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# ISO 18587 AND POST-EDITING STANDARDS: APPLICATION TO UZBEK TRANSLATION PRACTICE

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**Abstract.** This article examines the international standards governing machine translation post-editing — ISO 18587 (Translation services — Post-editing of machine translation output — Requirements), supported by ISO 17100 (Translation services — Requirements for translation services) and ASTM F2575 — and analyses their applicability to Uzbek translation practice. The standards' core provisions are summarised: competence requirements for post-editors, process organisation, quality assurance, and the distinction between light and full post-editing. The article identifies gaps between the standards' assumptions (mature service markets, standardised workflows) and Uzbek reality (developing service market, limited standardisation, low-resource MT context). An adaptation framework is proposed: localised competence requirements (adding Uzbek-specific linguistic competence), modified quality metrics (adapted to Uzbek error typology), simplified workflow documentation for small providers, and integration with national translation education. The conclusion argues that standards adoption, even partial, professionalises the post-editing service, protects translators and clients, and creates a foundation for quality differentiation in the market.

**Keywords:** ISO 18587, translation standards, post-editing requirements, quality assurance, Uzbek translation practice, professionalisation.

## I. INTRODUCTION

As machine translation post-editing becomes a recognised professional service, the need for standardisation grows: clients need to know what they are buying, providers need to define their services, and translators need their competence recognised. The international standard ISO 18587, published in 2017, addresses this need by specifying requirements for post-editing services. This article examines ISO 18587 and related standards, analyses their applicability to Uzbek translation practice, and proposes an adaptation framework. The analysis draws on the standards themselves, scholarly commentary (Ustinova, 2025; Vieira, 2019), and Uzbek translation service observations.

## II. ISO 18587: CORE PROVISIONS

ISO 18587 ('Translation services — Post-editing of machine translation output — Requirements') specifies requirements for the post-editing process. Core provisions include: (1) Competence requirements for post-editors: translation competence, linguistic competence in source and target languages, research and information retrieval skills, cultural competence, technical competence (tools), and domain knowledge. (2) Process requirements: pre-production (agreeing scope, quality level, and post-editing level), production (post-editing according to agreed specifications), and post-production (verification, client feedback handling). (3) Quality requirements: the post-edited output must meet the

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agreed quality level; quality is assessed against specified criteria. (4) The light/full distinction: light post-editing aims for comprehensibility; full post-editing aims for publishable quality equivalent to human translation. The standard deliberately does not prescribe specific quality metrics, allowing providers and clients to agree on project-specific criteria. ISO 17100 (translation services requirements) provides the parent framework: it specifies translator qualifications, core processes, and quality management applicable to post-editing services as well. ASTM F2575 provides guidance on quality assurance frameworks. Together, these standards form a normative basis for professional post-editing (Ustinova, 2025).

## III. GAPS BETWEEN STANDARDS AND UZBEK PRACTICE

Applying ISO 18587 to Uzbek practice reveals several gaps. Gap 1: market maturity. The standard assumes a developed service market with professional buyers who can specify quality levels; in Uzbekistan, many clients are first-time buyers with limited understanding of post-editing levels, requiring provider education alongside service delivery. Gap 2: workflow documentation. The standard expects documented processes; small Uzbek providers (often individual freelancers or small agencies) lack the administrative capacity for full documentation, requiring simplified lightweight implementations. Gap 3: competence recognition. The standard's competence requirements assume formal qualification pathways; Uzbek translation education is developing, and post-editing competence is not yet formally certified, requiring alternative competence demonstration (portfolios, practical tests). Gap 4: MT context. The standards were developed primarily for high-resource language pairs; for Uzbek, the MT error profile differs (higher proportion of morphological and hidden errors), requiring adapted quality metrics. Gap 5: terminology. The standards' terminology ('post-editor', 'full post-editing') lacks established Uzbek equivalents, creating communication friction. These gaps do not invalidate the standards but require thoughtful adaptation.

## IV. ADAPTATION FRAMEWORK

We propose a five-component adaptation framework. Component 1: localised competence requirements. The ISO competence list is retained, with emphasis on Uzbek-specific linguistic competence (agglutinative morphology, literary tradition, cultural realia handling) as a core requirement for Uzbek post-editors. Component 2: adapted quality metrics. The generic quality criteria are specified for Uzbek using the five-group error typology (lexical-semantic, phraseological, morphological-syntactic, cultural-realie, artistic-aesthetic): full post-editing requires correction of all five groups; light post-editing requires correction of semantic and heavy grammatical errors only. Component 3: simplified workflow documentation. A one-page service specification template replaces full process documentation for small providers: client, text type, post-editing level, quality criteria, deadline, price, revision policy. Component 4: education integration. University translation programmes incorporate ISO 18587 awareness, preparing graduates for standardised practice. Component 5: terminology standardisation. A Uzbek glossary of post-editing terms is developed ('posttahrirlash', 'yengil posttahrirlash', 'to'liq posttahrirlash', 'post-rediktor') for consistent professional communication.

## V. BENEFITS OF STANDARDS ADOPTION

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Adopting ISO 18587, even partially, brings significant benefits. For clients: predictable service quality, clear expectations, recourse in case of disputes; the service level agreement becomes a professional contract rather than an informal understanding. For translators: professional recognition of post-editing as skilled work (not 'cheap correction'); protection against unreasonable demands (e.g., being asked to 'just quickly check' MT output that requires full post-editing); a basis for fair pricing. For the market: quality differentiation becomes possible — providers can credibly offer different service levels at different prices, replacing opaque competition on price alone. For education: curriculum alignment with international standards raises graduate employability. For Uzbek literary translation specifically: standards protect quality by making 'publishable quality' a contractual specification, not a vague aspiration — countering market pressure to accept MT output with minimal checking (Ustinova, 2025; Koponen, 2016).

| **Standard element** | **ISO 18587 generic** | **Uzbek adaptation** |
|---|---|---|
| Post-editor competence | translation + technical + domain | plus Uzbek morphology, literary tradition |
| Quality levels | light / full | specified via five-group error typology |
| Workflow | documented process | one-page service specification |
| Certification | formal qualifications | portfolio + practical test |
| Terminology | English/French terms | standardised Uzbek glossary |

## VI. IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

Implementing the adaptation framework requires a phased roadmap. Phase 1 (awareness): dissemination of ISO 18587 basics through professional associations, translation journals, and university seminars; publication of the Uzbek glossary. Phase 2 (piloting): selected translation agencies and freelance groups pilot the adapted service specification template on real projects, gathering feedback. Phase 3 (refinement): based on pilot results, refine quality metrics (e.g., calibrate the five-group typology against actual project errors), simplify or expand documentation as needed. Phase 4 (education): incorporate the adapted standards into university curricula and professional training programmes. Phase 5 (institutionalisation): seek national standard body recognition of the adapted framework as a voluntary national standard; explore accreditation pathways for post-editing services. International cooperation can accelerate the process: partnering with standards organisations (ISO/TC 37), joining international translation quality initiatives, and learning from countries with similar market conditions. The roadmap is ambitious but achievable; each phase delivers standalone value even if later phases are delayed.

## II-та. THE STANDARDS LANDSCAPE: ISO 18587, ISO 17100, ASTM F2575

The post-editing standards landscape consists of three complementary documents. ISO 18587 (2017) is the specific standard for post-editing: it defines the process, competence requirements, and quality expectations for post-editing services. ISO 17100 (2015) is the general standard for translation services: it specifies translator qualifications, core translation processes, and quality management;

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post-editing services must comply with its general requirements (client communication, resource management, quality assurance) in addition to ISO 18587's specific ones. ASTM F2575 (2014) is the American guide for quality assurance in translation: it provides a framework for specifying translation quality levels and project requirements; while not a certification standard, it is widely used in North American markets for service specification. The relationship: ISO 17100 sets the general frame, ISO 18587 specifies post-editing within that frame, ASTM F2575 guides quality level specification. Providers seeking comprehensive compliance use all three: ISO 17100 for organisational management, ISO 18587 for post-editing process, ASTM F2575 for project-specific quality agreements.

| Standard | Scope | Key contribution | Application |
|---|---|---|---|
| ISO 17100 (2015) | translation services (general) | translator qualifications, core processes | organisational framework |
| ISO 18587 (2017) | post-editing of MT output | post-editor competence, light/full levels | post-editing process |
| ASTM F2575 (2014) | quality assurance guide | quality level specification | project agreements |

## IV-та. CALIBRATING QUALITY METRICS: THE FIVE-GROUP TYPOLOGY AS A STANDARD

A key adaptation task is converting the generic quality requirement ('post-edited text meets agreed quality level') into operational metrics. We propose using the five-group error typology (Articles 1 and 4 of this series) as the calibration basis. For full post-editing of literary texts: zero tolerance for lexical-semantic and morphological-syntactic errors (they distort meaning); zero tolerance for phraseological errors (they distort style); cultural-realie errors corrected per agreed strategy (transcription, adaptation, annotation); artistic-aesthetic deficiencies assessed by expert review (since they resist binary error counting). For light post-editing: lexical-semantic errors that impede comprehension corrected; other error groups optionally noted but not corrected. This calibration transforms the abstract quality level into a checkable specification: the post-editor or reviewer counts errors by group against the tolerance table. Hamroyeva and Matyakubova's (2023) alignment methods support the checking process by enabling segment-level comparison. The calibration should be refined through pilot projects: collect inter-annotator agreement data (do two reviewers classify the same errors identically?) and adjust category definitions until agreement reaches acceptable levels (Cohen's kappa $\geq 0.7$).

## VI-та. LEGAL AND LIABILITY ASPECTS

Standards adoption has legal dimensions. Liability: when post-edited translations cause damage (e.g., mistranslated instructions, defamatory errors in published texts), responsibility allocation depends on documented agreements. ISO 18587's process requirements (documented specifications, verification steps) create the evidence trail needed for liability assessment. Uzbek law on services and intellectual

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property provides the general frame; specific translation service contracts should incorporate standard-compliant clauses. Intellectual property: post-edited texts based on MT output raise questions about copyright in the MT output itself; current practice treats post-edited text as a new work with the post-editor's contribution, but the legal status of raw MT output remains unsettled. Disclosure: clients should know whether a text was produced by MT+post-editing or by direct human translation — ISO 18587 implies such disclosure through its service specification requirements, but explicit disclosure clauses are advisable. For literary translation, moral rights of the original author add complexity: post-editing that distorts the author's voice could theoretically engage moral rights provisions, another argument for professional post-editing standards that protect artistic fidelity.

## VII. CONCLUSION

ISO 18587 provides a professional normative framework for machine translation post-editing; its adaptation to Uzbek practice requires localised competence requirements, adapted quality metrics based on the Uzbek error typology, simplified documentation for small providers, educational integration, and terminology standardisation. The benefits — predictable quality, professional recognition, market differentiation, and educational alignment — justify the adaptation effort. For Uzbek literary translation, standards are particularly important: they make 'publishable quality' a contractual specification, protecting literary quality against market pressures for cheap, unchecked MT output. Future research should evaluate pilot implementations of the adapted framework, develop calibration procedures for the Uzbek error typology as a quality metric, and study the economic effects of standards adoption on Uzbek translation market prices and quality.

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