

15 March 2017

## UCL Education: Louvain School of Translation and Interpreting

### Unique in French-speaking Belgium: UCL master's degree in sign language interpretation

Beginning in September 2017, UCL will be the only Belgian francophone university that offers a master's degree in sign language interpretation. In preparation, the Louvain School of Translation and Interpreting has recently acquired high-tech interpretation booths, cameras and touch screens, which will enable future students to view their performances and self-correct in real time. As for faculty, UCL will continue to bolster its already impressive professorial staff.

The Louvain School of Translation and Interpreting will administer the master's degree in sign language interpretation. Dedicated specifically to translation and interpretation, it opened in September 2015, with some 40 new professors and 150 students, in accordance with a French Community of Belgium Decree (the 'Marcourt decree') on creating university master's programmes in translation and interpretation.

#### Specifically, what is the new master's in sign language interpretation?

UCL is breaking new ground by offering, beginning with the 2017-18 academic year, a sign language interpretation master's degree that is unprecedented in French-speaking Belgium. This is a golden opportunity for bachelor's degree students who want to complement their studies in the field. It will train students to become dual-role interpreters, that is, capable of translating from French to sign language and vice versa.

This new UCL course responds to three growing demands in society:

- increased labour market demand for sign language interpreters;
- increased student demand for such training, e.g. the number of 2015 final-year secondary school student registrations in sign language translation and interpretation tripled in 2016;
- increased sign language professional demand for returning to university (via 'Accreditation of Prior Experience', 'Valorisation des acquis de l'expérience', VAE) to earn a degree.

The relative popularity of studying translation and interpretation is explained in part by the excellent chance of its leading to a job. Most graduates land one in Brussels, home to the EU institutions, the world's largest employer of interpreters.

#### New high-tech facilities

UCL has built new facilities for learning sign language interpretation. Ten high-tech booths equipped with microphones, computers, cameras and screens allow for recording and viewing student work. These are in addition to the 10 interpretation booths and four multi-purpose booths already in use. The new facilities will be inaugurated Saturday 18 March during UCL's Campus Open Days.

Finally, in addition to the master's degree in sign language interpretation, and also beginning in September 2017, UCL will offer a master's degree in English/sign language to French translation. Once again, UCL will be the first Belgian francophone university to offer such a programme.

Votre contact

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## Testimonials

Mathilde Collin, a third-year bachelor's degree student, anticipates pursuing the new master's degree in sign language: 'I'm passionate about this official language of Belgium that so few people are aware of. There are few sign language interpreters yet they're indispensable to giving the hearing-impaired an equal opportunity to have access to information, public places – to society in the broadest sense.' Faustine Secheyay will also pursue the new master's degree next year: 'Sign language is a gateway to another world and culture that too few people know about and I want to continue my journey in this culture, because the more I learn, the more it fascinates me. I'm planning on specialising in medical interpretation, to ensure easier access to hospitals, because everyone should be admitted and receive care in his or her own language.'

## CONTACTS (press):

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