



IRISH TRANSLATORS' and INTERPRETERS' ASSOCIATION  
CUMANN AISTRITHEOIRÍ agus TEANGAIRÍ NA hÉIREANN

## **ITIA Certified Translator**

The Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association (ITIA) is the only professional body on the island of Ireland representing the interests of practising translators. It has introduced a procedure whereby a Professional Member of the association can apply to become an 'ITIA Certified Translator'. An ITIA Certified Translator is a translator whose work/main area of work involves the translation and certification of legal and official documentation and who has fulfilled the criteria as laid down by the ITIA Certification sub-committee.

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

The enlargement of the European Union and freedom of movement between the member states has created an ever-increasing demand for reliable communication. The provision of certified translation services is an integral part of such 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 a career as a Certified Translator.

### **Why ITIA Certified Translator status?**

At present, there is no state regulation or formal recognition of Certified Translators in Ireland. The aim of the ITIA in offering its members the opportunity to apply for ITIA Certified Translator status is, therefore, to

- achieve formal recognition for the profession and the status of Certified Translators by the Irish legal system, Government departments, state institutions, foreign embassies, the business community etc.
- set up a career path for Certified Translators, recognised by the legal system, government departments, state institutions, etc.
- promote standards of professional excellence through the assessment element of the approval procedure and through offering continuing professional development in the area of Certified Translation

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## What type of document requires certified translation?

Documents that may require certified translation include:

- 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
- Any other document requested by authorities, solicitors, companies or individual customers.

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 either the *original* document or of a *certified copy* of the original document. The ITIA Certified Translator may not certify a document that has been translated from, for example, a photocopy, a fax copy or a scanned copy of the original. The translator is personally responsible for the accuracy of the translation. 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.

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

ITIA Certified Translator status is open only to natural persons. **Only fully-paid up Professional Members of the ITIA of good standing who fulfil specific criteria may apply.**

Professional Members may only apply to become an ITIA Certified Translator for the language combination(s) for which they hold professional membership.

### **What are the criteria for approval as an ITIA Certified Translator?**

The ITIA Professional Member must provide evidence of 5 years of professional translation experience and must achieve a PASS in two test translations in the language combination for which s/he is seeking to become an ITIA Certified Translator.

**N.B.** It should be noted that a language combination is understood to be **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 for translation 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 ITIA holds a workshop prior to the certification examination where the details of and requirements for the certified translation of texts are demonstrated and discussed. The date and venue of this workshop is posted on the ITIA website and Professional Members are notified directly.

### **Why is there an assessment element?**

The aim of the ITIA is to promote the highest standards in translation when awarding Certified Translator status. Quality in translation depends on both the professional commitment and the professional competence of the translator. In order to meet the stringent quality requirements laid down by the ITIA Certification sub-committee, therefore, applicants are required to demonstrate such commitment and competence by translating two texts and achieving a PASS in each.

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### **How is the assessment carried out?**

The examination texts are sent by post to the candidate who translates the texts as if in a normal working situation, i.e. using a computer, online glossaries etc.

**Under no circumstances may the translator use Machine Translation to translate the assessment texts or solicit the help of a third party for the translation of the assessment text.**

All sources used for the purpose of the translation must be listed and submitted along with the translated text.

The translator receives the source texts by post on a specific Friday and the translations must be returned by email to the ITIA by 5 pm (Irish time) at the latest on the following day (Saturday). A signed declaration stating that the work submitted for assessment is the work of the translator alone is submitted along with the translated texts (scanned) or by post.

### **What kind of texts will be used?**

The ITIA Certification sub-committee has compiled a collection of texts based on the sample of texts as outlined above. These texts are copies of actual documents that require certified translation, with names and other identifying details blanked out for reasons of confidentiality. These texts mirror the type of text encountered in real life by Certified Translators, i.e. in some places text may be illegible, stamps partially obscured, as the assessment of the translated texts takes into consideration how the applicant handles such difficulties.

The ITIA Certification sub-committee selects at random one short and one long text for each language combination. Guidelines for the translation of the texts will be provided.

### **Who will mark the test translations?**

Since introducing the certification procedure in 2006, the ITIA Certification sub-committee has brought together a panel of examiners from among professionals of good standing who are professional translators, proof-readers and translation tutors in

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various language combinations and who have extensive experience in the area of translations used in a legal context. Where possible, the examiners are sourced from within Ireland. However, it is sometimes necessary to source examiners from other countries if they are not available in Ireland with the required language combination or with the required level of experience.

The examiners are provided with marking guidelines and marking is anonymous.

**What are the marking 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. The texts should be translated to the highest professional standard. The applicant must obtain a **PASS in both texts** in the language combination in order to be approved as an ITIA Certified Translator.

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***

- Decoding / encoding error
- Omission where this impairs the text
- Orthographical error in the case of proper nouns

***Minor errors***

- Punctuation error
- Orthographical error in non-essential elements of the text
- Awkwardness of rendition
- Inappropriate idiom, register, tone, style

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### **What happens if I achieve a PASS in the two texts?**

Professional members who achieve a PASS in both texts of a language combination are awarded ITIA Certified Translator status for this language combination and are added to the list of ITIA Certified Translators. This list is circulated to various state departments and embassies likely to require certified translators or the contact details of such translators.

The Certified Translator receives two certification stamps (for current prices, please contact the Certification sub-committee): One stamp is an embossing stamp and shows a) the name of the translator, b) the number of the certified translator and c) the acronym 'ITIA'. The second stamp is a self-inking stamp that contains the name, language combination for which the translator is certified, and the translator contact details. These stamps are ordered by the ITIA on behalf of the translator.

### **What happens if I fail both texts?**

You may take the examination again at the next opportunity.

### **What happens if I pass one text and fail the other?**

You only have to repeat the failed paper. You may take this paper again at the next opportunity.

### **Certification procedure in summary**

- The Professional Member submits the completed application form, all accompanying documents and a non-refundable administration fee of € 20 to the address below and receives an acknowledgment of receipt from ITIA administration.
- The ITIA Certification sub-committee meets to consider each application. Only fully-completed applications will be considered. Applicants are then notified as to whether they have been approved to go forward for assessment or not. Those who are approved are asked to submit the assessment fee of € 120 per language combination to cover assessment fee, administration work, postage, photocopying etc..



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- **The source texts will be sent to the candidate by post, to arrive on Friday, 11 November 2011.** The two translated texts must be returned to the ITIA Certification sub-committee **by 5 pm (Irish time) on Sunday, 13 November 2011.**
- Once all the scripts have been returned with mark sheets by the examiners, the applicants are informed of the outcome. If the decision is a FAIL, the applicant will be provided with feedback. In the case of a PASS, feedback will also be provided, where appropriate. The successful candidate provides details for the certification stamps along with the fee (price for 2011 not yet available) to cover the price of the two certification stamps and postage.
- The newly-approved ITIA Certified Translator signs a declaration/disclaimer and receives his/her certification stamps and certificate.

ITIA Certified Translators may only use stamps that are issued by the ITIA.

The ITIA reserves the right to amend any aspect of the ITIA Certification procedure.

The Certification Sub-Committee

September 2011