

FREE HANDBOOK · 2026 EDITION

The Certified Translation Handbook

Who asks for what, who has to sign, and how to get it accepted



COMPLIMENTS OF



CertifiedVisaTranslation



About CertifiedVisaTranslation

Despite the name, we don't only translate for visas.

CertifiedVisaTranslation provides certified translations for the Home Office, HM Passport Office, courts and tribunals, universities, professional regulators, banks and solicitors, and for authorities abroad.

We work in more than 120 languages. Each order comes back as a single certified PDF: the certificate of accuracy, a copy of your original, and the translation, stamped page by page.

We are a member of the Association of Translation Companies (ATC). Standard delivery is one working day. Rush delivery is eight hours, weekends included. If an authority rejects a translation we certified, we refund it.

This handbook grew out of one question that customers ask us more than any other: *will they accept it?* The answer depends on who "they" are. So we went to each authority's own published rules and wrote down what they say.

120+ languages	1 day standard, Monday to Friday	8 hours rush, weekends included	2 revisions included	Refund if an authority rejects it
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Quantum Cognition Ltd



Member of the Association of Translation Companies
and of the EUATC network. Our membership number is
on the badge, and you can check it with the ATC. Find
us at **certifiedvisatranslation.com**.



The Certified Translation Handbook

Who asks for what, who has to sign, and how to get it accepted

Written by the team at

CertifiedVisaTranslation

The Certified Translation Handbook

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Please pass this handbook on, whole and free of charge, to anyone who would find it useful. Ask us before reproducing parts of it or republishing it elsewhere.

This handbook is general information. It is not legal or immigration advice. We are a translation company. We can explain what an authority says it wants from a translation. We can't advise on your case, tell you which documents to file, or predict a decision. For that you need a solicitor or a regulated adviser.

Authorities change their rules without telling us. Each quotation here was taken from the official page on 2 October 2026 and is linked to it. Before you rely on one, open the link. Where we couldn't find an official statement, we say so. Prices and delivery times are those in force at the time of writing.

Customer stories are drawn from real correspondence, with names and identifying details removed.

Illustrations and design by CertifiedVisaTranslation.

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Introduction



IN THIS CHAPTER

- Why "certified" means different things to different authorities
- Who this handbook is written for
- How the chapters are arranged

A marriage certificate, translated once, can be accepted by the Home Office on Monday and sent back by a court on Tuesday. Nothing about the translation changed. The reader did.



Figure 1. *The same document, read against two different rules.*

That is the awkward truth about certified translation in the UK. There is no single standard and no national register. Each authority publishes its own requirement, in its own words, and most people only discover the differences when something comes back.

This handbook puts those requirements in one place. Where an authority has published a rule, we quote it and link to it. Where it hasn't, we tell you that too, and suggest what to ask.

Who this handbook is for

- **Individuals** with a document in another language and an authority asking for it in English: a passport office, a university, a regulator, a bank, a court.
- **Professionals** who handle other people's documents: solicitors and paralegals, immigration advisers, HR and mobility teams, wealth advisers and conveyancers.
- **Anyone who has been told** "it needs to be certified" and wasn't told what that means.

You don't need any background. Every term is explained the first time it appears, and there is a glossary at the back.

How it is arranged

Chapters 1 and 2 cover the ground: when a certified translation is needed and what the word means, here and abroad.

Chapter 3 is the heart of the book. It goes authority by authority and answers the question in its title: who signs, and will they accept it?

Chapters 4 to 6 are practical: difficult documents, names and numbers, ordering and delivery. Chapter 7 deals with AI. Chapter 8 is for professionals. Chapter 9 is the list of mistakes we see most.

Four markers

TIP A shortcut, or something that saves a second round of emails.

WATCH OUT A point where translations are commonly refused or have to be redone.

REMEMBER The sentence to keep if you forget the rest of the page.

FOR ADVISERS Notes for solicitors, advisers and others acting for a client.

If you only have ten minutes

YOUR TRANSLATION IS FOR...	READ
a visa or settlement application	Chapter 3, "The Home Office"
a British passport	Chapter 3, "HM Passport Office"
a court or tribunal	Chapter 3, "Family and civil courts" and "Immigration tribunals"
a university or UK ENIC	Chapter 3, "Universities and UK ENIC"
a professional regulator	Chapter 3, "Professional regulators"
a bank, mortgage or property purchase	Chapter 3, "Banks and solicitors"
an authority outside the UK	Chapter 3, "Authorities abroad"

When you need a certified translation



IN THIS CHAPTER

- The situations that call for one
- Who decides what "acceptable" means
- What to find out before you order

"Your name says 'visa'. Do you do passports as well?"

We do. We also do university applications, professional registration, mortgages, probate, tribunal appeals and a good deal else. The customer who asked had a foreign birth certificate and a child's first British passport application, and was worried she had come to the wrong place.

Her question points at something useful. People think of certified translation as a visa thing. In practice it is asked for wherever an official needs to rely on a document they can't read.

Where certified translations are asked for



Figure 2. *The same translated document can meet eight different sets of rules.*

SITUATION	TYPICAL DOCUMENTS	WHO SETS THE RULE
Visa, extension, settlement	Certificates, bank statements, payslips, messages	The Home Office, in the Immigration Rules
British passport	Foreign birth and marriage certificates	HM Passport Office
Appeal or court case	Statements, police and court papers, letters	The tribunal's or court's procedure rules
Study or recognition of a degree	Diplomas and transcripts	The university, or UK ENIC
Professional registration	Qualifications, good-standing letters, ID	The regulator: GMC, NMC, HCPC, GDC, SRA and others
Mortgage, purchase, probate	Bank records, deeds, wills, death certificates	The bank or the solicitor acting
Driving licence, marriage	ID documents, divorce papers	DVLA; the register office
Use outside the UK	Anything	The authority in that country

The person who decides is the person receiving it

This is the idea the rest of the handbook rests on. A translation company can tell you what it puts on its certificates. It can't decide whether an authority will accept them. Only the authority decides that, and most of them have written down what they want.

A translation company can tell you what it puts on its certificates. Only the authority decides whether to accept them.

So before you order, find out three things.

- 1. Who exactly is receiving it?** "The court" and "the Home Office" are different readers with different rules, even in the same case.
- 2. Have they published a requirement?** Chapter 3 quotes the ones we could find. If yours isn't there, ask them.
- 3. Do they want paper?** Most accept a PDF. A few want documents posted.

TIP When you order, tell us what the translation is for. It changes the wording on the certificate, and in the case of a court it changes the service you need.

When you don't need one

You don't need a translation of a document, or a page, that is already in English or Welsh. Many organisations will issue an English version on request, and some modern certificates are printed in two languages.

You may not need one for UK ENIC either. Its Translation Waiver Service lets applicants for a Statement of Comparability submit qualifications in certain languages untranslated. Chapter 3 has the details.

REMEMBER "Will it be accepted?" is a question about the reader, not about the translation. Start with who is reading it.

What "certified" means, here and abroad



IN THIS CHAPTER

- The UK definition, in the government's own words
- Why the UK has no sworn translators
- Certified, notarised, sworn, apostilled and legalised
- Certifying a translation is not certifying a copy

In most of continental Europe, an official translation comes from a translator appointed by a court or a ministry. Their stamp is the proof. People arriving from those systems reasonably expect the UK to have an equivalent. It doesn't.

The UK definition

The government's general guidance on certifying a translation takes three lines. You ask the translator to confirm in writing on the translation:

- that it is a "true and accurate translation of the original document";
- the date of the translation;
- their full name and contact details.

Source: [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/certifying-a-document), "Certifying a document".

That is the baseline. Individual authorities build on it. Some say a translation company may sign. Some add a signature, a stamp, membership of a professional body or the translator's qualifications. Chapter 3 shows who asks for what.

No sworn translators

The three main UK professional bodies have published joint guidance, and it is unusually direct:

"The figure of the sworn translator does not exist in the UK, and therefore, no UK authority will request a sworn translation."

Source: ATC, CIOL and ITI, [Certified Translation: Getting It Right](#).

The same guidance describes what the UK has instead: "certified translations are official translations that are stamped and/or signed by a professional translator or translation company accredited by the relevant professional body."

This matters most when a translation is going the other way. If an authority in Spain, Germany or France asks for a sworn translation, a UK certified translation is unlikely to satisfy it, and no UK company can make one sworn. You would need a sworn translator registered in that country.

Words that are not the same

Certified A translator or translation company signs a statement that the translation is accurate. Asked for by: the Home Office, the Passport Office, universities and most UK bodies.	Notarised A notary public, a specialist lawyer, adds their own certificate and seal. Asked for by: some authorities abroad. Rare for UK use.
Sworn Made by a translator appointed by a court or ministry in countries that have that system. The UK has no sworn translators, so no UK authority asks for this.	Apostille A certificate from the Legalisation Office confirming that a UK document's signature or seal is genuine. Asked for when a UK document is going to be used abroad.

Figure 3. Four kinds of official translation. Most UK authorities ask for the first.

Certified is what this handbook is about, and what nearly every UK authority means.

Notarised means a notary public has added a certificate of their own. A notary is, in the words of the [Notaries Society](#), "a qualified lawyer", and their work is mainly with documents going abroad. We don't provide notarisation. If an authority abroad insists on it, it has to be arranged separately with a notary.

Sworn belongs to other countries' systems, as above.

Apostilled and **legalised** describe the same process. The UK's Legalisation Office checks a UK document and, in the government's words, "if any signatures, stamps or seals match their own records", attaches "an 'apostille' (stamped official certificate)". It applies to UK

documents being used abroad, and the office is clear that "you cannot get documents issued outside the UK legalised using this service".

Source: [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/get-your-document-legalised), "Get your document legalised".

TIP If your foreign certificate came with an apostille page from its own country, that page is part of your document. If it is in another language, it needs translating, and it counts as a page. If it is printed in English as well, tell us and we leave it out.

Certifying a translation is not certifying a copy

The gov.uk page on [certifying a document](https://www.gov.uk/certifying-a-document) explains two different things, and people mix them up.

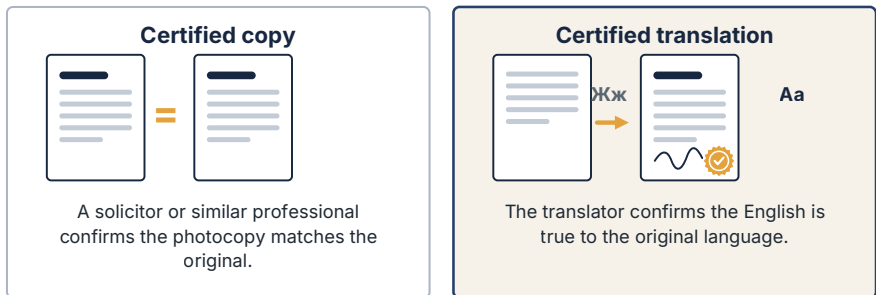


Figure 4. Two things that share a word. A certified copy is signed with "Certified to be a true copy of the original seen by me". A certified translation carries a statement that it is true and accurate.

If you have been asked for a "certified translation", your GP, your teacher or your solicitor can't provide it by signing the back of a page. That is the other kind of certifying.

The professional bodies

With no state register, membership of a professional body is how authorities judge a translator or a company. Several of them name these three.

BODY WHAT IT IS

ATC [Association of Translation Companies](#): "a trade association representing the interests of language service companies". Membership is for companies. We are a member.

CIOL [Chartered Institute of Linguists](#): "the UK's Royal Charter body for language professionals and linguists". Membership is for individuals.

ITI [Institute of Translation and Interpreting](#): a membership association for practising translators and interpreters, with corporate members too.

WATCH OUT ATC membership belongs to a company. CIOL and ITI credentials belong to a person. If your solicitor or authority has asked for one of these by name, tell us which before you order, so that nobody finds out afterwards that they meant the other.

Who signs, and will they accept it?



IN THIS CHAPTER

- What every certified translation carries
- The published rule for each authority, quoted
- Where a company signature is enough and where it isn't
- What happens if a translation is refused

A customer sent her translated marriage certificate to the divorce court, and the court sent it back. The translation was accurate. The objection was the signature. The court wanted a statement signed by the person who had done the translating, and hers was signed by an official of the company.

The same certificate carries everything the Home Office's rule asks for.

Each authority writes its own rule, and the rules mostly differ on one point: who signs. This chapter goes through them in turn. Every quotation is taken from the authority's own page and linked.

What every certified translation carries

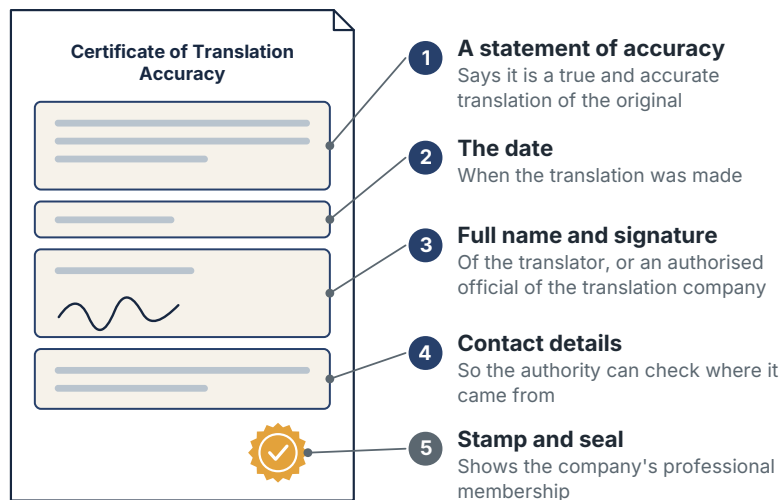


Figure 5. *The parts of a certificate of accuracy. Items 1 to 4 appear in the Immigration Rules. Authorities that ask for a stamp or a professional membership are looking at item 5.*

Each certified PDF we send holds three things in one file: the certificate, a copy of your original document, and the translation.

Our standard certificate is signed by an authorised representative of the company. That is what most authorities ask for. One group asks for something different, and it is the group in the story above.

At a glance

A company certificate	Check the wording	The translator signs
Our standard certificate, signed by a company official. Home Office HM Passport Office UK ENIC DVLA	Rules vary. Send us what the authority has asked for. Regulators Banks and solicitors Register offices Authorities abroad	A statement of truth or the translator's own signature. Family courts Civil courts Tribunal bundles*

* where the bundle follows the older practice direction

Figure 6. Where our standard certificate is used, where to check first, and where the translator must sign. The table below gives the wording behind each.

AUTHORITY	WHAT ITS PUBLISHED RULE ASKS FOR	OUR STANDARD CERTIFICATE?
Home Office	Dated, accurate, signed by the translator or a company official, with contact details	Yes. Tell us if you are applying inside the UK
HM Passport Office	Signed and stamped by a member of a recognised professional organisation	Yes, in our experience
Immigration tribunals	An English translation; best practice adds the translator's identity and qualifications	Ask your representative
Family and civil courts	A statement of truth, a notary's certificate, or the translator's own signature	No: court service
UK ENIC	Certified translation from a professional translator	Yes
Regulators	Varies: signature, stamp, letterhead, sometimes the translator's own details	Check the wording
Banks and solicitors	No single rule; often a member of a recognised body	Usually
DVLA	Issued in the UK, signed by a translator from a recognised body or company	Yes, in our experience, printed
Abroad	That country's own rules	Depends

The Home Office

The general rule sits in Part 1 of the Immigration Rules. A document not in English or Welsh must come with "a full translation that can be independently verified". The translation must be dated and include:

- "confirmation that it is an accurate translation of the original document";

- "the full name and signature of the translator or an authorised official of the translation company";
- "the translator or translation company's contact details".

Source: Immigration Rules, Part 1, [paragraph 39B\(f\)](#); repeated, almost word for word, in [Appendix FM-SE](#).

Note the words "or an authorised official of the translation company". The Home Office rule expressly allows a company signature.

WATCH OUT For applications made from inside the UK, for leave to remain or indefinite leave to remain, the same paragraph adds "certification by a qualified translator and details of the translator or translation company's credentials". Tell us if that is your situation.

HM Passport Office

The public page for a first adult passport says only that you "need to send a certified translation". The Passport Office's guidance booklet says more:

"If any document you are providing is in a language other than English or Welsh, also provide an official translation. This must be signed and stamped by a translator who is a member of a recognised professional organisation to prove it is genuine."

Source: HM Passport Office, [Guidance for paper passport applications](#).

Our certificates are signed and stamped, and they show our membership of the Association of Translation Companies. In our experience they are accepted for passport applications. Because passport applications are often posted with original documents, print the certified PDF on ordinary paper and send it with them.

Immigration tribunals

The First-tier Tribunal's procedure rules are brief: "if a document provided to the Tribunal is not written in English, it must be accompanied by an English translation". The Upper Tribunal's rules say the same.

Source: [First-tier Tribunal rules, rule 12](#); [Upper Tribunal rules, rule 13](#).

An older practice direction, last amended in 2018, describes best practice for bundles. The First-tier Tribunal replaced it in November 2024; it remains in place for the Upper Tribunal. It asks for

"a typed translation of the document signed by the translator, and certifying that the translation is accurate ... together with details of the identity and qualifications of the translator."

Source: [Practice Directions of the Immigration and Asylum Chambers](#), paragraph 8.2(b).

FOR ADVISERS We could not find a translation paragraph in the First-tier Tribunal's [November 2024 practice direction](#). If you are preparing a bundle, decide which wording you are following and tell us before you order.

Family and civil courts

This is where a company signature stops being enough. For a divorce application, the Family Procedure Rules ask that a marriage certificate not in English comes with

"a translation of that document certified by a notary public or authenticated by a statement of truth."

Source: [Family Procedure Rules, Practice Direction 7A](#), paragraph 3.1.

Of a witness statement in a foreign language, the same rules say:

"the translator must sign the translation to certify that it is accurate."

Source: [Family Procedure Rules, Practice Direction 22A](#), paragraph 8.2.

The Civil Procedure Rules take the same line for witness statements: "the translator must sign the original statement and must certify that the translation is accurate". For an affidavit they go further and require the translator to swear an affidavit of their own.

Source: [Civil Procedure Rules, Practice Direction 32](#), paragraphs 10.2 and 23.2.

In each case the court wants more than a company's certificate. For court proceedings we therefore offer a separate service, in which a qualified translator signs a Statement of Truth. It costs more per page than a standard order.

A standard certificate sent to a court is right and still comes back.

WATCH OUT If your translation is for a court, including a divorce application, say so before you order. A standard certificate sent to a court is the single most expensive mistake in this handbook, because the translation is right and still comes back.

Universities and UK ENIC

UK ENIC, which issues Statements of Comparability for overseas qualifications, says it "accepts certified translations from professional translators". It also offers a way to avoid translation altogether.

Its Translation Waiver Service "lets you submit international qualifications in their original language". At the time of writing it is free for languages "like Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish", and available for a fee for some others. ENIC is careful to add: "We do not provide you with translations as part of this Service."

Source: [UK ENIC, Translation Waiver Service](#).

Universities set their own requirements, and most ask simply for a certified translation. Whoever is reading, we reproduce grades, marks and classifications exactly as they appear. Converting them to UK equivalents is an assessment, and that is ENIC's job, not a translator's.

Professional regulators

Regulators are the most varied group. Some ask for a stamp, some for letterhead, some for the translator's own name and address.

REGULATOR	WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT TRANSLATIONS
GMC doctors	"All translations must include the contact details of the translation service or translator ... your documents must be stamped and signed by the translation service." It names ITI, CIOL and the ATC as UK professional associations. gmc-uk.org
NMC nurses, midwives	"The translator must confirm in writing that the translation is an exact and direct translation from the original language into English. The translator's full name, address, signature, contact details and stamp must be provided." nmc.org.uk
HCPC health professions	"Translations must be done by an official translator", described as a professional who "will have a stamp or seal to verify their identity". Each translation must be certified. hcpc-uk.org
GDC dental professionals	"The translation must be on the company letter head and include the translator's signature, name and address." gdc-uk.org
SRA solicitors	"You must give us certified translations for any documents not in English. These cannot be AI-generated or self-certified translations." sra.org.uk

We found no published translation rule for teachers applying for qualified teacher status. If you are applying to a regulator not listed here, ask it for its wording.

REMEMBER Send us the regulator's exact wording with your order. If it asks for something our certificate doesn't carry, we will tell you before you pay, not after.

Banks and solicitors

There is no published rule here, because each bank, lender and law firm decides for itself. Translations are usually wanted for a mortgage, a property purchase, a source-of-funds check or probate.

What we hear most often is a request for a company that belongs to an organisation such as the ATC, which we do. Occasionally a solicitor asks instead for a translator with CIOL or ITI membership. Those are individual credentials, so ask the firm whether an ATC member company meets its requirement, and tell us what it says.

DVLA

We found one gov.uk statement about translations for driving licence applications, in guidance written for people arriving from Ukraine. It asks for a translation that is issued in the UK and signed by an official translator belonging to the Institute of Linguists or the Institute of Translation and Interpreting, or by a translator employed by a recognised translation company, or by a member of the Association of Translation Companies.

Source: [gov.uk](#), "[Driving and public transport: Homes for Ukraine](#)".

DVLA wants original identity documents by post, and says "do not send photocopies of documents or laminated certificates". That is about your documents, not the translation. Print the certified PDF and post it with them.

Source: [gov.uk](#), "[Identity documents needed for a driving licence application](#)".

Register offices

If you are giving notice of marriage and you or your partner are from outside the UK, the national guidance asks you to bring "a translation of any documents that are not in English". It doesn't say more. Register offices have their own practice, so ring yours and ask what it expects on the translation.

Source: gov.uk, "Documents you'll need to give notice".

Authorities abroad

Once a translation leaves the UK, the UK definition no longer applies. A few examples show how different the rules can be.

COUNTRY	WHAT THE AUTHORITY SAYS
United States USCIS	A "full English language translation which the translator has certified as complete and accurate, and by the translator's certification that he or she is competent to translate". 8 CFR 103.2(b)(3)
Canada IRCC	A translation plus "an affidavit from the person who completed the translation (if they are not a certified translator)". Translations "must not be done by the applicants themselves nor by members of the applicant's family". canada.ca
Australia Home Affairs	Outside Australia, the translation "must be endorsed by the translator with their full name, address, telephone number, and details of their qualifications and experience". homeaffairs.gov.au
EU countries with sworn translators	Usually a translator sworn in that country. A UK certified translation is not a sworn translation.

If your translation is for USCIS, tell us, so that the certificate carries the US wording and the translation is in US English, not British. For anywhere else, send us the authority's instructions first. We would

rather tell you we can't meet a requirement than have you find out at the counter.

If it is refused

If an authority rejects a translation we certified, we refund it. When you write, send us the authority's message. Its wording usually shows exactly what was wanted, and sometimes a reissued certificate is all it takes.

Documents that cause trouble



IN THIS CHAPTER

- Financial papers and tables of figures
- Academic, legal and official documents
- Cards, apostilles, screenshots and recordings
- What we do when something can't be read

Most documents translate without incident. The ones in this chapter are the exceptions: the kinds that produce questions, corrections or surprises on the invoice.



Figure 7. Five things on one page that make a translation harder, and what we do about each.

Money

Bank statements and financial tables

A statement is a table, and tables are where figures slip. A deposit that lands in the withdrawals column changes the meaning of the page without a single word being mistranslated.

TELL US

- Which months or pages you need
- The currency, if the statement doesn't show it
- Whether any pages are identical apart from a figure

CHECK ON DELIVERY

- Money in and money out, column by column
- Opening and closing balances
- The account holder's name

Valuations, estimates and receipts

For a source-of-funds check, the difference between "sold for" and "valued at" matters to the person reading. Where a document is an estimate or a valuation, the translation says so on its face. We don't present an estimate as a completed sale.

TELL US

- What the document is being used to show
- Who is asking for it: a bank, a conveyancer, a court

CHECK ON DELIVERY

- Amounts and currencies
- The title of the document

Study and work

Transcripts, diplomas and syllabuses

We reproduce grades, grading scales and classifications exactly as written. We keep the names of institutions and faculties the same across every document in an order, so that a diploma and its transcript plainly belong together.

TELL US

- The institution's official English name, if it has one
- Whether it is for a university, UK ENIC or a regulator

CHECK ON DELIVERY

- Every row of the marks table, including marks written out in words
- The title of the qualification

Legal and official

Contracts, deeds, powers of attorney and wills

Long documents, where people often want only the clauses that matter. We can translate selected pages. Translating part of a page costs the same as the whole page, so we translate that page in full. Some bodies insist on the complete document with nothing left out; if you have been told that, send all of it.

TELL US

- Exactly which pages you want, if not all
- That the gaps are deliberate, so we don't query them

CHECK ON DELIVERY

- Names of the parties
- Amounts, dates and property descriptions

Police, court and tribunal papers

A solicitor once returned a translation to us because official seals and handwritten minutes had not been fully rendered. The solicitor was right. On these documents the stamps, seals and margin notes are evidence, and every one must appear in the translation.

TELL US

- Whether it is for a court (see Chapter 3)
- Names as they appear on ID

CHECK ON DELIVERY

- Each seal and stamp is accounted for
- Reference and case numbers

Medical and vaccination records

Handwritten entries, batch numbers and test results are the risk. We copy numbers as written, and where a word can't be read we mark it instead of guessing.

TELL US

- Anything you can read that a stranger couldn't: names of clinics, medicines, doctors

CHECK ON DELIVERY

- Batch numbers and dates
- Patient name and date of birth

Cards, apostilles and reissued certificates

Two-sided cards and certificates

Each side is a page, even if you upload both in one file. If you don't need the reverse translated, tell us before you order and we leave it out.

Apostille pages

An apostille page counts as a page. Many are printed in the issuing country's language and in English or French. If yours is already in English and you don't need it translated, tell us before you order.

Reissued and replacement certificates

A translation belongs to one document. If your certificate is reissued, with a new number or date of issue, the old translation describes a document you are no longer submitting. One customer found this out when a passport office refused a laminated certificate and a fresh copy had to be obtained. Send us the new one and we will update the translation.

Messages and recordings

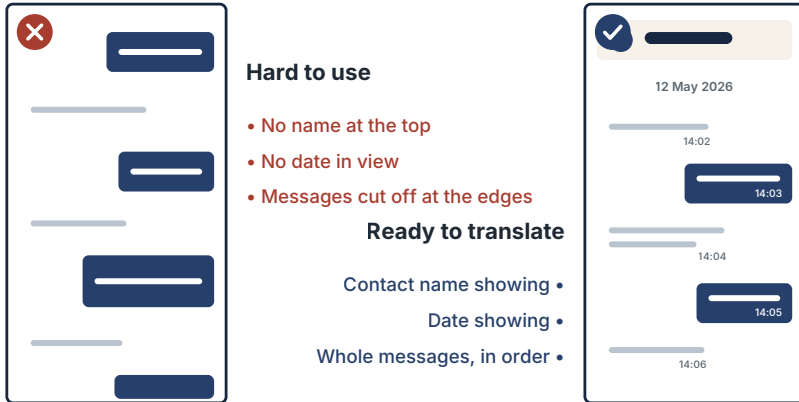


Figure 8. Screenshots that can be translated cleanly, and screenshots that can't.

Chat and social media screenshots

Each screenshot is one page, whatever the word count. That is the question we are asked most about screenshots, usually by someone looking at a quote for eleven pages of very short messages.

BEFORE YOU CAPTURE

- Show the contact name and the date
- Keep whole messages on screen
- Leave out screenshots that are entirely in English

IF ONLY PART IS FOREIGN

- Where a mostly English document has screenshots embedded in it, tell us which pages hold them

Voice notes and video

We transcribe and translate recordings. Send the file by email for a quote, with the names of the speakers and the date if you have it. Where speech is inaudible, the transcript says so.

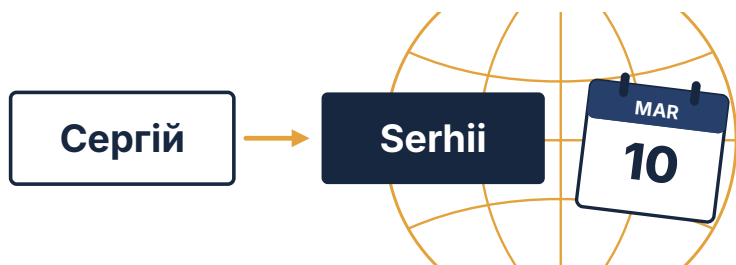
When something can't be read

Old certificates fade. Stamps overlap. Handwriting defeats even people who know the language.

Our rule is that a certified translation never contains a guess. A word we can't read is marked as illegible. A stamp we can only partly make out is marked as partially legible. A number that looks wrong is copied as it stands. If you can read what we couldn't, tell us and we will put it in. For handwritten documents, a typed list of the names, places and dates you already know saves a round of corrections.

One last rule. We don't translate or certify a document we have reason to think has been altered.

Names, dates and numbers



IN THIS CHAPTER

- Why name spellings cause more corrections than anything else
- How to give us the spellings you need
- The limit: a translation says what the document says

If we could change one thing about how people order, it would be this: send the passport spellings first.

Corrections after delivery are the largest single category of email we receive, and names are the largest part of it. Not because translators are careless with names, but because a name in another alphabet can be written in English several ways, all of them defensible.

1	Name spellings
2	Dates and numbers
3	Missing content: seals, stamps, lines, pages
4	Addresses and place names
5	The source language named on the certificate

Figure 9. *What we are asked to correct after delivery, most common first.*

Transliteration has no single answer

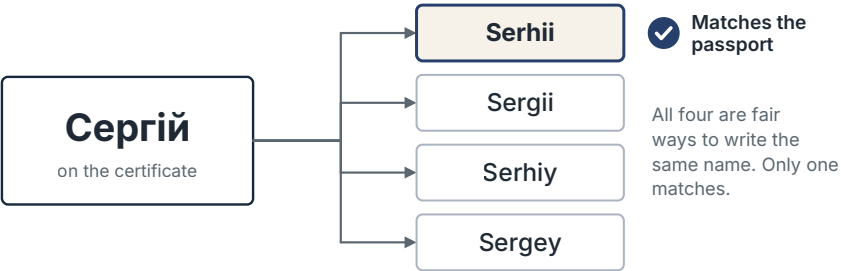


Figure 10. Four fair spellings of one first name. Only the passport can say which is yours.

Transliteration means carrying a name from one script into another. Every language pair has more than one convention, and official practice changes over time. A person born in the Soviet Union may hold a birth certificate in Russian and a passport that follows Ukrainian spelling. A Vietnamese name may or may not keep its accents. A patronymic may be printed on one document and dropped from the next.

None of this is an error. It is simply a decision the translator can't make without you.

The spelling list

Put this in the notes box when you order, or in an email.

NAME AS IT APPEARS IN THE DOCUMENT	SPELLING REQUIRED	WHERE THAT SPELLING COMES FROM
		Passport
		Passport
		Earlier visa or application

Include everyone the document names, not only yourself. Say whether you want accents kept or removed, and whether a patronymic or a maiden name should appear.

Dates

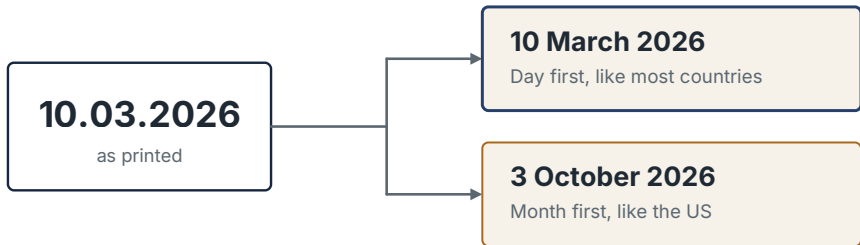


Figure 11. *The same printed date, read two ways.*

Dates fail in three ways. The day and month are reversed. A handwritten digit under a stamp is misread. Or the document uses another calendar, and the conversion is a year out.

Where a document uses another calendar, we convert its dates to the Gregorian one. You know your own dates better than anyone, so read each one when the translation arrives.

Numbers

Document numbers are copied exactly, character for character, even when they look unusual. If a handwritten passport number has one digit more than the standard format, we reproduce it as written. Correcting it would be us deciding what your document ought to say.

The limit: what the document says

A customer asked us to show a current UK address on a translated document. The original gave an address abroad, from the time it was issued.

We couldn't do it, and we couldn't add a translator's note to do it for us either. A certified translation states that it is a true and accurate rendering of the original. An address that isn't in the original has no place in it.

The line is easy to draw once you see it.

WE CAN	WE CAN'T
Spell a name the way the passport spells it	Replace a name with a different one
Convert a date from another calendar	Change the date the document shows
Use an institution's official English name	Substitute a different address
Mark a source error with "[sic]"	Silently correct it

A spelling preference is yours to give. A fact belongs to the document.

If the document itself is wrong, the remedy is a corrected document from whoever issued it.

Ordering, price and delivery



IN THIS CHAPTER

- How the price is worked out
- Standard and rush, including weekends
- What is in the file you receive
- Revisions, reuse and refunds

The price of a certified translation should never be a surprise. Ours is a fixed amount per page, shown before you pay.

How the price is worked out

At the time of writing, a page costs £17.99 on the standard service and £29.99 on rush. The price is per page, not per word, because each page is translated, checked and stamped individually.

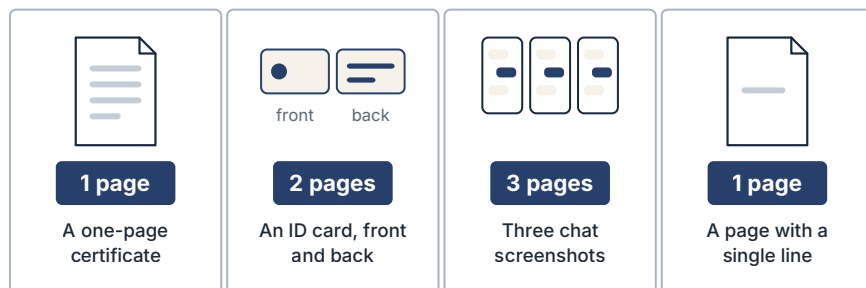


Figure 12. How pages are counted.

Four rules cover almost every case.

- **Each side counts.** A two-sided card is two pages, even in one file.
- **Each screenshot counts.** One screenshot, one page.
- **Part of a page is a page.** If you need one table from page two, we translate page two.
- **One line is enough.** A page with a single line, a stamp or a handwritten note on it counts as a page.

If you have several documents, send them together. We total the pages and give you one price and one payment.

TIP If the website says it can't detect any text, or can't tell what language a scan is in, that is a limit of the upload tool, not a problem with your document. Email the file to support@certifiedvisatranslation.com and we will quote it by hand.

Standard and rush

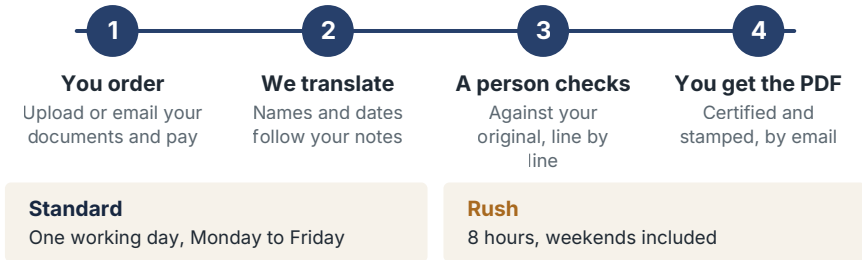


Figure 13. From order to certified PDF.

Standard: working days



Rush: every day, public holidays included



Figure 14. Standard runs on working days. Rush runs every day.

Standard is delivered within one working day. Working days are Monday to Friday, so an order placed on a Friday is delivered on Monday.

Rush is delivered within eight hours, and the eight hours run through weekends and public holidays. If your deadline is a Monday morning and it is Saturday afternoon, rush is the service you need.

What is in the file

You receive one PDF by email. It contains three things, in this order.



Figure 15. *What is inside the certified PDF.*

Keeping the original inside the file is deliberate. It shows the reader exactly which document was translated.

The wording on the certificate depends on the purpose you gave us: immigration, academic admission or credential evaluation, or neutral wording for general official use. Translations for UK use are in British English. If the purpose changes after delivery, tell us and we reissue the certificate with the right wording at no charge.

Uploading and printing

Upload the PDF as it arrives. If a portal refuses it or says the file is too large, write to us and we will send a version that goes through.

We don't post hard copies. Where an authority wants paper, to avoid any unnecessary cost, print the PDF yourself on ordinary paper and send it with your documents.

Revisions

Two revisions are included with every order. Reply to the delivery email, or use the link in it, and tell us what needs to change. We deal with revisions before new orders.

The quickest revision is the one that isn't needed. Chapter 5 explains how to give us name spellings before we start.

Using a translation again

We don't put an expiry date on a certified translation. You can offer it again for a later application, provided the document it translates hasn't changed. Whether the authority accepts it is, as always, the authority's decision.

Two things to check. If your certificate has since been reissued, the old translation describes the old one. And some authorities want the underlying document itself to be recent, which no translation can fix.

If you add more documents later and want everything in a single certified file under one certificate, ask us. We can reissue the set together.

If an authority says no

If an authority rejects a translation we certified, we refund it. Refunds go back to the card you paid with, and the card networks usually take five to ten working days to show them.

REMEMBER Tell us three things with every order: what it is for, when you need it, and how each name should be spelt.

AI, humans and judging quality



IN THIS CHAPTER

- What translation software does well
- Why a certified translation needs a person
- What authorities are starting to say about AI
- Five questions to ask any translation company

"Is this translated by a human who actually speaks the language?"

It is a fair question, and more people are asking it. Translation software has improved enormously. You have probably used it yourself to read a letter or a menu, and it probably worked.

So here is a straight answer about where it fits.

What software does well

It is fast. It handles clean, typed, everyday text with few mistakes. It never gets tired on page forty of a bank statement. As a way of understanding a document you can't read, it is a real help, and we would encourage you to use it to check our work.

What it doesn't do

The documents people need certified are rarely clean, typed, everyday text. They are photographed at an angle. They carry stamps over the print and handwriting in the margins. They contain names that must match a passport and numbers that must match exactly.

Left alone, software will read a faint stamp and tell you confidently what it says. It will pick a spelling for a name without knowing a passport exists. It may add a helpful note of its own. None of that belongs in a document a decision depends on.

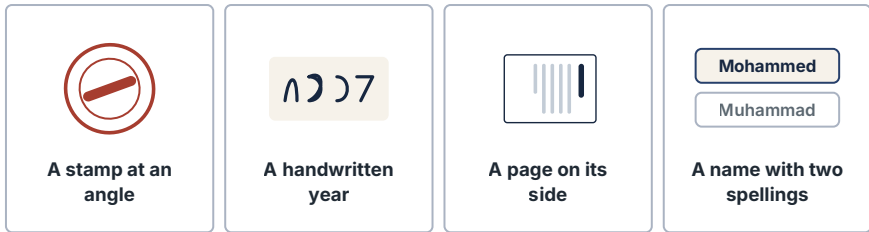


Figure 16. *Four things that trip software up.*

And there is a simpler point. A certificate of accuracy is a statement by someone who can be contacted and held to it. Software can't sign.

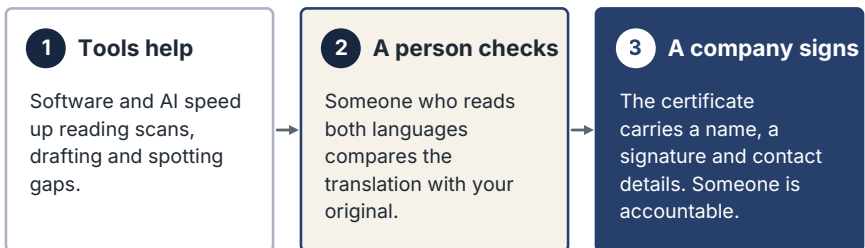


Figure 17. *AI is a complement. Every translation needs a human.*

That is our position in one line. AI is a tool in the hands of a translator, as a dictionary or a glossary is. Every translation we certify is checked by a person against the original before our name goes under it.

What authorities are saying

Some authorities have started to address this directly. The Solicitors Regulation Authority tells applicants:

"You must give us certified translations for any documents not in English. These cannot be AI-generated or self-certified translations."

Source: [Solicitors Regulation Authority](#).

Others make the same point through the signature. A rule that asks for a named translator's signature, stamp or qualifications is a rule that a person must stand behind the work.

Judging a translation you can't fully read

You don't need to be bilingual to check the things that matter most.

- ☐ Is every page of the original there, in the same order?
- ☐ Does each name match the passport, letter for letter?
- ☐ Does each date and number match the original?
- ☐ Is every stamp, seal and handwritten note mentioned?
- ☐ Is anything in the translation that isn't in the original?

The last one is easy to overlook. A translation that explains, summarises or comments has stopped being a translation.

Five questions to ask any translation company

Each question comes with our own answer.

1 Who signs the certificate? A named person at the company, or the individual translator? Chapter 3 shows why it matters.

Ours: an authorised representative, or the translator personally for court work.

2 Which professional body do you belong to? Is the membership held by the company or by the translator?

Ours: the ATC, as a company.

3 Does a person check the translation against my original?

Ours: yes, every time.

4 What happens if the authority rejects it?

Ours: we refund it.

5 How do I give you name spellings, and what do corrections cost?

Ours: in the order notes, with two revisions included.

For professionals



IN THIS CHAPTER

- Quotes and payment links your client can use
- Scoping an order so it costs what it should
- Bundles, court work and source-of-funds checks
- A request template to copy

If you handle documents for clients, your questions are different from theirs. You aren't asking whether a translation will be accepted. You are asking how fast you can get a quote, who pays, and whether the file will come back in a state you can put straight into a bundle.

Quotes and payment

Email the documents to support@certifiedvisatranslation.com. We count the pages and reply with a total and a payment link. Send the link on to your client and they pay it directly. Nobody has to upload anything to a website, and you don't have to pay on a client's behalf.



Figure 18. *How most firms work with us.*

Each link we send states the order number, the language, which documents it covers, the page count and the total, so that your client knows what they are paying for.

If your firm sends us work regularly, tell us. We can agree a way of working, and a referral arrangement for your clients, once, so that it doesn't have to be explained with every order.

Scoping the order

We price exactly what you ask us to translate. Three habits keep that honest.

- **Tell us what the client already has.** If some pages have been translated before, leave them out and we reprice.
- **Mark partial translations clearly.** If you only need clauses 1, 5 and 9 of an agreement, say that the gaps are intended. Otherwise our checks flag the document as incomplete and we stop to ask.
- **Split people, not pages.** Where one email carries several clients' documents, name the files so each person's set stays together.

A request template

Copy this into an email and fill it in.

NEW MESSAGE
To: support@certifiedvisatranslation.com
Subject: Translation request, client reference ...
Documents attached: name, language, number of pages Pages to translate: all, or only pages ... For submission to: the authority, and whether it is a court Applying from inside the UK? yes or no Name spellings: as in the passports Needed by: date and time Send the quote and payment link to: ... Send the finished translation to: ...

What comes back

One PDF per order, containing the certificate, the original and the translation. If a caseworker or a court wants the source document alongside the translation, it is already there.

If you need the set arranged differently, for example one file per exhibit, tell us at the start.

Court and tribunal work

Chapter 3 sets out the rules. In brief:

- **Family and civil courts** want more than a company's certificate: a statement of truth, a notary's certificate or the translator's own signature, depending on the document. Ask for our court service, with a Statement of Truth, before the order is placed.

- **Immigration tribunals** require an English translation; the older practice direction adds the translator's signature, identity and qualifications. Tell us which standard your bundle is following.
- **Seals, stamps and handwritten notes** are translated in full. If something in the source is illegible, the translation says so. It doesn't guess.

Source-of-funds and property work

For conveyancers and wealth advisers, the documents are usually bank records, sale agreements, loan agreements, valuations and gift deeds. Tell us what the document is meant to evidence. Where it is a valuation or an estimate, the translation makes that plain.

Ten mistakes that get translations refused



IN THIS CHAPTER

- The refusals we see, in order of cost
- Why each one happens
- The one habit that prevents most of them

A refused translation is rarely a bad translation. Much more often, it is a good translation sent to the wrong reader, or prepared without one piece of information. One habit prevents most of this list: before you order, write down who is receiving the translation and what they have asked for, and send that to us with the documents.

1 Sending a company-signed certificate to a court

Courts want a statement of truth or the translator's own signature, not a company certificate. Say it is for a court before you order.

2 Not saying what the translation is for

The purpose decides the certificate wording, and sometimes the whole service. "It's for official use" isn't enough.

- 3 Assuming one authority's rule applies to another**
Each authority writes its own rule. Check the one you are sending to.
- 4 Expecting a UK translation to be "sworn"**
For use in a country with sworn translators, a UK certified translation may not be enough, and nobody here can make it sworn.
- 5 Leaving name spellings to chance**
Still the most frequent correction of all. Send the passport spellings with the order.
- 6 Asking for content the document doesn't contain**
A new address, a converted grade, a corrected date. A certified translation can't include what the original doesn't say.
- 7 Reusing a translation after the document was reissued**
New certificate, new number, new date of issue: the old translation no longer matches what you are submitting.
- 8 Sending part of a document without saying so**
If pages are missing on purpose, tell us. If they are missing by accident, the authority will notice before you do.
- 9 Asking a relative, or an app, and then asking for a stamp**
We can't certify a translation we didn't make, and some authorities rule out self-translation in terms.
- 10 Laminating, photocopying or editing**
Authorities that want originals want them untouched, and a certified PDF that has been edited is no longer certified.

Checklists, glossary and sources



Questions to ask the authority

- ☐ Do you have a published requirement for translations? Where can I read it?
 - ☐ Must the translator sign personally, or may a translation company sign?
 - ☐ Do you need the translator's qualifications or professional membership shown?
 - ☐ Do you need a stamp, a seal or company letterhead?
 - ☐ Do you accept a PDF, or do you need paper?
 - ☐ Do you need the whole document translated, or only certain pages?
-

What to send us

- ☐ Every page you want translated, both sides, photographed flat
 - ☐ A note of any pages to leave out
 - ☐ The authority it is for, and whether it is a court
 - ☐ The authority's own wording, if it has given you any
 - ☐ Passport spellings for every person named
 - ☐ Your deadline, with the time
-

What to check on delivery

- ☐ The certificate, the original and the translation are all in the file
 - ☐ The page count matches
 - ☐ Names, dates, numbers and amounts match the original
 - ☐ Every stamp and seal is accounted for
 - ☐ The certificate wording suits the purpose
-

What we don't do

- **Notarisation.** It has to be arranged separately with a notary.
- **Sworn translation.** It doesn't exist in the UK.
- **Posted hard copies.** We deliver a certified PDF. Print it yourself if paper is needed.
- **Certifying someone else's translation.** We translate from the original and certify our own work. An existing translation is welcome as a reference.
- **Sample translations before payment.** Two revisions are included instead.

- **Adding anything that isn't in the document.**
- **Legal or immigration advice.**

Glossary

Affidavit

A written statement sworn before someone authorised to take oaths.

Apostille

The certificate attached when a document is legalised, confirming that a signature, stamp or seal on it is genuine.

ATC

Association of Translation Companies. A trade association whose members are companies.

Certified copy

A photocopy confirmed as true to the original by a professional who has seen both. Not the same as a certified translation.

Certified translation

A translation with a signed, dated statement of accuracy from the translator or translation company, with their name and contact details.

CIOL, ITI

The Chartered Institute of Linguists and the Institute of Translation and Interpreting. Professional bodies whose members are mainly individuals.

Legalisation

The process by which the UK Legalisation Office confirms a UK document for use abroad by attaching an apostille.

Notary public

A qualified lawyer who authenticates documents, chiefly for use abroad.

Statement of Truth

A signed declaration that the contents of a document are true. In our court service, the translator signs one personally.

Sworn translator

A translator appointed by a court or ministry in countries with that system. The UK has none.

Transliteration

Writing a name from one script in the letters of another.

UK ENIC

The UK agency that issues Statements of Comparability for overseas qualifications.

Official sources

All quotations in this handbook were taken from these pages on 2 October 2026.

- [gov.uk: Certifying a document](#)
- [Immigration Rules, Part 1, paragraph 39B](#)
- [Immigration Rules, Appendix FM-SE](#)
- [gov.uk: first adult passport documents](#)
- [HM Passport Office: guidance for paper passport applications](#)
- [First-tier Tribunal \(IAC\) Rules 2014, rule 12; Upper Tribunal Rules 2008, rule 13](#)
- [Practice Directions of the Immigration and Asylum Chambers](#)
- [Family Procedure Rules, PD 7A and PD 22A; Civil Procedure Rules, PD 32](#)
- [UK ENIC: Translation Waiver Service](#)
- [Regulators: GMC, NMC, HCPC, GDC, SRA](#)
- [gov.uk: Driving and public transport, Homes for Ukraine; identity documents for a driving licence](#)
- [gov.uk: documents you'll need to give notice of marriage](#)
- [gov.uk: Get your document legalised; The Notaries Society](#)
- [ATC, CIOL and ITI: Certified Translation, Getting It Right](#)
- [Abroad: 8 CFR 103.2 \(USCIS\), IRCC Guide 5256 \(Canada\), Department of Home Affairs \(Australia\)](#)

Send us the document and the destination

Upload at certifiedvisatranslation.com and see the price before you pay, or email support@certifiedvisatranslation.com with your documents and tell us who they are for.

Standard delivery: One working day, Monday to Friday. Rush: 8 hours, weekends included. Two revisions included. Refunded if an authority rejects it.



CertifiedVisaTranslation

120+ languages	1 day standard, Monday to Friday	8 hours rush, weekends included	2 revisions included	Refund if an authority rejects it
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Member of the Association of Translation Companies
and of the EUATC network.

"Will they accept it?" depends on who they are

The Home Office, the Passport Office, the courts, universities and regulators each publish their own rule for translations, and the rules don't match. This handbook puts them side by side, in their own words, so that you send the right kind of certified translation the first time.

INSIDE

- Who must sign for each authority, with every rule quoted and linked
- Certified, notarised, sworn and apostilled, finally untangled
- The documents that cause the most corrections, and how to avoid them
- A plain account of where AI fits and where a person is needed
- Checklists and a request template for professionals



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