



Guidelines for translation certification

1. Why certification matters

Because the essential quality of a translation is its invisibility, the same is often thought of the professional who writes it.

As is the case with all professionals, the status of translators is a reflection of the perceived value that society places on their work.¹ Yet, translators are perceived as members of an invisible and silent group.²

Furthermore, the relationship between translators and their clients is often more transactional than interpersonal, which tends to result in clients seeing their service providers as interchangeable.

Certifying translations makes the certified translator visible in the eyes of the client, creating an interpersonal rather than a transactional relationship for both parties, and also sets the translator apart from amateurs.

2. What should be certified and how

2.1 What should be certified

- Whenever possible, all translations should be certified.
- Of particular importance are cases in which an incorrect translation may cause serious, irremediable, or nearly irremediable harm, which may be:
 - Physical
 - Psychological, emotional or moral
 - Financial or economic
 - Material
 - Legal³

2.2 How to certify a translation

- Translations can be certified using the attached certificates.

¹ Pym, A., Grin, F., Sfreddo, C., Chan, A., *The status of the translation profession in the European Union, Final Report*, DGT/2011/TST, 2012

² Sela-Sheffy, R., *How to be a recognized translator – Rethinking habitus, norms, and the field of translation*, Target 17:1, 2005

³ Office des professions du Québec, *Guide d'analyse préliminaire des demandes d'encadrement professionnel – Critères et processus*, septembre 2018



- In professional translation, there are two types of certification: without reservation and with reservation.

2.2.1 Certification without reservation

- a) The vast majority of translations must be certified without reservation.
- b) In order to proceed with this type of certification, the translator must obtain prior client approval of the terms of execution of a certification without reservation.
- c) The terms are as follows:
 - Reasonable deadline
 - Access to relevant documentation and/or terminology
 - Access to a contact person who is able to provide additional information if needed
 - Sufficient quality of any translation technologies (translation memories, machine translation, etc.) required or imposed by the client
 - Consensus regarding segments pre-translated by the client and not included in the translation mandate

2.2.2 Certification with reservation

- a) Certification with reservation takes place only in a minority of cases.
- b) This type of certification should never come as a surprise to the client.
- c) The client must be informed in advance, in writing, that the requested translation will be certified with reservation.
- d) Certification with reservation may take place for the following reasons:
 - Deadline too tight
 - Documentation and/or terminology inaccessible, irrelevant, outdated or unreliable
 - No access to a contact person who could provide the required additional information
 - Language technology (translation memory, machine translation, etc.) deficient but required or imposed by the client
 - Segments pre-translated by the client and not included in the translation mandate for verification or correction



3. General terms

- a) Certification templates are part of the *Règles de pratique professionnelle de l'OTTIAQ*.
- b) They may be used only by members of the Order in good standing.
- c) They may be used by the employer of a certified translator on the condition that said professional be responsible for the translation or revision of the text.
- d) They must not be modified without the Order's authorization.
- e) They may, however, be printed on the letterhead of the certified translator or of the firm.
- f) In the case of a certified translator, the certificate sent to the client must include:
 - The professional's name and signature
 - The words *translator* or *certified translator*
 - The date
 - The professional's membership number
 - The professional's physical or electronic seal
- g) In the case of a firm, the certificate must include:
 - The name of the firm
 - The date
 - The membership number of the certified translator responsible for the text
- h) In the case of team translations, the certificate must include:
 - The name of the firm
 - The date
 - The membership number of the certified translator responsible for the text and for its revision
- i) In the case of multiple professionals responsible for the same text, the certificate must include:
 - The name of the firm
 - The date
 - The membership numbers of all certified translators responsible