



Association of Translation Companies

GUIDANCE NOTE

There are three ways in which translations are certified:

1) Certification

This is where a freelance translator or translation company produces their own certificate showing their qualifications and certifying that the translation is true and faithful. Some translation companies charge the same for this as swearing because the work is effectively identical.

2) Sworn Translation

This is where an Affidavit or Solemn Declaration is drawn up and sworn or affirmed before a Solicitor. It is required by some foreign diplomatic missions for passport and visa purposes or for company documentation and more often than not if a document has to be presented to a court of law, either in this country or abroad. It is mandatory whenever a contractual arrangement is broken or an entity ceases to exist, for example divorce, liquidation or probate.

3) Notarisation

This is an archaic process, dating back to the time of ancient scribes, and involves swearing or affirming in front of a Notary Public or Consular Official, with proof of identity, and is now used less and less. In theory it should not be necessary between countries that are signatories to the Hague Convention. It is used mainly for documents that involve the question of the identity of the person swearing and the fact that a foreign power cannot be sure of the identity of a British Citizen. Only our Foreign & Commonwealth Office can certify via an Apostille that we are who we say we are, and they are not prepared to do so unless first signed by a Notary Public or Consular Official of the Diplomatic Mission of the foreign country concerned. Notarisation is demanded for a higher level of proof, especially, for example, in the case of certain High Court proceedings or for the formation of a company abroad. Notarisation is usually by a form of Affidavit, but can be by Notarial Certificate.