



## **CERTIFICATION – Questions and Answers**

### **1. Why is there a need for certified translation of documents?**

The enlargement of the European Union to include 10 new Member States and freedom of movement between the member states creates an ever-increasing demand for reliable communication. The provision of certified translation services is an integral part of reliable communication between countries, aiming specifically to cater for the needs of EU citizens who require various legal documents translated from or into their native language.

Furthermore, the cultural and social changes, which are taking place in Ireland, have produced an ever-growing demand for the translation of a wide range of languages, including those spoken in Central and Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia. This fact emphasizes even further the need to establish a framework within which qualified translators can pursue their careers as Certified Translators.

At present, the profession of a Certified Translator does not exist in Ireland. Some translators practicing in this country do offer certified translation, however they are not always considered legally valid.

The aim of the ITIA in offering its members 'ITIA Certified Translator' status is to:

- achieve formal recognition for the profession and status of Certified Translators,
- set up a career path for Certified Translators, recognised by the legal system, government departments, state institutions, etc;
- maintain the standards of professional excellence through continuing professional development programmes.

## **2. What types of documents usually require a Certified Translation?**

The list of official documents which require Certified Translation includes:

Birth Certificates, Marriage Certificates, Death Certificates, Divorce or Separation papers, Maintenance or Child Support papers, Adoption papers, Custody papers, Notarial deeds, Court rulings, Diplomas and Degrees, Affidavits, Statements, Medical statements, Agreements, Contracts, Memoranda and Articles of Association, Official correspondence, Insurance policy statements and any other documents requested by the authorities.

A *Certified Translation* always includes either a *statement / certifying clause* or a separate *certification* page which confirms that the translation is a true, accurate and correct rendering of the original document or of a certified copy of the original document. The translator is personally responsible for the translation's accuracy and, therefore, great care and attention is always required. Any translator who is found to wilfully mistranslate or inaccurately translate a text may be charged with negligence, perjury or even with contempt of court.

A *Certified Translation* should state the *language* from which the translation has been carried out and must be *signed* by the translator, stating his/her name, address and contact details and the date, together with a *certification stamp* affixed at the end of a translation. Such a stamp is issued to an *ITIA Certified Translator*, together with a *round personal stamp*, bearing the ITIA's name, the First Name and Surname of the *Certified Translator* and his/her *Registration Number*. *Certified Translators* are approved for translation into their *native language* or, in exceptional circumstances, into a language in which they have *near-native competency*.

## **3. Is Notarized Translation the same as a Certified Translation?**

A Notarized Translation requires a Statement signed by the translator with his/her signature notarized by a Notary Public, attesting that the translator believes the target-language text to be an accurate and complete translation of the source-language text. It is important to remember that *the notarization has no bearing on the quality of a translation*, but identifies the translator and ensures traceability in case of any problems arising in relation to such a translation.

## **4. Who can apply to become an ITIA Certified Translator?**

The status of an *ITIA Certified Translator* is open only to the ITIA Professional members, who fulfil specific criteria listed on the Application

form (please see 'Application form for Certified Translator status'). Only applications from existing and fully paid up Professional members of good standing will be considered. Applications from Professional members (specialising in Translation, as opposed to interpreting only!) will be automatically approved for testing.

## **5. What are the main stages of the Certification procedure?**

### **In summary:**

- Application form for Certified Translator status to be submitted by a Professional ITIA member to the Certification Sub-committee.
- The Application is either accepted and the Applicant is approved for test or the Application is not accepted. Applicant shall be notified in writing of either of these decisions by the Certification Sub-committee.
- If the Application is accepted, the Applicant receives two test texts per language combination.
- The translation of both test texts, including affidavit stating that the test translations, as submitted, are his/her own work, to be returned within *one week* to the ITIA Certification Sub-committee. Upon receipt of the texts, the Certification Sub-committee members will check that there are no indications of the translator's identity on the translation texts. The test translations are then forwarded anonymously to external assessor(s).
- Test translations are assessed and then returned with either PASS or FAIL mark to the ITIA Certification Sub-committee.
- Applicant is informed of the decision in writing.
- If the decision is FAIL, one review is permitted with an additional charge for the second assessment. The second assessment will be final and its outcome will take precedence over the first assessment.
- If the decision is PASS, the Applicant will be issued with a Certificate and two stamps: a rectangular 'certification' stamp and a round stamp bearing the Applicant's Name and Surname, the name of ITIA, the words: "Certified Translator" and a Registration number.

### **5.1 Why is the translation of test texts needed?**

Prior to awarding the Certified Translator status to an Applicant, the Certification Sub-committee would like to satisfy itself that the quality of the translation work provided by an Applicant is of the highest standard. Applicants approved by the Certification Sub-committee will be asked to translate two texts in the language combination for which Certification is sought. In the case of more than one language combination, two translations will be required for each language combination.

**N. B.** It should be noted that a language combination is understood as being composed of **one source language** and **one target language**. For example, a French-English Certified Translator is certified to translate from French to English **only**. Translators will be considered for certification of documents that are translated *into their native* language.

In exceptional circumstances, translators with near-native competency may be considered / approved for testing in their chosen language combination(s).

The test texts will include guidelines for translation and information on the assessment procedure.

## **5.2 What types of documents are selected for a test translation?**

The ITIA Certification Sub-committee will select *at random* two texts for each language combination, based on the list in Section 2 above. These texts will be actual documents where possible, with names and other personal details blanked out for reasons of confidentiality. These texts will mirror what is encountered by translators in real life, i.e. in some places the text may be illegible, stamps partially obscured, etc., as part of the assessment procedure will depend on how the Applicant handles these difficulties.

## **5.3 Who will be correcting/assessing Applicants' test translations?**

The ITIA Certification Sub-committee will forward test translations to a suitable assessor from its panel of correctors/assessors. This panel shall include professionals of good standing who are qualified translators and proof-readers in the relevant language combinations and who have extensive experience in the field of translation. Where possible, the assessors will be sought from within Ireland, otherwise the Certification Sub-committee will engage translation professionals from other countries. All correctors/assessors will receive marking guidelines approved by the ITIA Certification Sub-committee.

## **5.4 What are the assessment / correction guidelines?**

The following guidelines are provided for information only and may be supplemented and/or amended by the ITIA where and as this is deemed necessary.

Where a short text (birth/marriage/death certificate; diploma, etc.) contains **one serious error OR 3 minor errors**, the test is given a 'Fail' rating.

Where a long text (Articles of Association, solicitor's letter, etc.) contains **one serious error OR 5 minor errors**, the test is given a 'Fail' rating.

### **Serious errors**

1 serious decoding / encoding error  
Omission where this impairs the text  
Spelling mistake for proper nouns

### **Minor errors**

Punctuation error  
Typos for non-essential elements of the text  
Awkwardness of rendition  
Wrong idiom, register, tone, style

## **5.5 Who will have access to the results of the test translations?**

As stated earlier, the identity of the applicants will not be disclosed to anyone on the correctors/assessors panel. Only members of the ITIA Certification Sub-committee will have access to information provided on the Application form and on any attached copies of documents. All information held by the Sub-committee regarding applications will be treated as confidential and will not be divulged to any person outside the Sub-committee on any pretext whatsoever.

## **5.6 Is the ITIA Certified Translator Certificate renewable?**

Yes. Following the issue of the initial Certificate in a particular year, the certificates are renewable annually, subject to the payment of annual subscription fee of €150.00. This fee also covers an annual ITIA membership subscription. Each subsequent Certificate issued to a Certified Translator will state the year for which such a Certificate is valid. The Certification Sub-committee reserves the right to review any Certified Translator's work every 2-3 years.

Application forms are available on the ITIA website at <http://www.translatorsassociation.ie> or may be obtained by post by contacting the ITIA c/o the Irish Writers' Centre at 01-8721302

and should be returned to:

Certification Sub-Committee  
Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association  
Irish Writers' Centre  
19 Parnell Square  
Dublin 1