



NZSTI GUIDELINES

FOR THE TRANSLATION OF OFFICIAL AND LEGAL DOCUMENTS

1. Scope

These guidelines should be observed when translating official and legal documents into English and other languages for use in New Zealand.

2. Heading

- 2.1 The translation should be headed "Translation from [source language]".
- 2.2 The translation may also be headed "Selective translation from [source language]" in the case of a selective translation.
- 2.3 In the case of translations into a foreign language, the corresponding heading should be written in that language.

3. Original/Copies (also see 20.)

The document to be translated is to be considered as:

- 3.1 Original, if the latest stamp of issue or certification by the issuing authority of the country of origin or a related entity bears an original signature.
- 3.2 Certified Copy/Certified Photocopy, if the latest stamp of certification in the document has been put in place by a party other than the issuing authority i.e. a person authorised to authenticate copies by laws in force at the place of issue or in the country of use of the document. The person so certifying should be identified in the translation (e.g. J.P., notary).
- 3.3 Uncertified Copy/Photocopy, if the latest stamp of issue or certification in the document is already included in the copy.
- 3.4 Facsimile, if the document has been received by facsimile.

4. Completeness and Correctness (also see 20.)

- 4.1 The source texts should be translated **completely and accurately**. Notes relating to publishing or printing matters should not normally be translated.

- 4.2 If the client requires only extracts to be translated, the sections which have been omitted should be indicated in the translation.
- 4.3 Under certain circumstances, depending on the client's requirements, it is acceptable to provide a selective translation. The document should be headed "Selective translation from [source language]" (also see 2.2.).
5. Format/Layout
 - 5.1 The translation should approximately follow the format and layout of the source text.
 - 5.2 If this is not possible, appropriate notes should be inserted (e.g. above right, left margin, vertical, etc.). In the case of documents in which the text is not continuous (e.g. academic report books, seamans' discharge books, etc.), the page number of the source text should be inserted before the text in question.
 - 5.3 When translating forms, empty columns may be omitted or should bear the words "No entry/No entries" within square brackets.
 - 5.4 Such typographical conventions as a dotted line used to prevent unauthorised insertions in the source text may either be reproduced or their meaning indicated by a Translator's note.
 - 5.5 Signatures may be represented by the insertion of [signature] or [signed]. There is no need to indicate whether or not the signature is legible.
6. Special features
 - 6.1 Mention should be made in the translation, by way of translators' notes, of special features in the document (e.g. erasures, hand-written corrections, deletions, etc.) which could be of significance in establishing the authenticity or otherwise of the source text.
 - 6.2 Crossed out but still legible sections should be translated and a note inserted stating that they were crossed out in the original document. Alternatively, they may be translated and crossed out as in the original document. If such sections are not translated, a note should be inserted to this effect. A note is also required for sections which have been crossed out and are consequently no longer legible and parts of the document which are illegible.
7. Writing materials

The materials (paper, pen, ink, etc.) used for the translation must be acceptable for official purposes, able to resist erasure and indelible.
8. Joining sheets

If the translation consists of several sheets of paper, these should be numbered sequentially. The sheets should be joined together in such a way that any separation would cause externally visible damage (e.g. with staples, not paper clips).

The left hand corner of the sheets may be folded, stapled and sealed with the imprint of the translator's seal.

9. Insertion of notes in the translation

9.1 Translator's notes should be inserted in a suitable place in the text in the form of footnotes and should include the words "Translator's note". In translations into a foreign language, an equivalent translation of "Translator's note" should be employed.

9.2 All notes inserted in the translation including translator's notes, footnotes and other notes should be written within square brackets so they can easily be identified as such.

10. Names of official bodies and courts

In cases where it is important for official purposes that the name of an official body, court or educational institution be left in the original language or transliterated, a translation of the name should be inserted in square brackets after the name or as a footnote (NZQA recommendation). Alternately, a translation of the term may be followed by the original language version or a transliteration either in square brackets or in the form of a footnote.

11. Fee stamps, official seals and stamps

Fee stamps, official seals and stamps in the source text should be mentioned in the translation within square brackets (e.g. [seal] or [stamp]). Alternatively, text contained within official seals and stamps may be translated within square brackets, or explained in a note.

EXAMPLE:

Documents from South America almost always contain signatures certified by several different authorities, plus an overall certification by an Embassy at the end of the document. If this overall certification (legalisation) is present, it is sufficient to simply insert a note mentioning the various signature certifications and the overall certification by the Embassy.

12. Notes of Certification, Attestation and Authentication

Notes of Certification, Attestation and Authentication should be translated or described in square brackets, indicating the issuing authority or person, place, date and reference number.

13. Address details

Address details should not be translated. They should be transliterated or transcribed if necessary.

14. Numbers and dates

- 14.1 Reference numbers (as opposed to dates) should be copied without change (e.g. as Roman or Arabic numerals).
- 14.2 To avoid ambiguity, on official documents intended for use in New Zealand, dates should appear in the format: 1 January 2004, with the month written in full.
- 14.3 Numbers written in words in the source text should also be written in words in the translation.
- 14.4 If the stated date is based on a different calendar, the conversion should be mentioned in a translator's note, i.e. [date converted].

15. Abbreviations

Abbreviations should be deciphered and translated in full. If this is not possible, a note should be inserted to this effect.

16. Spelling/typing errors/discrepancies

If the original document contains words with spelling/typing errors/discrepancies, they should not be corrected. However, a note should be inserted to this effect immediately following the error i.e. [sic].

17. Certificates and diplomas

- 17.1 In the translation of certificates and diplomas, the type of school, the marks, the profession or the academic degree should be translated as accurately as possible. It is recommended that their original designation in the source language be inserted underneath in square brackets; if necessary, they should be explained in a translator's note.
- 17.2 The assessment of the New Zealand equivalent is the responsibility of the relevant authorities, i.e. the New Zealand Qualification Authority. It is not the responsibility of the translator to attempt to indicate or explain exact equivalency with the New Zealand education system in marks or qualifications.
- 17.3 The translation of certificates, diplomas and degrees for use in New Zealand should carry the following footnote:

[By law the New Zealand Qualifications Authority determines the value of overseas qualifications in New Zealand. This translation should not be seen as an assessment or validation of any qualifications.]

If there is insufficient space to add this footnote, the translation should be supplied with a page appended to the translation containing the same text as above.

18. Names of people

- 18.1 As a general rule, names of people and marks of nobility and titles (e.g. van, von) should never be translated, but copied in the original spelling, except that all diacritic marks or signs should be omitted for use within New Zealand, unless specifically requested by the client. It may be necessary to indicate the masculine nominative form of a surname (e.g. in Slavonic languages).
- 18.2 If it is difficult to distinguish between the first name and the surname of a foreign-language name, the surname may be underlined or written in block letters, or a footnote inserted indicating the surname. This is not necessary for names of witnesses, officials, etc.
- 18.3 If the language in question uses lettering other than Latin, the following applies:
- 18.3.1 If the person concerned can produce a person's birth, marriage or death certificate or passport issued by New Zealand regulatory authorities containing an existing transliteration or transcription of his/her name, this should be used in the translation. If other official New Zealand documents are submitted, the name as given in these documents may be used but a note should be inserted to this effect.
- 18.3.2 If the person concerned cannot produce any such document, his/her name should be transliterated. Transliteration should follow as closely as possible the transliteration standards recommended by the International Standardisation Organisation (ISO). A copy of the ISO standards for transliteration can be downloaded from the ISO website (www.iso.org).
- 18.3.3 If transliteration of the original is not possible (e.g. Arabic script), the name should be transcribed according to their pronunciation and English phonetics.
- 18.3.4 When transcribing Chinese names, as a general rule, the Hanyu-Pinyin system (without accents) should be employed. Former common spellings may be added in brackets for clarification, if such spellings have been established for common use (e.g. Beijing [Pekin]). Note: Equivalent rules apply to Japanese.

19. Names of places and countries

- 19.1 When translating into English, names of countries, places or other geographical designations should be written with the foreign spelling. If an English designation is commonly in use, then this should be employed instead. We recommend that all translators of official and legal documents use the designations contained in the Times Atlas or in the Lippincott Gazetteer or, for recent designations, in the Statesman's Yearbook (Macmillan Press). The foreign spelling - as a transliteration or transcription if necessary - may be indicated in a note. Note: No. 18.3.2 and 18.3.3 also apply here.
- 19.2 If the translator is aware of changes to names of places or other geographical designations, he/she may state this in a note by adding [formerly ...] or [now ...].

- 19.3 In the case of translations into a foreign language, the same applies. Translation rules of the target language remain unchanged.
- 19.4 The official term used in the original document should not be changed when translating into another language (e.g. "Bundesrepublik Deutschland" should be translated "Federal Republic of Germany" in English, not German Federal Republic or FRG.)

20. Additional notes

- 20.1 An additional note may be inserted at the end of the translation, describing the type of document submitted for translation.

[Translated from a certified photocopy, or: an uncertified copy, or: a facsimile].

The date and place of the translation should be stated.

(Place and date).....[Signature]

The translation should be signed and stamped, if applicable, with a round stamp of 45 mm in diameter containing the **name** and possibly the **language or language pair and/or the address of the translator** in the centre of the stamp. Note: The translation may be signed in the centre of the stamp.

In the event that the translator has been approved for the translation of several languages, the translator should use a different stamp for each language or language pair. The use of a round stamp of this kind is not compulsory but it is at any rate recommended. It is also recommended that each sheet be sealed with the imprint of the translator's stamp and signature or initials of the translator.

- 20.2 In the case of translations into a foreign language, an equivalent additional note should be inserted in that language. If the translator makes exclusive use of an English round stamp, he/she should at least insert a note in the language in question referring to his/her NZSTI member status.