

## Understanding The Disadvantages of Interpreting

[Interpreting is a challenging and demanding field](#) that requires excellent [language skills](#), cultural knowledge, and quick thinking. [Interpreters](#) play an essential role in bridging the language barrier between different groups of people and are crucial in various settings such as medical appointments, court proceedings, and business meetings. However, like any other profession, interpreting also comes with its own set of disadvantages. In this article, we will discuss the main disadvantages of interpreting.

Interpreting is a sought after profession, but comes with a number of challenges including working with a code of ethics, convenience, difficulty with more than two participants, heated conversation, noisy background, not enough time to conduct research, short notice projects, stress, traditional challenges, travelling, understanding habits of people, unreasonable workloads, variety of work settings, working without support,, and training and up-skilling. This blog explains more about the challenges below:

### Challenges with the [code of ethics](#)

Interpreters are expected to adhere to a strict code of ethics that governs their behavior and decision-making processes. This includes confidentiality, impartiality, and maintaining the cultural nuances of both the source and target language. Interpreters must [navigate ethical dilemmas](#) and often have to make split-second decisions that can have serious consequences.

### Convenience

Face to face interpreting requires the interpreter to be physically present at the location of the interpreting assignment. This can often be inconvenient, especially when the assignment takes place at an inconvenient time, or a difficult to reach location. Telephone interpreting or video remote interpreting is much more convenient as interpreters can log in any time of the day and work from home, however, they need a suitable environment and some specialist equipment.

## Difficulty with more than two participants

Interpreting in a situation where there are more than two participants can be challenging. The interpreter has to keep up with the conversation, accurately interpret what is being said, and ensure that all parties involved understand each other. This can be particularly difficult in group discussions or heated debates.

## Heated conversation

Interpreting in a heated conversation can be challenging as the interpreter must remain calm, impartial and not take sides. This can be difficult when the interpreter is faced with strong emotions and conflicting opinions. Further difficulties can arise due to participants speaking over each other, or speaking too quickly to be effectively understood.

## Noisy background

Interpreting in a noisy environment can be challenging as it can make it difficult to hear what is being said. This can be particularly problematic in noisy environments such as a job centre or a hospital and can even present difficulties during telephone interpreting or video remote interpreting where there can be background noise from family members or pets.

## Not enough time to conduct research

Interpreting requires a thorough understanding of the subject matter being discussed. In some cases, particularly for ad-hoc or on-demand telephone interpreting or video remote interpreting, the interpreter may not have enough time to conduct research and familiarize themselves with the topic before the assignment.

## Short notice projects

Interpreting assignments can often be on short notice, requiring the interpreter to be available immediately. This can be challenging for interpreters who have other commitments and may not be able to take on an assignment.

## Stress

Interpreting can be a stressful profession, as the interpreter is expected to maintain a high level of accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and confidentiality and may often be asked to interpret in highly emotional situations such as NHS interpreting or in housing. This can lead to stress and burnout for interpreters who are constantly faced with demanding and challenging assignments.

## Traditional challenges

Interpreting is a complex and challenging profession that requires a wide range of skills and knowledge. Interpreters must be able to handle the traditional challenges such as the different dialects and accents of the source and target language.

## Travelling

Face to face Interpreting requires travel, which can be time-consuming and expensive, and not all assignments will compensate for the cost or time involved in travelling. This can be a challenge for interpreters who have families or other commitments and cannot be away for extended periods of time.

## Understanding habits of people

Interpreting requires a deep understanding of the cultural habits of people in both the source and target language. This can be challenging for interpreters who are unfamiliar with these habits (and don't forget these can change over time), as they must navigate cultural differences and misunderstandings.

## Unreasonable workloads

Interpreting agencies can often assign unreasonable workloads to interpreters, leading to burnout and a decrease in the quality of the interpreting service provided.

## Variety of work settings

Interpreting can take place in a variety of work settings, each with its own unique challenges. For example, interpreting in a medical setting requires a deep understanding of medical terminology and procedures, while

interpreting in a legal setting requires an understanding of legal terminology and procedures. Interpreters must be able to adapt to the different work environments and challenges that come with each setting and will often be expected to deal with a number of different settings day-to-day.

## Working without support

Interpreting can often be a lonely profession, as interpreters work independently and may not have a support system to turn to in case of challenges. This can lead to feelings of isolation and burnout.

## Training and up-skilling

[Interpreting](#) is a constantly evolving profession, and interpreters must continuously upgrade their skills and knowledge. However, this requires time and resources, which may not always be available for interpreters and are often not paid time. This can limit the career growth and professional development of those who are unable or unwilling to put the time in.

In conclusion, interpreting is a challenging and demanding profession that requires excellent language skills, cultural knowledge, and quick thinking. Interpreters play an essential role in bridging the language barrier between different groups of people and are crucial in various settings. However, the profession also comes with its own set of disadvantages, including the challenges mentioned above. Interpreters must navigate these challenges to provide an accurate and effective interpreting service.

If you want to get started in your interpreting career, we recommend the [Level 3 Certificate in Community Interpreting](#). This is the entry level qualification for paid interpreting assignments and will allow you to work in various settings including medical, welfare benefits, education, social services, housing, local government and more.