# MQM vs. Reference-based metrics

MQM is an example of a reference-**free** metric. There are also reference-**based** metrics such as BLEU or METEOR.

Reference-based metrics automatically compare the translation (whether human or machine) against one or more professional reference translations.

Reference-free metrics, such as MQM, don't require a reference translation. The translation is analytically evaluated by a human who understands the specifications of the project and thus the criteria that it is being evaluated on.