

I. POLICIES regarding the NATIONAL TRANSLATION AWARD

1. The National Translation Awards as of 2020

1.1. From 1988 - 2014, the National Translation Award was offered as a single award. As of 2015, there are two National Translation Awards: the National Translation Award for Prose and the National Translation Award for Poetry.

1.2. The award for Prose will be open to books of fiction, of literary non-fiction, and of drama written in prose; the award for Poetry will be open to books of poetry (including prose poetry) and of drama written in verse. Graphic novels and hybrid works are also accepted, and are to be submitted to either award category as determined by the publisher.

To be eligible for an NTA, a translation must be into English and the book must have been published during the preceding calendar year. (Example: a book published anytime in 2019 is eligible only for the 2020 award cycle.) A book in which all or nearly all the text has been translated by a single translator is eligible, as is a book in which all or nearly all the text has been translated collaboratively by a team of no more than four translators. If such a collaborative translation is chosen as a winner, the award will be shared by the translators. Collections in which various parts have been translated separately by four or more translators are not eligible. Self-published books are not eligible.

In the case that a title is published in multiple countries, only one publication may be considered for the award. For example, in the case that a title is published in the UK in 2019, and in the US in 2020, the title may only be submitted either in 2020 (for the 2019 publication) or in 2021 (for the 2020 publication).

1.3. Books are to be submitted to one award or the other (i.e. the submitting party must choose a category for hybrid or ambiguous works).

1.4. The amounts of the two awards will be equal and will be determined by the Board each year.

2. Definition embodying criteria

2.1. Each National Translation Award is awarded annually to a literary translator (or translators) who has made an outstanding contribution to literature in English by masterfully recreating the artistic force of a book of consummate quality.

2.2. Guidelines for jurors are contained in Appendix A.

3. The judging process

3.1. The Vice President of ALTA will coordinate and exercise administrative oversight over the judging process but will play no role in the selection of books for the long or short lists.

3.2. There will be one jury of three to five people for each category (Prose and Poetry), each of whom will evaluate entries in that category. The jury for each award will generate a longlist of eight to twelve books by consensus.

3.3. Each book on a longlist will be sent to an expert reader for comparison of the translation to its source text. The expert readers will write reports according to the guidelines in Appendix B.

3.4. Each jury will receive the expert readers' reports without the expert readers' names and will keep these reports confidential. Each juror will read all the expert reports submitted to his/her jury. Each jury will then generate a shortlist of four to six books by consensus, will select a winner by consensus, and will write a citation about the winning book. If a jury is unable to make any decision by consensus, it may do so by majority vote.

3.5. Jurors should not quote expert readers' reports in a citation for a winning book, or if they do wish to quote, should not indicate that they are doing so (thus, minor plagiarism will prevent expert readers from being identified by stylistic clues).

4. Selection of jurors and expert readers, and composition of juries

4.1. ALTA will strive to engage diverse jurors and expert readers in keeping with our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement viewable [here](#).

4.2. Each jury committee will be comprised of three to five persons. Membership requirements: at least one juror will be an ALTA member (with a preference for at least two ALTA members per jury, though this may not always be possible in a given year). Expertise requirements: each juror must have published at least one translated book in a genre relevant to the category of award they are judging for; self-published books may not be used to meet this eligibility requirement. Jurors may be literary translators, authors in a relevant genre, editors, publishers, librarians, professional literary critics, professional book reviewers, academics, or members of an additional relevant professional category that has been added to this list by approval of the Board.

4.3. To serve as an expert reader, a person must have expertise in the source language of the translation he/she is asked to assess and must be a literary translator who has published at least one translated book in a genre relevant to the category of award for which the translation that he/she will evaluate has been entered. In the case that no expert reader is available who fits both these criteria, expert readers may be selected based on professional expertise as defined in 4.2. Expert readers will ordinarily be members of ALTA, but a qualified non-member may serve when no qualified member is available.

4.4. The Vice President will select jurors and expert readers.

4.5. ALTA Board members may not serve as expert readers or judges except in circumstances where qualified expert readers and judges cannot otherwise be identified and/or engaged.

5. Logistics

5.1. To allow sufficient time for each jury to evaluate all entries, the postmark deadline for entries will be as early in the year as possible.

5.2. The names of the jurors will be published at least one month before the deadline for entries. Each juror will specify whether they will require physical copies of the submitted titles in addition to PDF copies. Jurors may request physical copies of titles if the shipping address is located in the United States (including Alaska and Hawaii); if requested, publishers are required to send hard copies to the jurors. Publishers are encouraged to send hard copies of the titles to jurors as quickly as possible; all hard copies sent by the publishers must be postmarked by the final day of awards submissions. All publishers are required to submit PDF copies of the translations in the Submittable portal as part of the admission process; failure to do so will render the title ineligible for the award. If the submitted title is selected by jurors to be longlisted for the NTA, publishers will be requested to provide a PDF copy of the original-language text to be considered by the expert readers (see below). Failure to provide all or virtually all of the original-language text will render the title ineligible to be considered for the shortlist.

5.3. Expert readers must remain anonymous, and their reports must remain confidential. For each book on a longlist, publishers will be required to send a PDF file of the source text to the ALTA office. (This may impose on a publisher the task of scanning the original text and/or creating a PDF.) ALTA will then send PDF files of both the original and the translation to expert readers. Expert readers will submit their reports to ALTA electronically, and ALTA will remove expert readers' names before forwarding reports to jurors.

5.4. Jurors and expert readers may be offered an honorarium. All announcements of award winners will list the jurors for each award by last name in alphabetical order.

6. Conflicts of interest

6.1. No one with a book in contention in a given category (Prose or Poetry) may participate in any stage of the judging process for that category in that year. No one may serve as a juror and an expert reader in the same judging process (within the same category).

6.2. Potential jurors and expert readers must declare a conflict of interest if a situation arises wherein they feel they may not be able to judge objectively, for example:

- if an author or translator of a submitted book is:
 - someone with whom they have had a financial connection within the past year or will have such a connection in the coming year;

- their student or protégé, or their recent former student;
- their close relation by blood, marriage, or romance;

or if:

- the name of the potential juror or expert reader appears in the acknowledgments or the dedication of a submitted book, or as the writer of a blurb for one.

When in doubt about objectivity, jurors and expert readers may turn to the Awards Manager or Vice President for guidance.

6.3. Each person who agrees to serve as a juror or expert reader will be provided with these Conflicts of Interest provisions in writing and will be asked to confirm in writing that they understand them and will abide by them. (E-mail is acceptable as writing.) If any of the judges must recuse themselves from judging a particular title because of a conflict of interest, then the remaining judges must select a winner by consensus or majority vote as described in 3.4 above.

6.4 Titles translated by the ALTA President, Vice-President, and staff members are ineligible for the awards given out by ALTA

Appendix A: Guidelines for Jurors

National Translation Award Guidelines for Jurors

The intention of the definition of the National Translation Award is to make excellence of the translation and excellence of the source text the only criteria. This definition removes earlier emphasis on the stature or reputation of the source text (its “importance” and “significance”).

For each award, the longlist should contain from eight to twelve books, and the shortlist from four to six books.

All longlists and shortlists are to be chosen by consensus, as are the winning books. But if a jury is unable to choose a winning book by consensus, it may do so by majority vote.

Expert readers’ reports and all discussions by the jury should be kept confidential. Expert readers’ reports should not be quoted in a citation for a winning book, or if quoted, then the citation should not indicate the quotation (thus, minor plagiarism will prevent expert readers from being identified by stylistic clues).

Jurors are bound by the ethical considerations outlined in the “Conflicts of Interest Statement,” which you have received separately.

Appendix B: Guidelines and Assessment Form for Expert Readers

National Translation Award

Guidelines and Assessment Form for Expert Readers

Thank you for agreeing to serve as an expert reader for the 20__ National Translation Award. The book you will evaluate has been read and longlisted by the jurors on the basis of their reading of the English translation only.

Your expert comparison of the translation to the source text is required to help the jury determine whether the translation is of a high enough caliber to advance to the NTA shortlist. Please return your report to the ALTA office as a data file in a format specified by the office. (Do not send your report to any jurors.)

As you write your report, please consider the following:

- The official definition of the NTA and its criteria is as follows: “Each National Translation Award is awarded annually to a literary translator who has made an outstanding contribution to literature in English by masterfully recreating the artistic force of a book of consummate quality.”
- The excellence of the translation and excellence of the source text are the only criteria. The perceived “importance” or “stature” of the source work and/or its author in their culture of origin are not criteria for this award.
- Your report is anonymous and will remain confidential. The ALTA office will ensure that your identity is not made public and is not revealed to either the jurors or the competitors. Jurors will be asked not to quote your report in a citation for a winning book, or if they do wish to quote, then not to indicate that they are doing so (thus, minor plagiarism will protect you from being identified by stylistic clues). Please be candid and forthcoming in your assessment, as your expert opinion is crucial in informing the jurors’ decisions.
- You are bound by the ethical considerations outlined in the “Conflicts of Interest Statement,” which you have received separately.

Your report (on the attached evaluation form) must include:

- Your opinion as to whether the source text is “of consummate quality” (yes or no).
- A two- to three-paragraph statement evaluating the quality of the translation on the basis of the latter’s fidelity to (or in some cases, successful transcreation of) the semantic, formal, stylistic, emotive, intellectual or other significant attributes of the source text.
- Specific examples from the text to substantiate your evaluation.
- Your overall rating of the translation, from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating “inadequate” and 5 indicating “exceptional.”

20__ National Translation Award

EXPERT READER EVALUATION

NOMINEE:

Translator:

Author, Title, Publisher:

Source Language:

Genre:

EXPERT READER:

Name:

SOURCE TEXT:

In your opinion, is the source book "of consummate quality"? (Yes or no)

EVALUATION OF THE TRANSLATION (use as much space as you need):

OVERALL RATING OF THE TRANSLATION:

How would you rate the overall quality of the translation?

Please assign a number from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "inadequate" and 5 indicating "exceptional."