

The IALLT Statement of Professional Responsibilities

Version April 2019

Introduction

The International Association for Language Learning Technology (IALLT) is a professional organization that provides leadership in the integration of instructional technology into the foreign language classroom. Our members provide leadership in the development, integration, evaluation, and management of instructional technology for the teaching and learning of language, literature, and culture.

As such, IALLT presents the current statement as a service to all language technology specialists. Often, these specialists have multiple roles, such as faculty member, administrator, and technology professional. The most common work environment is a language center, which is “a physical and/or virtual space that supports foreign and/or second language learning and/or teaching within a larger educational institution” (Lavolette & Kraemer, 2017, p. 149). Most IALLT members are based at a college or university, although some members are employed at K-12 institutions, and others in the private commercial sector. Some members interact with a language center although they do not work in it. Many members are the main, or even the only language-technology specialist in their institution, which can present problems for professional development and for ensuring appropriate recognition of their role in the institution. In a profession that deals with a large number of different constituencies, technologies, and resources, there is potential for misunderstanding as a result of unforeseen, career-changing demands, or insufficiently precise position descriptions.

Thus, the purpose of this document is to outline key responsibilities of language technology professionals. It is an update of the 2002 statement (IALLT, 2002) and has been approved by the IALLT Board. It has been informed by surveys of the IALLT membership and the larger language center profession (e.g., Lavolette, 2018) and the Language Center Evaluation Toolkit (Simon, Kraemer, Kronenberg, Lavolette, & Sartiaux, 2015). IALLT members, their supervising administrators, and others in similar roles, are encouraged to use this document as a basis for defining (in writing, preferably in advance) their respective responsibilities and expectations, for the purposes of negotiating contracts, salaries, and other career-related areas. Please acknowledge IALLT as the source of the information. We have attempted to make as extensive a list of responsibilities as possible, and no single person is likely to fulfill all of the responsibilities listed below. Larger institutions will often divide these responsibilities among several staff and faculty members. Nevertheless, it is our hope that this document will help to define the professional status and career expectations of language technology professionals.

Typical Areas of Responsibility for Language Technology Professionals

We have divided the responsibilities into four areas: research, administration, liaison and outreach, and professional development and teaching.

1. Research

To make good decisions and provide good leadership, members must first know the current status of the technology affecting language learning and teaching, which is ever-changing. This research requires a consistent commitment of time, reflection, and participation in activities where information is shared: listservs, professional journals, social and popular media, conferences, webinars, and workshops.

Some language technology professionals engage in collaborative or sole-investigator research that leads to academic publications. Tenure-track faculty who accept roles as technology professionals are particularly advised to agree on the specific expectations for career progress in advance, in writing, with their academic-administrative supervisors.

a. Pedagogy and technology: For professional advising

Language technology professionals need to keep abreast of technological innovations and research in areas that have an effect on language learning and teaching within their institutions, such as

- language learning resources (digital and analog)
- educational technology tools
- second language acquisition
- cross-institutional shared language programs
- online learning
- self-instructional language programs and self-directed learning
- digital competencies and literacies
- digital humanities
- pedagogy (e.g., project-based learning, classroom management, curriculum development, peer education)
- cultures and languages across the curriculum (CLAC) initiatives

b. Pedagogy and technology: For career progress

Some language technology professionals, especially those with faculty duties, are expected to pursue activities such as

- presenting at and attending conferences and other professional-development events
- conducting and publishing research

Often part of tenure-track expectations, these obligations can be seriously compromised by other duties unless expectations are clearly defined.

2. Administration

Administration is potentially the most time-consuming portion of the language technology professional's work. This area of responsibility requires strong interpersonal communication skills, time management, and above all, flexibility (e.g., to cope with the last-minute demands for assistance). The most visible work includes ongoing activities and relationships with faculty and staff. The less visible work includes staff training programs and management training for the administrator her/himself.

For those with other responsibilities, administration is the biggest, least predictable variable, requiring careful advance definition and regular redefinition to avoid conflicting expectations. Language technology professionals should beware the open-ended "other duties as assigned." Duties should be defined as closely as possible, in advance. A distinction should be made between what is an expected duty of the language technology professional and what tasks are the responsibility of other campus units (e.g., the role of IT services in organizing LMS courses or the library's obligation to develop a collection of foreign language material). Tenure-track candidates should be especially vigilant in obtaining clearly defined, written career-progress expectations in advance.

a. Office management

- hiring, training, and managing professional and student staff
- budgeting
- communication with stakeholders
- tracking inventory (e.g., learning materials, media collections, hardware, office supplies)
- tracking users
- scheduling spaces and events
- planning events
- assisting patrons

b. Lab and facility management

- maintaining and updating physical language center spaces
- maintaining and upgrading technology resources and virtual language center spaces
- supervising laboratories (e.g., AV labs and computer classrooms)
- managing computer networks
- purchasing and subscribing to software
- supporting users (e.g., orientations, demos, help desk)
- curating libraries (e.g., acquisitions, cataloguing, culling)
- audio/video recording, duplicating, processing, editing, transferring from one format to another, etc.
- skills training for staff

c. Academic support

- ongoing faculty language technology training

- extended teacher training (e.g., education faculty, K-12 outreach)
- peer tutoring (e.g., recruiting, hiring, training)
- developing and editing classroom materials
- managing courseware
- language student testing and placement
- evaluating language programs and the language center itself
- student advising (e.g., learning materials & strategies, class project assistance)
- academic department administration (e.g., supervising language instruction and study abroad programs)
- intellectual property (copyright) consulting
- programming for intercultural competencies and assessment

d. Project management

As principal developer or consultant, the language technology professional is frequently directly involved in project development and maintenance. Duties may include:

- applying for and administering grants
- instructional design (e.g., for online course delivery)
- developing, evaluating, and disseminating digital and analog materials
- programming
- training/supervising project assistants
- consulting with faculty who are planning projects
- maintaining project websites
- obtaining copyright permissions

3. Liaison and outreach

Liaison and outreach are vital functions and a natural consequence of being involved in a profession that serves constituents from diverse disciplines. Good relations with the campus and other communities have important implications for the department's continuing, evolving roles and may have valuable benefits for the profile of the institution, attracting students and research funding, for example.

Liaison and outreach take many forms, such as the following:

- promoting awareness of and advocating for the language center and language learning in general
- serving as a hub for language teaching and the intellectual home for language teachers
- membership in campus computing and teaching committees
- library liaison (e.g., consulting on digital archiving, multimedia)
- consulting/planning for other institutions
- publicizing technology-rich or language events in the community
- editing, writing, or publishing newsletters, articles, journals, or monographs
- community outreach (e.g., language-related services for English learners and other community members)
- collaborating with centers for teaching/learning, information/instructional technology offices, media centers, cultural outreach organizations, etc.

4. Professional development and teaching

- leading workshops and other professional development events for language faculty, graduate students
- funding and encouraging professional development for language center staff and language faculty
- mentoring faculty
- teaching classes in language, linguistics, culture, pedagogy, technology, or other content areas
- taking leadership roles in professional organizations such as IALLT

Conclusion

This is not a static but rather an evolving statement of responsibilities. As an association for language technology and language center professionals, IALLT recognizes the wide variety of institutional structures and individual career paths. We welcome your input as we seek to define and support the range of activities of members of our profession. We believe firmly that the unique combination of our roles – in research, language pedagogy, technology, administration, service, and outreach – makes a core contribution to the language teaching mission of our respective institutions.

References

- IALLT. (2002). The IALLT statement of professional responsibilities. Retrieved from <http://www.iallt.org/resources/Documents/IALLTProfessionalResponsibilities.pdf>
- Lavolette, E. (2018). Language center mandates and realities. In E. Lavolette & E. Simon (Eds.), *Language center handbook*. International Association for Language Learning Technology.
- Lavolette, E., & Kraemer, A. (2017). The language center evaluation toolkit: Context, development, and usage. In F. Kronenberg (Ed.), *From language lab to language center and beyond: The past, present, and future of the language center*. International Association for Language Learning Technology.
- Simon, E., Kraemer, A., Kronenberg, F., Lavolette, E., & Sartiaux, A. (2015). Language Center Evaluation Toolkit. International Association for Language Learning Technology. Retrieved from <http://iallt.org/resources/publications/>

The IALLT Statement of Professional Responsibilities
Version April 2019

Updated in April 2019 by a task force appointed by the IALLT Board:
Betsy Lavolette, Kyoto Sangyo University
G. Cory Duclos, Colgate University
Claire Francis, Grinnell College



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).