Translating and Certifying International Academic Records

A resource sheet for graduate applicants whose transcripts or diplomas are not in English

When you need a translation

If any transcript, diploma or academic record is not in English, most U.S. graduate programs require a certified English translation of each document, submitted with the original-language record.

- **Ask your home institution first.** Many universities issue official English versions of transcripts. If yours does, that version is usually the simplest to use.
- **Otherwise, use an independent professional translator.** If your institution does not provide an English version, a certified translation is required.
- **Check your program's instructions.** Requirements differ by school and program, including when official records are due and whether a credential evaluation is also needed.

What a certified translation includes

A certified translation is a complete English translation accompanied by a signed statement from the translator. According to the American Translators Association, the statement should include at a minimum:

1. A statement of the translator's qualifications
2. Confirmation that the translation is complete and accurate
3. Identification of the translated document and its language
4. The translator's name, signature and date

The translation should cover every part of the document, including stamps, seals, signatures and grading scales, and should be submitted with a copy of the original.

Certified translation vs. notarization

Notarization does not certify that a translation is accurate. A notary public verifies the identity of the person signing a document and witnesses the signature, as the American Translators Association explains.

- A **certified translation** is what admissions offices review. It carries the translator's signed statement of accuracy.
- **Notarization** is an extra step some recipients request: the translator signs the certification statement in front of a notary. It adds identity verification, not a check of the translation.
- If a program asks for a "notarized translation," you still need the translator's certification statement. The notary witnesses the translator signing it.

Where to get help

- **Your home institution's registrar.** Ask whether it issues official English-language transcripts or degree certificates.
- **Your country's embassy or consulate.** Some can advise on, or provide, translations of official records. The U.S. Department of State lists U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide.
- **The American Translators Association directory.** ATA's Language Services Directory is free to use and can be searched by language, specialty and location.

- **Credential evaluation services.** If your program also requires a course-by-course evaluation, the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) lists its member organizations. Some members also provide translations.

Translation providers

Provider	Location	Services
Boston Mobile Notary & Apostille Service	Boston, MA	Certified translation of academic records in 65+ languages; notarization; ATA Corporate Member
TransPerfect	Boston, MA	Certified translation
University Language Services	New York, NY (online)	Certified translation of academic transcripts

Listing a provider is not an endorsement. Confirm requirements with your program before ordering.

Tips for applicants

- **Start early.** Professional translations often take several business days, and records requested from abroad can take weeks to arrive.
- **Translate everything.** Include all pages, stamps, seals and the grading scale, not just the course list.
- **Never send your only original.** Keep originals safe and follow your program's instructions for submitting official records.
- **Don't translate your own records.** Admissions offices expect a translation from your institution or an independent professional.
- **Ask before you add steps.** Notarization or an apostille is only needed if the program or receiving authority asks for it.

Prepared by Boston Mobile Notary & Apostille Service as a free resource for students and admissions offices. Universities and offices are welcome to share or adapt it. Online version: boston-mobile-notary.com/translating-international-academic-records.html