internship assignment listed in Table 4).

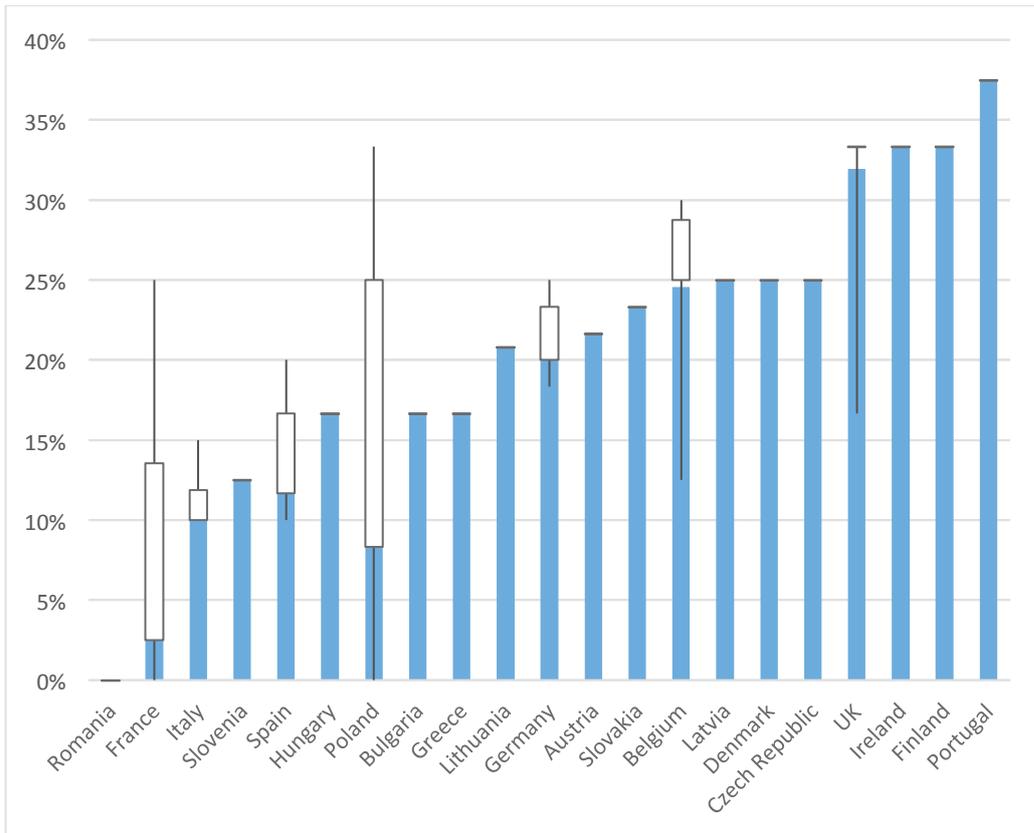
Table 6. Percentage of credits for research work in EMT Masters

Charles U. (Prague, Czech Rep.)	2	Konštantína Filozofa (Slovakia)	23%
Sorbonne Nouv Paris 3 [translation]	3	Aarhus (Denmark)	25%
Sorbonne Nouv Paris 3 [2 lang]	3	ISTI (Bruxelles, Belgium)	25
Strasbourg (France)	5	Leipzig (Germany)	25
ISIT Paris (France)	6	Toulouse 2 [AVT] (France)	25
IULM Milano [specialized] (Italy)	10	Universiteit Ghent (Belgium)	25
IULM Milano [translation] (Italy)	10	Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria)	25
Pontificia Comillas (Madrid, Spain)	10	Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belg)	25
UNINT Roma [translation] (Italy)	10	KU Leuven (Belgium)	30
UNINT Roma [interpreting] (Italy)	10	Universiteit Antwerpen (Belgium)	30
Stendhal Grenoble 3 (France)	11	Aston (UK)	33
Valladolid (Spain)	12	Birmingham (UK)	33
Bologna (Italy)	13	Dublin City [technology] (Ireland)	33
Haute-Alsace (France)	13	Dublin City [translation] (Ireland)	33
Ljubljana (Slovenia)	13	Durham (UK)	33
Mons (Belgium)	13	Eastern Finland (Joensuu)	33
Alcalá de Henares (Madrid, Spain)	15	Hull (UK)	33
Trieste (Italy)	15	Latvijas Universitāte (Riga)	33
Aristotle (Thessaloniki, Greece)	17	Manchester [interpreting] (UK)	33
Eötvös Loránd (Budapest, Hungary)	17	Manchester [translation] (UK)	33
Jaume I (Castelló, Spain)	17	Newcastle (UK)	33
Leeds (UK)	17	Portsmouth (UK)	33
Paris Diderot, Paris 7, UFR	17	Roehampton (UK)	33
Rīgas Tehniskā (Latvia),	17	Surrey (UK)	33
Sofia (Bulgaria)	17	Swansea (UK)	33
Köln (Cologne, Germany)	18	Tampere (Finland)	33
Toulouse 2 [translation] (France)	18	Turku (Finland)	33
Vilniaus (Lithuania)	18	Uniwersytet Warszawski (Poland)	33
Salamanca (Spain)	20	Ventspils (Latvia)	33
Wien (Austria)	22	Porto (Portugal)	38

As mentioned, some programs allow students to choose between an internship and research work. Usually that choice implies opting for professional training or academic training, with the latter being a necessary prerequisite to enter PhD programs.

If we look at the credits assigned by country (see Figure 6), we notice very little variation within most countries.

Figure 6. Percentage of credits for research work in EMT Masters

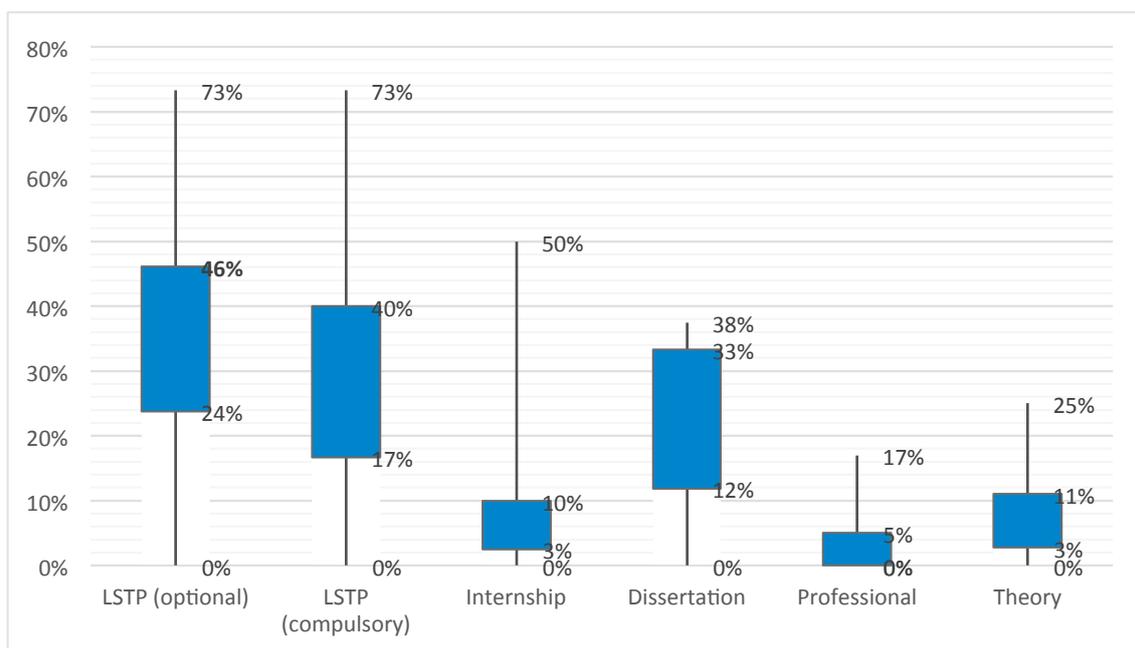


#### 4. Overview

We thus find not only considerable variation within the EMT programs, but also a very significant presence of elements that might seem not to be in line with the strict philosophy of training professionals for a market. When at least 85 percent of the programs offer theory courses and 90 percent include research work of some kind, one must recognize that these remain academic curricula within academic institutions, despite the absence of these elements from the main competences in the EMT model.

The degrees of variation are nevertheless not entirely random. As shown in the quartile analysis (Figure 7), the scores for most variables cluster around fairly well-defined central bands: there is a degree of pragmatic consensus at work within the variation. It is also clear that, in general, there is more translation practice than translation theory, and one must further allow that the pronounced role of what we have called “research” can include commented translations, which might be seen as an extension of practice.

Figure 7. Percentages of credits allocated to language-specific translation practice (LSTP), internships, research work, courses on the profession, and translation theory in all EMT programs



At the same time, there are very extreme values for the presence (or rather absence) of language-specific translation practice (LSTP) and internships, which suggests that it is possible to offer a Masters in translation in which relatively little translating might be done. On those particular aspects, one might question the degree to which the EMT criteria necessarily move training closer to the professional context: there are four member programs that have no internship and no course on translation as a profession; and several programs offer academic research-oriented streams that appear to benefit from the EMT label.

## 5. Conclusions: What is to be done?

Our observations on these points suggest that there are significant tensions at work within the program designs. Strict vocational training can conflict with the need to claim academic respectability within university structures, and the training of researchers need not contradict successful training in professional practice. As we have had occasion to observe elsewhere (Pym and Torres-Simón 2016), the vast majority of translation scholars have also worked as professional translators or interpreters, so one could argue that it makes little sociological sense to pretend to be training for one profession to the exclusion of the other. As long as the required linguistic and translation skills are in place (all somehow within the scope of a one-year program), there should be little reason to question the place of academic training.

The remaining problem, though, is that the EMT system has little way of ascertaining whether language-pair-specific translation skills are actually acquired by all graduates to a professional level. As long as the quality control is based on self-report

*process* data rather than on the assessment of graduates' translation *products*, no one can really guarantee that all graduates are competent translators.

If this doubt should prove problematic, be it for employers or for program designers aware of the vast national differences, then several strategies would seem to be available:

1. *More language-pair-specific credits*: In some cases one could increase the percentage of language-specific translation credits to at least 50% or so, or ensure that language-specific assessment is rigorously graded within the various multilingual teaching formats (as indeed is being done in some institutions, cf. the chapter in this volume on the multilingual practicum). In cases like the one-year multilingual Masters programs in the United Kingdom, this would significantly increase costs and lower profits. The calculation need not be purely commercial, though: a low percentage of language-specific courses (below 20% in many cases) theoretically makes it cheaper to offer a wider range of languages, so such cost-saving could be fully justified in a Europe that is lacking training in the many "immigrant" languages and languages of lesser diffusion.

2. *Controlled entry*: In some cases (where legally possible) one could do more to ensure rigorous language tests at entry into the program, to the point where language skills do not need to be tested further in the program. This would not ensure that transfer skills are acquired during the Masters, but it should reduce potential applicability of the adage "rubbish in, rubbish out". The concomitant risk is that restricted entry could lead to a drop in the number of candidates admitted and thus reduce profitability. But profitability could then theoretically be enhanced by offering a lower percentage of language-specific courses.

3. *Multiple exit points*: If local economic pressures or regulations mean that entrance tests cannot be enforced, a series of face-saving exit points can be arranged within the Masters structure, as indeed is being done at some institutions in the United Kingdom. Weaker students can be granted a postgraduate certificate or degree at some point, *without* the EMT label, thus ensuring the quality of Masters graduates. (It is to be noted that some EMT partner institutions have become much clearer in this regard, specifying exactly which Master and which stream benefits from the label.)

4. *Program-specific professional examinations*: In some cases it should be possible to organize institution-specific (or EMT-specific) exams designed to test graduate-level professional competence in specific language pairs. If the exam is not passed, the Masters is not awarded (or perhaps it is awarded but without the EMT label). Exams have long been used by the European Masters in Conference Interpreting, which was one of the models on which the EMT was partly based, and indeed by the Directorate General for Translation, which remains the major sponsor behind the EMT. They are very traditional instruments, with notorious flaws and significant costs, but nothing leads us to believe that they cannot be improved to a level where each institution can have full confidence in the quality of its graduates, especially with respect to language skills.

5. *External professional examinations*: Alternatively, one could complement the current systems with open translation examinations administered outside the EMT, perhaps like those carried out by the American Translators Association, the UK Chartered Institute of Linguists, the Australian National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters, or the China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters. This has been done in the United Kingdom for many years, where specific training is offered as preparation for the exams set by the Chartered Institute of Linguists. Again, the current examination systems may need significant improvements, but nothing suggests that improvement is impossible.

6. *Maintain the status quo*. On the other hand, one could simply live with the current disparities between the various EMT programs and trust that, with time, the label will accrue prestige, as highly competent EMT graduates are recognized by enlightened employers.

None of these options necessarily excludes any other (except the last one) and most of them can be combined to create logical trade-offs (raising the entry-level bar, for example, will reduce income but should allow for more language-neutral credits, to reduce costs).

Our purpose in this paper has not been to tell program designers what to do. We have merely presented some data on key variables, leaving decisions to those who are paid for that responsibility. In this case, even maintenance of the status quo need not be a bad option: our analysis here is based on the situation in 2015-16, and it has become clear in the many subsequent checks that some of the EMT members have improved the clarity of their websites since then, and all have potentially gained from the information-sharing and discussions that the EMT structure fosters.

We hope to have contributed to the information-sharing and discussions.

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