



Association of
Translation Companies
DEFINING STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Certified Translations Certification Stamp Usage Guidelines

2024

ATC Certification Stamp

The ATC's Certification Stamp is awarded to Accredited ATC Member companies. The stamp may be used to certify translations, typically those submitted to public sector or other authorities.

Examples of translations requiring certification can include civil record certificates (birth, marriage, death certificates), diplomas and transcripts, company registration documents or documentation used in legal proceedings. Translations certified by an ATC Member company are accepted by most UK public service authorities. However, the ATC strongly recommends that any requirements for the certification are clarified with the authority directly by the client.

Translations certified with the ATC's Certification Stamp signal to the recipient that the translation has been carried out by an Accredited Member of the Association of Translation Companies, a company who has passed the association's strict membership vetting process, with checks on financial stability, quality management processes, client and supplier references and holds suitable professional indemnity insurance.

You can check a company's membership at <https://atc.org.uk/member-directory/>

The ATC's Certification Stamp is issued as both a digital and as a physical version, and renewed annually. The Stamp carries the name of the company and their unique ATC membership number, and it is dated for the current year.

About these guidelines

These guidelines set out best practice for certifying translations using the ATC's Certification Stamp.

The guidelines also explain the differences in 'certification' used in the UK and overseas.

The ATC's **Getting It Right – Certified Translations Client Guide** can be used to explain the certification of translations to and guide clients and receiving authorities.

What does 'certification' mean?

Many countries have a system of 'sworn', 'official' or 'state authorised' translators, who are accredited by government authorities to certify translations of official documents.

No such system, or indeed official rules for certifying translations, exists in the UK, which relies on different levels of certification depending on the translation's intended use and the receiving party.

Although Accredited ATC Members can offer advice on the various certification options available, responsibility should be on the client to ensure that the level of certification requested is correct for the receiving party.

Certified translation

Translation carried out by a suitably qualified or experienced translator, bound together with the source text and a written declaration ('certificate'). Signed by the translator and/or a representative of an Accredited ATC Member company and stamped with the ATC's Certification Stamp.

Affidavit

Translation carried out by a suitably qualified or experienced translator, bound together with the source text and a written declaration carrying the translator's name and affirming the translator's ability to translate from the original source to the target language accurately ('affidavit').

Signed by the translator and/or a representative of an Accredited ATC Member company, in the presence of a solicitor. Signed by the solicitor and stamped with the ATC's Certification Stamp.

Notarised translation

Translation carried out by a suitably qualified or experienced translator, bound together with the original and a written declaration ('certificate').

Signed by the translator and/or a representative of an Accredited ATC Member company, in the presence of a Notary Public. Signed by the Notary Public and stamped with the ATC's Certification Stamp.

Legalised or Apostilled translation

Translation authenticated by a relevant authority. In the UK, documents are legalised with a stamped official certificate (an 'apostille') by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) Legalisation Office.

Note a translation must first be notarised before it can be sent to the FCDO for legalisation. If the translation is bound together with a copy of the original, the legalisation request must clearly indicate that it is the notarised translation that should be legalised, and that the copy of the original document is solely for information purposes. The FCDO also accepts notarised translations without a copy of the original document for legalisation.

See more information at <https://www.gov.uk/get-document-legalised>.

Who can translate documents for certification?

There are no official requirements for the qualifications or competences of translators translating official documents in the UK.

The use of the ATC's Certification Stamp requires that the Accredited ATC Member company is able to assess and attest to the translator's competence in producing a translation fit for its purpose. The translator should have qualifications, experience and subject matter expertise commensurate with the requirements of the translation task.

How to certify a translation

A translation may be certified by an authorised representative of an Accredited ATC Member company, or the translator.

The original document

A copy of the original document should always be enclosed with the translation.

Translation

The translation should be laid out so that it resembles the original layout as closely as possible.

Certificate

The translation should be accompanied by a signed declaration on the company's letterhead: the certificate. See below for certificate wordings recommended by the ATC.

Binding order

Documents should be laid out in the below order:

- Certificate at the front

- Copy of source-language document in the middle
- Translation at the back

Stamping

The ATC's Certification Stamp should be used to stamp the certificate and each page of the translation.

The source-language document should not be stamped, as the Accredited ATC Member cannot take responsibility for its authenticity. If required, the source document can be legalised by the relevant source authority.

Hard-copy or digital certification?

Most authorities accept printed hard copies of certified translations. Hard copies should be bound using legal 'corners', a staple, or a binding machine.

If the receiving authority accepts digitally certified copies, the certified translation should be prepared as detailed below:

1. Produce the translation electronically and 'stamp' each page of the translation to include the ATC digital stamp.
2. Prepare an electronic version of the certification bundle: certificate with signature and ATC digital stamp at the front, copy of source language document in the middle, and translation with ATC digital stamp at the back.
3. 'Bind' the documents together by saving them as a PDF.
4. If required by the receiving authority, or due to the sensitivity of the information, the digital certification process may be protected with AES-level signature protection (e.g. with Adobe Sign/DocuSign) and with further editing/changes/tampering prevented (different methods depending on tool).
5. Deliver the document to the client as a PDF.

Recommended certificate wording
(signed and stamped by an Accredited ATC Member representative)

CERTIFICATE

I, [NAME], [JOB TITLE] at [NAME OF COMPANY] an Accredited Member of the Association of Translation Companies under Membership Number [MEMBERSHIP NUMBER], with registered office at [ADDRESS OF COMPANY], being competent to assess the qualification of the translator, [QUALIFICATIONS OF TRANSLATOR], to translate from [SOURCE LANGUAGE] into [TARGET LANGUAGE] the document entitled [NAME OF DOCUMENT], relating to [NAME OF COMPANY] project number [PROJECT NUMBER], hereby CERTIFY that the document in [TARGET LANGUAGE] attached hereunto, is, to the best of my professional knowledge, a true and accurate representation of the document in [SOURCE LANGUAGE] likewise attached.

Date: [DATE]

[YOUR NAME], [JOB TITLE]

[NAME OF COMPANY]



[ATC CERTIFICATION STAMP]

Recommended certificate wording
(signed by translator, stamped by an Accredited ATC Member
representative)

CERTIFICATE

I, [NAME OF TRANSLATOR], [QUALIFICATIONS OF TRANSLATOR], declare that I am competent to translate from [SOURCE LANGUAGE] into [TARGET LANGUAGE] the document entitled [NAME OF DOCUMENT], relating to [NAME OF COMPANY] project number [PROJECT NUMBER], and hereby CERTIFY that the document in [TARGET LANGUAGE] attached hereunto, is, to the best of my professional knowledge, a true and accurate representation of the document in [SOURCE LANGUAGE] likewise attached.

[NAME OF TRANSLATOR]

Date: [DATE]



[NAME OF COMPANY]

[ATC CERTIFICATION STAMP]

[NAME OF COMPANY] is an Accredited Member of the Association of Translation Companies under Membership Number [MEMBERSHIP NUMBER], with registered office at [ADDRESS OF COMPANY].