Legalisation of Irish Public Documents

Policy Guidelines Handbook of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for the application of Authentication and Apostille stamps

Consular Directorate
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Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures and principles followed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade ("the Department") when legalising Irish public documents for use outside Ireland, whether through **Authentication** or the issuance of an **Apostille**.

The policy is based on and should be read in accordance with:

- The **Hague Convention of 5 October 1961 Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents** (the Apostille Convention),
- The **Hague Convention Apostille Handbook (2023)**, and
- Applicable **Irish legislation.**

Where a particular situation is not addressed by the Apostille Convention or Irish law, the Department reserves the right to determine the appropriate course of action on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the principles in this policy document.

Guidance for applicants

Document legalisation

If an Irish public document is required for use outside Ireland, the receiving authority may require the document to be legalised. **Legalisation is the process which certifies the authenticity of official signatures and / or official stamps / seals applied to a public document.**

There are two ways to legalise a document:

> (i) **Authentication**: this is a multi-step verification process reviewing a chain of signatures that applies to documents being produced in countries that are not contracting parties to the Apostille Convention, resulting in an **Authentication stamp**,
> (ii) **Apostille**: this is a simplified one step legalisation process for parties to the Apostille Convention, and replaces the full legalisation process as described above and results in an **Apostille stamp**.

Only public documents issued within Ireland can be legalised using this service. Public documents issued in Northern Ireland should be legalised through the legalisation office in the United Kingdom. Public documents issued outside of Ireland should be legalised by the relevant authority in the country from which the public document originates.

Where legalisation is required, the purpose of an Apostille or Authentication is to certify:

- The authenticity of the signature,
- The capacity of the person who has signed the public document, and / or
- Where relevant, the identity of the seal or stamp which the public document bears.

Legalising an Irish public document does not verify the accuracy or validity of the contents of the document which has been legalised. This is due to the nature and limited effect of legalisation, which is to certify the origin of the public document only. As such, an Apostille or Authentication does not certify:

- The truth of the contents of the underlying document,
- The legal validity of the contents of the underlying document,
- The enforceability of the underlying document,
- The correctness of any legal advice within the underlying document,
- The effectiveness of a transaction referenced in the underlying document, or
- Compliance with the law of the receiving State.

Authentications and Apostilles

Ireland is a contracting party to the 'Hague Convention of 5 October 1961 Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents', commonly referred to as the **Apostille Convention**.

Apostille stamp – For use in countries that are party to the Apostille convention

Irish public documents intended for use in countries which are also a contracting party to the Apostille Convention may be eligible for an Apostille stamp.

Under Article 2 of the Apostille Convention, an Apostille issued by the competent authority of one contracting party must be recognised and accepted by all other contracting parties.

An Apostille can only be issued by the **designated Competent Authority** in the country from which the public document originates. In Ireland, the **Consular Services Authentications and Apostilles Unit** of the Department is the competent authority responsible for issuing Apostille stamps.

The policies and procedures outlined in this document are based on the provisions of the Apostille Convention, together with guidance contained in the Apostille Handbook and the conclusions and recommendations arising from the meetings of the Special Commission on the Practical Operation of the Apostille Convention.

This policy handbook should be read alongside the **Apostille Handbook**. Where questions arise regarding the interpretation or application of the Convention, officials in the Authentications and Apostilles Unit will consult the Apostille Handbook, consider the guidance of the Special Commission, and seek legal advice where appropriate.

It should be noted that the Apostille Convention does not impose an obligation on a Competent Authority to issue an Apostille. The decision to issue an Apostille rests solely with the designated Competent Authority in accordance with the Apostille Convention. The Department may refuse to issue an Apostille or to authenticate a document where the requirements of the Apostille Convention or this policy document cannot be satisfied.

Links to the full text of the Apostille Convention and other relevant supporting information can be found in the appendix "Useful links".

Authentication stamp – For use in countries that are not party to the Apostille convention

Public documents to be used in countries which are ***not*** a contracting party to the Apostille Convention are legalised by receiving an Authentication stamp from the Authentications and Apostille Unit. The authenticated public document must then be counter-signed by the diplomatic representation of the country where the document will be presented.

How to apply

Requirements of receiving country

Whether a public document needs to be legalised depends on the requirements of the country where it will be used. The Department is unable to advise on the legalisation requirements of other countries.

Before submitting a document for legalisation, you should check with the relevant authority in the destination country to confirm the requirements. This includes any rules on how documents should be presented, whether multiple documents can be submitted together as a set or bundle, and whether certified translations are required.

Apply via post

In order to apply for legalisation of Irish public documents, applicants should send the document(s) requiring legalisation, along with a cover letter confirming:

- Applicant's name,
- A list of all the public documents requiring legalisation,
- The country the public document will be presented in,
- A contact phone number,
- An e-mail address, and
- Return address,

to the below address, **by post** / **registered post**:

Worldwide and Rest of Ireland	Munster Region
Authentication Unit Consular Division Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 80 St. Stephen's Green Dublin 2 D02 VY53	Authentication Unit Consular Division Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 1A South Mall Cork T12 TA46

Please ensure for documents sent by post / courier that **'Authentication Unit'** is clearly marked on the envelope to avoid delays in receipt.

We recommend that public documents are submitted by **registered post** and that you retain the tracking number for your records. The Department cannot accept responsibility for documents that are lost, delayed, or not received in the post.

Drop off

Public documents may be dropped off in person at our offices in Dublin and Cork. All document drop-offs should be accompanied by a cover letter, as outlined in the postal submission requirements above.

Documents can be dropped off at our Dublin and Cork offices during public opening hours, which are outlined in the 'Address and contact details' section.

Processing time for applications by post, courier, or drop off

For documents submitted by post, courier, or drop off, we aim to process applications within **3 to 7 working days**, excluding postal delivery times. Please note that this is an indicative timeframe only and does not constitute a service guarantee. Processing may take longer during periods of high demand, where large amounts of documents are submitted in your application, or where additional information is required in relation to an application.

Where amendments are required, processing times will recommence from the date the corrected or updated documents are received.

Once processing is complete, documents will be returned to the applicant by **An Post - Registered Post**. Applicants may also arrange for their own courier service to collect and return documents. As the Department does not provide this service, applicants are responsible for making all necessary courier arrangements.

The below address can be used if using the services of a **courier to collect legalised documents**:

Authentications & Apostilles
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Knockmaun House
42- 47 Mount Street Lower
Dublin 2, D02 TN83

Alternatively, applicants may choose to collect their documents in person. In such cases, a member of our team will contact the applicant by phone when the documents are ready for collection. Collections

can be made from the Dublin and Cork offices during public opening hours, which are outlined in the 'Address and contact details' section.

Apply in person – public counter

The Department has a walk-in service in both Dublin and Cork. There is no appointment required. Applicants at our Dublin office should take a ticket from the machine upon arrival and wait to be called. Applicants at our Cork office will be seated in order as they come in. Applicants should bring the public documents they wish to have legalised and confirm the country each document will be presented in.

Please note: Our office processes a variety of public documents, each requiring different verification procedures before they can be legalised. Although applicants are attended to in order of arrival, this does not guarantee that their documents will be processed and returned before those submitted later.

Processing time in person

One to five documents:

For walk-in submissions of up to five documents applicants should normally expect, where possible, a turnaround time of approximately 30 minutes from when the documents are accepted at the counter. This turnaround time is however not a service delivery guarantee. Processing times may be exceeded if the document does not meet the requisite requirements for legalisation, or if the Department has queries about the documents submitted.

The five-document limit cannot be circumvented by dividing a larger submission into smaller groups. For example, a submission of 20 documents cannot be presented as four separate groups of five documents.

More than 5 documents:

When an applicant or organisation presents more than five documents, only the first five may be considered for processing through the walk-in service. Any additional documents will be treated as a drop-off submission.

Turnaround times for drop-off submissions will vary depending on the volume of documents received and current postal processing times.

Large numbers of documents:

Applicants intending to submit a large number of documents are encouraged to contact the Public Office in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Adoption Dossiers:

Applicants seeking legalisation of Adoption Dossiers will be treated as a drop off service, if more than 5 documents are presented.

Fees and payment methods

Fees for Authentication and Apostille services are set out in the *Diplomatic and Consular Officers (Provision of Services) Act 1993* and the regulations made under that legislation.

The standard fee is **€40 per Apostille or Authentication stamp**.
A reduced fee of **€10 per stamp** applies to documents that relate directly to the export of goods.

Adoption dossiers are charged at a flat rate of **€100 for the original dossier**, regardless of the number of Apostille or Authentication stamps required. Any additional documents submitted as part of the same dossier are processed **free of charge**.

For **post-placement reports** relating to an adoption, the fee is **€40 per report**. In most cases, up to four post-placement reports are required.

Payment methods

Applicants submitting documents by post should enclose one of the following:

- Irish postal order,
- Irish bank draft, or
- Contact phone number (for credit or debit card payment to be taken over the phone).

Cash should not be submitted by post.

Visitors to the public office may use the following payment methods:

- Exact cash only,
- Irish postal order,
- Irish bank draft, or
- Credit or debit card (with chip and pin).

Address and contact details

Please find our address and contact details below.

	Address	Opening hours	Helpline
Dublin Office	Knockmaun House Consular Services 42- 47 Mount Street Lower Dublin 2 D02 TN83	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday (Counter is closed on Wednesday) 09:30 – 12:30 14:30 – 15:30	+353 (0) 1 408 2174 Monday - Friday 09:30-12:30
Cork Office	Consular Services 1A South Mall Cork T12 TA46	Tuesday and Thursday 09:30 – 12:30	+353(0)21 4944 765 / 766 Monday - Friday 09:30-12:30
Website	www.ireland.ie/documentAuthentication		
Web contact form	Web contact form		

Policy and guidance for Professional Stakeholders

The Department's function

The Department's Authentications and Apostilles Unit is the Competent Authority to verify the origin of Irish public documents.

On receipt of an application to legalise a document, the Department does not ordinarily determine, *inter alia*:

- Whether a private transaction referenced in the public document is legally effective,
- Whether a power of attorney is legally enforceable,
- Whether a contract is binding,
- Whether a translation is accurate, or
- Whether factual statements contained in a public document are true.

However, as set out further under the "Fraud and integrity concerns" section, if the underlying content of the document which is presented for legalisation appears to be fraudulent, misleading or offensive, then the Department has the discretion to not legalise the underlying document.

The legalisation service is provided largely on an administrative basis, pursuant to general executive powers of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, in particular further to the Ministers and Secretaries Acts 1924 (as amended). This service is provided by post and at the public counter by the Consular Services Authentications and Apostilles Unit of the Department.

Irish Embassies and Consulates abroad cannot provide this service for Irish public documents.

Currently, only physical documents may be legalised. There is no electronic legalisation or e-Apostille service available.

Verification principles

Before issuing an Apostille or Authentication stamp, the Department must be satisfied that the document submitted is a genuine Irish public document and that it is intended for use outside Ireland.

As part of this process, the Department may verify:

- The signature on the document,
- Any official seal or stamp,
- The official capacity of the person who signed the document, and / or
- The origin and authenticity of the document.

To carry out these checks, the Department may rely on:

- Specimen signatures,
- Official registers and records,
- Direct enquiries with the issuing authority or relevant official, and / or
- Other appropriate and reliable verification methods.

If a document cannot be verified as an Irish public document, or if it is not intended for use abroad, the Department will not legalise it.

What is a public document

The Department may legalise documents that are recognised as **public documents** under Irish law. Legalisation is carried out by affixing either an **Apostille** or an **Authentication stamp** to an eligible document.

Only public documents originating in Ireland can be legalised. In addition, all documents submitted for legalisation must demonstrate a clear and genuine connection to Ireland. The Department reserves the right to refuse an application where it considers that a document does not have a sufficient Irish link.

There is no single statutory definition of a *public document* in Irish law, nor does the Apostille Convention provide a comprehensive definition. However, Article 1(2) of the Convention identifies a number of categories of documents that are generally regarded as public documents.

For the purposes of legalisation, a **public document** is generally understood to be a document issued, certified, signed, or otherwise executed by a public authority, public official, or a person acting in an official capacity. These include:

- Documents issued by courts and judicial authorities, including public prosecutors, court clerks, and other court officials like a process-server ("huissier de justice"),
- Administrative documents issued by government departments, local authorities, public bodies, and statutory agencies,
- Notarial acts prepared or certified by a Notary Public, and
- Official certificates attached to documents signed in a private capacity, such as certificates of registration, certificates confirming the existence of a document on a particular date, and official or notarial Authentications of signatures.

The determination of whether a document is a public document for the purposes of legalisation is a matter for the law of the country in which the document originates. In Ireland, this assessment falls within the remit of the Department as the Competent Authority under the Apostille Convention.

Examples of Irish public documents that may be eligible for legalisation include:

Court Documents

Documents issued by:

- Courts,
- Court offices,
- Registrars, or
- Other court officials.

Administrative Documents issued by:

- Government Departments,
- Local authorities,
- Public authorities,
- Statutory office holders, or
- Statutory bodies.

Notarial Acts

A notarial act is a public document created, certified, or authenticated by a Notary Public. It is typically used to record, verify, certify, or formalise a legal act, agreement, obligation, declaration, or fact.

Official Certificates

Official certificates issued by a recognised and verifiable authority or person, including certificates placed on private documents by registered and practising Irish Solicitors. Further guidance regarding these categories of public documents is set out below.

Legal professionals

Documents that have been notarised by an Irish Notary Public or certified by an Irish Solicitor / Commissioner for Oaths may be eligible for legalisation, depending on the nature of the certification or attestation and the type of document being submitted.

To be considered for legalisation, all notarial certificates and attestations by Solicitors or Commissioners for Oaths must include:

- The name of the Notary Public, Solicitor, or Commissioner for Oaths,
- Their business address,
- Their official stamp or seal,
- The date of certification or attestation,
- A clear statement specifying exactly what is being certified or attested. General statements such as “certified” or “authenticated” are not sufficient.

Only certifications and attestations completed by a **currently practising and duly authorised** Notary Public, Solicitor, or Commissioner for Oaths will be accepted. Certifications by individuals who are retired, no longer practising, or who do not hold a current appointment or practising certificate, will not be accepted for legalisation.

In accordance with professional conduct obligations relating to conflicts of interest, Notaries Public, Solicitors, and Commissioners for Oaths must not certify or attest documents where they have a personal interest in the matter, where the document relates to themselves, or where they are related to the person whose signature or document is being certified.

The Department reserves the right to contact a Notary Public, Solicitor, or Commissioner for Oaths to verify the authenticity of any certification or attestation submitted for legalisation. In cases involving a Notary Public, and where concerns arise, relevant documents may be shared with the Faculty of Notaries Public, with appropriate redactions, for verification purposes.

All certifications and attestations must meet the required legal and professional standards and be:

Complete

- All relevant sections of the certification or attestation must be fully completed,
- Any supporting documents must be attached and clearly referenced,
- Any amendments, alterations, or redactions must be identified, referenced to and explained where necessary, and
- The certification or attestation must be appropriate to the document and sufficiently detailed to support legalisation.

Legible

- All text, signatures, stamps, seals, and other information must be clear, visible, and readable.

Please note, currently documents that have been sworn remotely cannot be accepted for legalisation from this office.

Notary Public

A Notary Public is a public officer appointed by the Chief Justice under s.10(1)(b) of the *Courts (Supplemental Provisions) Act 1961*. A Notary Public is authorised to witness and certify the execution of deeds, contracts, instruments, declarations and other documents, and to verify certain acts or matters carried out in their presence.

Bundles of Documents

A Notary Public may bind multiple documents together and certify them as a single bundle. Where documents are submitted as a bundle:

- The Notary Public may provide a single covering certificate that clearly identifies and describes each document within the bundle and states what is being certified, or
- Each document within the bundle may contain its own individual notarial certification.

Where a bundle is accompanied by a single notarial certificate, only one Apostille or Authentication stamp fee will generally apply. Where individual certifications are attached to separate documents, each certification will require a separate Apostille or Authentication stamp and the relevant fee.

All multi-page documents and notarial certificates must be securely bound or sealed in a manner that prevents pages from being removed, substituted, or added after certification. Examples include the use of a wafer seal, ribbon seal, or other secure binding method.

Verification of Notaries Public

The Faculty of Notaries Public in Ireland maintains a directory of practising notaries, which is available at www.Notarypublic.ie.

The Department maintains specimen signatures of practising Notaries Public for verification purposes. If a Notary Public's signature cannot be verified, or if the signature on the document does not reasonably correspond with the specimen held on file, the Department may refuse to legalise the document pending further verification.

Solicitor

A Solicitor is a qualified legal professional regulated by the Law Society of Ireland. Solicitors provide legal advice and services across a wide range of areas, including conveyancing, wills and probate, litigation, commercial matters, and the preparation of legal documents. They can also represent clients in all courts. Under section 72 of the Solicitors (Amendment) Act 1994, Solicitors are also authorised to administer oaths, affirmations and statutory declarations in the same manner as a Commissioner for Oaths.

It is important to note that a document does not become a public document solely because it was prepared or drafted by a Solicitor or barrister. In most cases, documents created by legal practitioners remain private documents. However, certain Solicitor certifications or attestations may constitute

public documents for the purposes of legalisation, depending on the nature of the certification provided.

Unlike a Notary Public, a Solicitor cannot bind multiple documents together as a single certified bundle for legalisation purposes.

Verification of Solicitors

The Law Society of Ireland maintains an online Solicitor and Firm Search facility, which can be used to verify that a Solicitor is currently practising and to locate Solicitors by area or location.

The Department does not maintain specimen signatures for all practising Solicitors, although a number are held on file for verification purposes. Solicitors are responsible for ensuring that an original specimen signature has been received by the Department before certifying documents for clients.

Solicitors can contact the Authentications and Apostille Unit to arrange the submission of a specimen signature which can be stored on file.

Specimen signatures:

- Must be submitted on the Solicitor's headed paper,
- Must be original handwritten ink signatures,
- Must be the signature of the individual Solicitor, not that of a firm or company, and
- Must clearly identify the Solicitor's name in printed form to facilitate verification.

Where a specimen signature is not held by the Department and cannot otherwise be verified, the Department may be unable to legalise the document until the Solicitor's details have been confirmed. Signatures appearing on documents should be consistent with any specimen signature held on file.

Commissioner for Oaths

A Commissioner for Oaths is a person appointed by the Chief Justice under section 10(1)(b) of the *Courts (Supplemental Provisions) Act 1961*. Commissioners for Oaths are authorised to administer oaths, affirmations and statutory declarations, and to witness the swearing or affirming of affidavits for court proceedings and other legal purposes, including the registration of documents.

Commissioners for Oaths are appointed by the Chief Justice and are often, but not always, practising Solicitors.

A Commissioner for Oaths may witness signatures and administer oaths and declarations but **cannot certify documents as true copies of original documents**. Where a Commissioner for Oaths is also a practising Solicitor, any certification of a copy document must be carried out in their capacity as a Solicitor rather than as a Commissioner for Oaths.

Unlike a Notary Public, a Commissioner for Oaths cannot bind multiple documents together as a certified bundle for legalisation purposes.

Verification of Commissioners for Oaths

The Supreme Court Office maintains a register of Commissioners for Oaths, which is available on the Supreme Court website.

The Department maintains specimen signatures of Commissioners for Oaths for verification purposes. Signatures appearing on documents should be consistent with those held on file. Applications may be refused where a signature cannot be verified or where the signature on a document does not correspond with the specimen held on file.

Legal documents created by legal professionals

Notarial acts

Notarial acts are public documents within the meaning of Article 1(2)(c) of the Apostille Convention

The Apostille Convention deems that a notarial act or notarial certificate applied to a private document is considered to be a public document and can therefore be legalised.

The Handbook on the Practical Operation of the Apostille Convention (second edition, 2023, page 54) defines a notarial act as:

"A notarial act is an instrument or certificate drawn up by a Notary that may perfect, record, or verify an obligation, fact, or agreement. When authenticated by the signature and official stamp / seal of the Notary, the notarial act is a public document under Article 1(2)(c) of the Convention.
In some jurisdictions, the term "notarial act" refers to a function that the Notary is authorised to perform, such as certifying the genuine nature of a signature. These are not notarial acts for the purposes of Article 1(2)(c) and will instead fall under Article 1(2)(d)."

Contents of notarial acts

When carrying out a notarial act, a Notary Public verifies the identity of the person appearing before them, maintains appropriate records of that verification, and satisfies themselves that the person understands the nature and purpose of the document being signed.

A notarial certificate is a formal legal statement and can only be issued on the basis of facts, evidence, and information known to the Notary Public.

A notarial act must identify with reasonable clarity the fact, act, event or matter certified by the Notary Public.

While the Department does not prescribe a mandatory form of wording, all notarial certificates must contain at a minimum the following information:

- Name of the Notary Public,
- Address of the Notary Public,
- Notary Public's signature and official Stamp or Seal,
- Date and place at which the notarial act was performed, and
- Clear statement indicating precisely what action the Notary Public is attesting. General statements that do not clearly identify the act performed may not be accepted for legalisation. (Simply stating "authenticated", "notarised" or "certified" is therefore not sufficient)
    - Accepted examples:
        - That the signatory personally appeared before the Notary Public,
        - That the signatory's identity was verified, and in what way,
        - That a signature was witnessed by the Notary Public, or
        - That a declaration, affidavit, copy document, or other act was certified in accordance with the Notary Public's professional authority.

The Department reserves the right to contact a Notary Public to verify their certificate on a document.

Inadequate notarial acts

In accordance with the Department's obligation to verify that a document presented for legalisation is an Irish public document, the Department is required to determine whether a certificate applied to a private document satisfies the features of a public document.

The Department will not refuse legalisation solely because the notarial act does not contain particular wording preferred by the Department. However, with regard to notarial acts, the Department may request clarification or decline legalisation where it cannot determine:

- The nature of the notarial act,
- The public status of the act,
- What fact or matter is being certified, or
- Whether the document presented is genuinely a notarial act.

Affidavits and Statutory Declarations

An affidavit is a sworn private statement of evidence made by a deponent.

The jurat is the official certification attached to that affidavit confirming the oath was administered and the affidavit properly sworn. The jurat has an official or authenticating character, because it is completed by an authorised person (for the purposes of legalisation, this may be a Commissioner for Oaths, practising Solicitor or a Notary Public) exercising a statutory or public function.

Affidavits and statutory declarations will be accepted for legalisation where they have been executed in accordance with Irish law and have an appropriately completed jurat. The jurat is the official certificate or attestation attached to a private document, and it is the jurat that is the operative public document that is subject to legalisation.

The Department will not impose additional execution requirements in respect of affidavits or statutory declarations beyond those required by law and reflected in the rules of court. However, such rules, including the rules applicable to the remote witnessing of affidavits must be strictly adhered to.

The jurat must state the date and the place (county / city) where the affidavit was sworn, and it must be signed. Improperly completed jurats will result in the legalisation being refused.

On receipt of a jurat for legalisation, the Department may verify:

- The identity of the Commissioner, Solicitor or Notary Public,
- The authenticity of the signature, or
- The authenticity of the seal or stamp.

Powers of attorney

Under the Powers of Attorney Act 1996, a power of attorney may be created by an instrument signed by the donor, and where signed by another at the donor's direction the signing must occur in the presence of a witness who attests the instrument.

The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 also contains specific rules for the making of powers of attorney under that Act.

In practice, many powers of attorney are executed with deed formalities, particularly where they are used in property and conveyancing transactions. Whether a power of attorney is also a deed depends on whether it is intended and executed as a deed in accordance with the Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Act 2009. Where the power of attorney is required by Irish law or the law governing the instrument to be witnessed, evidence of such witnessing must appear on the document.

Deeds executed by a company or corporate body must also comply with the requirements of s.64 of the Land and Conveyancing Law Reform Act 2009. However, not every power of attorney presented for legalisation will necessarily be governed by Irish deed formalities. Foreign-law public-form powers of attorney are valid without complying with Irish witnessing concepts.

The Department does not determine whether a power of attorney is legally effective or enforceable. The Department's role is limited to Authentication of the relevant public document. Powers of Attorney may either be a public-form power of attorney (i.e. executed before a Notary Public or other authorised public official such as a Solicitor) or a private-form power of attorney (i.e. signed privately by the donor). In order for a private-form power of attorney to be legalised, it must be appropriately notarised / certified.

A notarial act on a power of attorney may take different forms depending on the jurisdiction and the purpose of the document. In order to be accepted for legalisation, a notarial certificate on a power of attorney is required to certify facts within the knowledge of the Notary Public, such as:

- Witness or certify execution,
- Authenticate and certify identity of the donor,
- Attest a signature,
- Certify an acknowledgement of signature,
- Verify and certify capacity of a company official,
- Certify a copy, or
- Certify other facts.

The Department does not accept a notarial certificate or Solicitor's certification on a power of attorney that simply states, "*this document is an original document*", as it does not clearly identify the underlying factual basis for the certification. Such a certificate does not say:

- Who appeared before the Notary Public,
- Whose identity was verified,
- Whether the signature was witnessed,
- Whether the signatory acknowledged execution, or
- In the case of a company, whether the Notary Public confirmed authority of the company signatory.

A private power of attorney that has not been appropriately notarised or certified will not be legalised, as such an instrument is not a public document.

With respect to the execution of a power of attorney, the Department will not ordinarily determine whether:

- A power of attorney was validly executed,
- Witnessing requirements were satisfied, or
- Deed formalities were satisfied.

These matters are governed by the applicable law and remain distinct from legalisation. However, fraud concerns may arise where there are reasonable grounds to doubt, for example:

- Authenticity of execution,
- Identity of the signatory,
- Authority of the donor, or
- Authenticity of the public act.

In such circumstances, the Department may seek additional verification and may refuse to legalise the document.

Affidavits of law

An affidavit of law means an affidavit, declaration or sworn statement by a person, typically a legal practitioner or expert, expressing a legal opinion or containing evidence concerning Irish law.

Examples include:

- Affidavits concerning company law,
- Affidavits concerning succession law,
- Affidavits concerning powers of attorney, or
- Affidavits concerning enforceability of documents.

The opinion expressed remains that of the deponent. The Department will not review the correctness of the deponent's statement of law. The public document that is subject to legalisation is the jurat.

Certificates of law

A certificate of law means a written certification by a legal professional concerning Irish law. Certain certificates of law may constitute public documents capable of legalisation depending on their nature and the capacity in which they were issued.

A certificate of law may:

- State legal principles,
- Certify (corporate) capacity,
- Certify legal authority,
- Certify legal status under Irish law,
- Certify execution of documents,
- Certify succession rights,
- Certify enforcement of instruments,
- Certify validity or enforceability under Irish law, or
- Certify the legal effect of a document under Irish law.

Such certificates may involve some legal opinion and legal judgment. The inclusion of legal opinions does not, of itself, prevent the document constituting a certificate of law. The Department shall not ordinarily review the legal correctness of the opinions expressed.

A certificate of law may be issued:

- By a Notary Public acting in a notarial capacity. A notarial certificate of law is a notarial act issued by a Notary Public certifying a matter of Irish law. Where validly constituted, such a document may constitute a notarial act for the purposes of Article 1(2)(c) of the Apostille Convention. A Notary Public who prepares a certificate of law in that capacity, should not give opinions on the law in the same certificate on the basis of their qualifications and expertise as a Solicitor.

  The contents required for a valid notarial act are set out above. Where a certificate is presented as a notarial act, the Department may verify:

  - That the signatory is a duly appointed Notary Public,
  - The signature, seal and stamp of the Notary Public,
  - That the document genuinely emanates from the Notary Public, or
  - That the document clearly identifies the nature of the notarial act performed.

- By a Solicitor acting in a professional capacity. The certificate must certify something (generally to be relied on by a third party) and not merely provide legal advice. The certificate must have been issued in the exercise of a recognised professional or statutory function and not merely as part of private correspondence

  In determining whether a Solicitor's certificate of law constitutes a public document capable of legalisation, the Department shall consider:

  - The capacity in which the Solicitor acted,
  - Whether the document is a formal certification rather than private legal advice,
  - Whether the document is intended for reliance by third parties,
  - Whether the identity, practising status and signature of the Solicitor can be verified, or,
  - Whether the document constitutes an official certificate or other public document recognised under Irish law.

The Department shall not assess the correctness of the legal opinions expressed in the certificate and shall not refuse legalisation solely because it disagrees with the legal analysis contained therein.

It is important to note that a Solicitor's opinion or certificate does not become a notarial act merely because the Solicitor also holds office as a Notary Public. The capacity in which the document is issued shall be determined from the face of the document.

In respect of certificates of law generally, the Department may seek clarification where it is unable to determine:

- The origin of the document,
- Whether the document is intended as a legal opinion, affidavit or notarial act,
- The capacity in which the signatory acted,
- The nature of the certification provided, or
- Whether the document constitutes a public document.

If reasonably practicable, the Department will ordinarily seek such clarification before refusal of legalisation.

Certificates of law remain subject to the Department's fraud prevention policy, (further outlined under the *'Fraud and integrity concerns'* Section. Fraud concerns are generally directed to authenticity and provenance and not to disagreement with the legal analysis contained in the document.

Circumstances under which Legalisation may not be required

EU Regulation 2016/1191 – Public documents not requiring legalisation when used inside the EU

Since 16 February 2019, following the adoption of EU Regulation 2016/1191 *on promoting the free movement of citizens by simplifying the requirements for presenting certain public documents in the European Union*, certain Irish public documents (as defined in the Regulation) no longer require legalisation for use within the European Union, these include:

- Court orders,
- Birth Certificates (including Irish Adoption Certificates),
- Marriage Certificates,
- Civil Partnership registrations,
- Death Certificates,
- Capacity to Marry Certificates (Certificats de Coutume), and
- Certificates indicating capacity to enter into a civil partnership (certificates of single status).

Certified copies of public documents covered by this Regulation are also exempt from legalisation. Therefore, the Public Counter of the Department will inform applicants that an Apostille should not be required for these documents if they are intended to be used in an EU Member State.

If an applicant still requests an Apostille after being so informed, the Department will process an Apostille as normal.

Individuals requiring a translation of such documents should, if necessary, request a Multilingual Standard Form from the public authority which issued the public document.

1987 Convention Abolishing the Legalisation of Documents in the Member States of the European Communities

In addition to Regulation (EU) 2016/1191, regard should be had to the Convention Abolishing the Legalisation of Documents in the Member States of the European Communities, signed in Brussels on 25 May 1987. This Convention did not enter into force across all Member States of the European Communities as it did not achieve sufficient ratifications. However, since 1999 it has been provisionally applied between the following participating States: Ireland, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Italy and Latvia.

The 1987 Convention provides, in defined circumstances, for the abolition of legalisation requirements for public documents exchanged between those participating States. However, for most routine purposes within the European Union, Regulation (EU) 2016/1191 now provides the principal framework governing public documents that are exempt from legalisation requirements.

Applicants seeking to rely on the 1987 Convention should satisfy themselves that both the State of origin and the State of destination participate in the Convention and that the document falls within its scope.

Document categories for Authentication / Apostille

Public documents originating in Ireland can be legalised by affixing an Apostille or Authentication stamp to a document listed in the below, *non-exhaustive*, lists. All documents must be physical documents. We cannot accept electronic documents.

Only Irish public documents can be legalised by the Department. Foreign documents should be directed to the Competent Authority of their country of origin.

All documents must have a clear and relevant Irish link eg. Irish passport number, address, company number. We reserve the right to refuse to authenticate / Apostille any documents that we deem not to have an appropriate Irish link. All documents are to be undamaged (including not being laminated) and to meet the statutory requirements.

The Department reserves the right to refuse documents where the content is deemed to be inappropriate, fraudulent, offensive, false, inflammatory, an abuse of process or inability to verify provenance.

Civil records

- Irish Birth / Death / Marriage / Adoption Certificates
    - Original document as issued by the GRO
        - No further certification required
    - Copy of original document
        - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them

- Non-Irish Birth / Death / Marriage / Adoption Certificate
    - Non-Irish Birth / Death / Marriage Certificates, including certified photocopies and / or translations of same are not accepted, and need to be legalised in the country where they originate from

Documents related to police records

- Irish Garda clearance certificate (police certificate)
    - Original document issued by An Garda Síochána, bearing original wet ink stamp of the relevant issuing Garda Office
        - No further certification required
    - Original document that does not contain an original wet ink stamp of the relevant issuing Garda Office
        - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must verify and certify the document as original document
    - Copy of the original document
        - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them
    - Print out of the original document
        - We cannot accept electronic documents. An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the printout, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful printout / copy of the original digital document

- Irish Garda fingerprint document
  - Original document issued by An Garda Síochána, bearing original signature and wet ink stamp of the relevant issuing Garda Office
    - No further certification required
  - Copy of original document
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them

- Irish Garda Data Protection Unit documents
  - Original document issued by An Garda Síochána, bearing original wet ink stamp of the relevant issuing Garda Office
    - No further certification required
  - Copy of original document
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them

- Irish Garda Vetting documents
  - Original document issued by An Garda Síochána, bearing original wet ink stamp of the relevant issuing Garda Office
    - No further certification required
  - Copy of original document
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them

- Non-Irish criminal records
  - Non-Irish criminal records are not accepted as they are foreign public documents. This includes documents that have been issued by Embassies based in Ireland, photocopies and translations of same

Documents issued by Government Departments, Statutory and Public Bodies or office holders

- Irish Passport
  - Copy of original document may be accepted providing it meets one of the below
    - Certification by the Irish Passport Office, bearing a wet signature and stamp, OR
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them

- Non-Irish Passport
  - Copy of original document
    - Customers will be directed to seek legalisation from the relevant issuing authorities in the first instance

        - In exceptional circumstances only, they may be accepted provided they have both been stamped / verified by the Embassy of the issuing authority / country, AND
        - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy and confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them, with the authenticated and notarised document being the Irish public document that is legalised.
        - Please note: We do not accept (notarised) translations of foreign passports for legalisation

- Irish Certificate of No Impediment / Freedom to Marry / Certificat de Coutume
    - Original document issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, signed and dated by a Departmental officer authorised to sign on behalf of the Minister
        - No further certification required
    - Copy of original document
        - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them
    - Please note: Application forms (MP1 and MP2) cannot be Apostilled

- Irish Foreign Birth Register certificate
    - Original document issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, signed, stamped / sealed and dated by a Departmental officer authorised to sign on behalf of the Minister
        - No further certification required
    - Original document issued by the Department, with photograph, name, date of birth, and Certificate Number
        - No further certification required
    - Copy of original document
        - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them

- Irish Naturalisation Certificate
    - Original document issued by the Department of Justice, with photograph, name, date of birth, and Certificate Number
        - No further certification required
    - Copy of original document
        - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them

- "Invitation to Stay" or "Permission / Temporary Permission to reside in Ireland"
    - Issued by the Department of Justice.
        - We cannot accept these for legalisation, regardless of whether they are originals or notarised / certified copies

- Irish Revenue Commissioners

  - Original document from the Revenue Commissioners bearing a wet ink signature of an authorised signatory and / or wet ink stamp
    - No further certification required
  - Original document that does not contain an original wet ink stamp or signature
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must verify and certify the document as original document
  - Copy of original document
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them

- Other documents / letters issued from Government Departments / Statutory Bodies
  - Original document bearing an original wet ink stamp or seal of the issuing office / Department, and include contact details for verification purposes
    - No further certification required
  - Copy of original document
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them

Court documents

- Irish court document (divorce decrees, etc.)
  - Original document dated and stamped by the Court Registrar / bear the seal of the Court
    - No further certification required
  - Copy of original document
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them
- Deed Polls
  - Must be enrolled in the Central Office of the High Court with original wet ink stamp of Court on document, or
  - If not enrolled, must be submitted with all supporting evidence including Affidavit of Attesting Witness, and must be stamped with original wet ink stamp by the Court office

Education documents

- Irish educational degree
  - Original document, issued / awarded by a body recognised by the Department of Education or Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) with stamp / seal
    - No further certification required
  - Copy of original document
    - Must contain an original wet ink stamp of the issuing authority
      OR
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them
  - Please note: If certificate is issued in Latin a translation from the college may be accepted for legalisation
  - Please note: Educational certificates, or their translations, issued by accreditation bodies other than QQI cannot be accepted for legalisation and need to be legalised by

the issuing body / country. (For example: TEFL / Alison / Warnborough College (UK), Association Montessori Internationale (NL), American College Dublin (USA).) Verify if your course is QQI Accredited here Irish Register of Qualification

- Irish Leaving Certificate
  - Original final Certificate, issued by the State Examination Commission
    - No further certification required
  - Copy of original document
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them
  - Statement of Provisional Results
    - Must contain an original wet ink stamp of the State Examinations Commission, or be certified by an Irish Notary Public or Solicitor
  - Please note: Leaving Certificate results issued by schools cannot be accepted

- Other documents issued by Irish education institutions (eg school report / transcript)
  - Issued by a body recognised by the Department of Education or Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), stamped with an original wet ink stamp
    - No further certification required
  - Copy of original document
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them
  - Please note: For original school transcripts with wet ink stamp, school must be available on 'Find a School' here Search Schools. Otherwise, they must be certified by a Solicitor or Notary Public

Medical documents

- Irish medical report
  - Original medical report signed and dated by a doctor registered on the Medical Council of Ireland Register, acting in their professional capacity and stamped with an original wet ink stamp. (Medical council number must be available for verification)
    - No further certification required
  - Copy of original document
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them

- Irish psychologist / psychotherapist / counsellor report
  - Original report, signed by Psychologist / Psychotherapist / Counsellor
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must verify and certify the execution of the document
  - Copy of original document
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them

- Irish Coroner's certificates
  - Original certificate with signature and / or wet ink stamp of the issuing Coroner Office
    - No further certification required
  - Copy of original document
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them

- Irish cremation certificates
  - The Department will contact the cemetery / crematorium to confirm the details before it can be authenticated / Apostilled

- Irish embalming certificate
  - Both originals and copies must be certified by an Irish Notary Public or Solicitor accordingly

- Irish funeral home remains certificate (Certificate of contents of urn / coffin)
  - Both originals and copies must be certified by an Irish Notary Public or Solicitor accordingly

- Irish Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA)
  - Original document signed by an authorised signatory with wet ink, and stamped by the HPRA
    - No further certification required
  - Copy of original document
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them

Company documents

- Irish Companies Registration Office (CRO)
  - Original document from the CRO, bearing an original stamp and signature of an authorised signatory
    - No further certification required
  - Copy of original document
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them
  - Print out of a digital CRO document
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the printout / copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original digital document

- General Irish company documents
  - eg Financial Statements, Invoices, Company Constitution, board resolution, Minutes, including those digitally issued / printed from the CRO website
    - Must be certified by an Irish Notary Public or Solicitor
    - If a Notary Public or Solicitor is certifying a signature, or the execution of a document on behalf of a company they must specify who the document was signed / executed by and the capacity in which they have signed / executed

the document. Eg: I certify that the within document was signed by X on behalf of X company in his / her / their capacity as company Director

Export documents

- Export documents issued by the Department of Agriculture (eg. Certificates of Free Sale)
    - Original document issued from the Department of Agriculture with original wet ink stamp and / or seal and signature
        - No further certification required
    - Copy of original document
        - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them

- Certificates of Origin
    - Original document with original signature and wet ink stamp from Chambers Ireland or Arab Irish Chamber of Commerce (AICC)
        - No further certification required
    - Copy of original document
        - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them
    - Please note: Certificates of Origin are the only documents that may be authenticated / Apostilled based on the stamp and signature of Chambers Ireland / AICC alone. All other private export documents must also be certified by an Irish Notary Public or Solicitor

- Documents issued by EU agencies for Irish companies (Eg. ISO, BSI, GMP, Certificate of Pharmaceutical Product)
    - Must be notarised with notarial certificate outlining clear Irish link
        - We cannot legalise (notarised) documents issued by non-EU agencies for Irish companies
        - We cannot legalise (notarised) documents issued by EU agencies for non-Irish companies

- All other export documents
    - Eg., Certificate of Analysis, Certificate of Appliance, Certificate of Compliance, Declaration of Conformity, etc.
        - Must be certified by an Irish Notary Public or Solicitor

Personal documents

- Irish private documents, and photocopies of same
    - Eg. Bank statements, bills, etc.
        - Must be certified by an Irish Notary Public or Solicitor
    - Certified signatures
        - If a Notary Public or Solicitor is certifying a signature, or the execution of a document they must specify who the document was signed / executed by

- Affidavit

  - Must be sworn in the presence of an Irish Notary Public, Solicitor or Commissioner for Oaths with jurat completed as appropriate

- Power of attorney
  - Original document
    - Must be witnessed or suitably attested by an Irish Notary Public, or Solicitor. (Cannot simply be certified as an original)
  - Photocopy of a power of attorney
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them

Foreign documents

- Foreign private and public documents and photocopies of same
  - We cannot accept foreign documents of any kind. This includes originals, notarised / certified copies, and translations. These must be legalised by the relevant authorities of the issuing country
    - Examples of foreign public documents include documents issued by foreign State bodies; Birth Certificates; Marriage Certificates; Death Certificates; Police Clearance etc. This also applies to documents emanating from foreign Embassies based in Ireland
    - Examples of foreign private documents include documents issued by foreign financial institutions, foreign private companies, foreign utility bills

Translations

We cannot accept documents that are in a foreign language only. There must be an English version or translation attached, and the underlying document cannot be a foreign document.

For the purpose of legalisation, translations of Irish Public documents such as Birth Certs, Marriage Certs, Passports etc. must be officially translated by an Irish registered translator (see below). Private documents such as powers of attorney, affidavits, company documents etc. do not have to be officially translated. These can be created in dual language format instead and can have two language 'versions'. Documents that have not been officially translated cannot state that they are a translation.

- Translated documents
  - Translated documents must be translated by an Irish registered translator, and then notarised. (Translators must be registered on ATII or be from a recognised and established Irish registered translation company with CRO number)
  - Translated documents must be notarised by an Irish Notary Public. They must be bound together, and the Notary Public's certification must be on the English version of the document, or on a covering Notarial Certificate

- Documents in dual language format
  - Certification of the Notary public / Solicitor must be placed on the English version of the document, or if notarised, on a covering Notarial Certificate. It cannot solely be placed on a foreign language version

- Multilingual Standard Forms (MSF)
  - We cannot legalise MSFs. MSFs are utilised under EU Regulation 2016/1191 on Public Documents. The Regulation removes the requirement of legalisation of some public

documents such as Birth, Marriage and Death Certs, among EU countries. MSF is a translation aid specific to this Regulation that is only of use when used with the original certificate. The whole purpose of an MSF is to avoid the requirement for legalisation, therefore they cannot be legalised

Other documents

- Irish Adoption dossiers / post-placement report
  - Original documents issued by the GRO, bearing ink signature and seal / stamp
    - No further certification required
  - Copy of original document
    - An Irish Notary Public or Solicitor must certify the copy, and must confirm that it is a true and faithful copy of the original document, that was presented to and personally verified by them
  - Please note: If a copy of a foreign passport is included, a copy of the document must be certified by the Irish Notary Public, and stamped / verified by relevant issuing authority / country / Embassy. Foreign birth certs should not be included
- Religious documents
  - Certificates issued by religious organisations cannot be accepted for legalisation. This includes baptism, communion, marriage, divorce and any other religious certificates

- Bundles containing multiple documents
  - These must be notarised by an Irish Notary Public and must be secured together so they cannot be interfered with after being legalised. They must be sufficiently certified for all relevant documents within the bundle

- Electronic / Digital Signatures
  - If an electronic signature is being certified, or a document is certified as an original document, and it contains an electronic / digital signature, the Notary Public / Solicitor must certify that they have verified the electronic / digital signature

- Expired documents
  - Individual documents which have an expiry date that has passed, and bundles that contain these documents
    - Expired documents will generally not be accepted for legalisation
    - Certified copies of expired documents may be accepted in extenuating circumstances only

- Sanctions
  - We cannot legalise any documents that relate to persons, groups or entities that have been named on the European Union Consolidated Financial Sanctions List

Common reasons why documents may be rejected

- There is **no Irish link** on the document
- Underlying document is a **foreign document**
- Underlying document is a **religious document**
- Underlying document is an **education document** that is **not QQI accredited**
- Document is **damaged / laminated**
- Document is **not intended** for use **outside of Ireland**
- Document contains a reference to an **'attached' item that is not present** at the time it is submitted for legalisation
- Documents have been **certified** as true copies of the original **by someone other** than the issuing authority or a Notary Public / Solicitor
- Document / certification statement contains **inaccurate information**
- Document / certification statement contains **expired documents** / Passport numbers
- Document has been presented in a **foreign language only**
- Documents that have been **notarised or certified**
    - There is **no certification statement** on the document. A signature alone is insufficient
    - The certification statement is **illegible**
    - It is **unclear** what is being certified
    - The certification statement is **incomplete**
    - Documents have **previously been Notarised / Apostilled** by a foreign Notary Public / lawyer / country - This must be specified in the notarial statement
    - **Insufficient binding**, with exposed staples
    - Certified 'true copies' of documents where the copy contains **redactions** that are not in the original and that **have not been referenced** in the certification
        - Any redactions must be referenced eg: I certify this to be a true copy of the original document, save for the redactions added for data security purposes
    - Original document containing **e-signatures** that have **not been verified** in the certification statement
    - A document that has **not** been **officially translated**, uses the word translation
    - Dual language documents where a **certification** has **only been applied** to the **foreign language document**
    - There are **blank pages** in the document. These must be removed or struck through and stamped by the Notary Public. A page that states "this page is intentionally blank" is acceptable
    - Document has been **signed by a firm** rather than an individual Solicitor
    - The **name** of the Notary Public, Solicitor or Commissioner for Oaths who has signed a document **is unclear**. The name should be clear and present in order to identify and verify the signature
    - Signatures that have been certified by a Notary Public or Solicitor where the **name of the signer is not present** on the document and / or the certifier has not specified whose signature they are certifying

Operational administration

Fraud and integrity concerns

The Department reserves the right to take appropriate action where there are concerns relating to fraud, forgery, or any other breach of law or policy. This may include refusing to issue an Apostille or Authentication stamp and, where appropriate, referring the matter to the relevant authorities for investigation. Such referrals may result in enforcement action or prosecution.

To protect the integrity of the legalisation process, the Department may undertake reasonable checks to verify that:

- The public document is genuine,
- The signature is authentic,
- Any seal or stamp is authentic,
- The document has not been altered, tampered with, or forged, or
- The document has not been obtained through fraudulent means.

The Department may request additional information, documentation, or verification before proceeding with legalisation. The Department may also refuse to legalise a document where there are reasonable grounds to suspect, *inter alia*:

- Forgery or falsification,
- Alteration or tampering,
- Identity fraud or misrepresentation,
- Abuse of process,
- Misuse of professional qualifications, status, or authority,
- Misuse of a notarial seal or certification,
- False representation of authority or capacity, or
- Fraudulent procurement of the underlying public document.

These measures are intended to safeguard the integrity and reliability of the legalisation service and to ensure compliance with applicable laws and procedures.

Verifying the validity of an Irish issued Apostille / Authentication

The Department operates an **e-Register** for the verification of Apostille and Authentication stamps. The online electronic register enables anyone to verify the authenticity of an Apostille or Authentication issued in Ireland. The e-Register can be inspected here.

Authentication and Apostille stamps issued by the Department do not have an expiry date. So long as they are affixed to the document and undamaged, they remain valid. However, the destination countries may request that a document is legalised within a specific timeframe.

Documents notarised / certified by an Irish Diplomat / Consular Officer

Under Section 5 of the Diplomatic and Consular Officers (Provision of Services) Act 1993, an Irish diplomat is empowered to perform any act which a Notary Public may perform in the State. However, it should be noted that this is not an obligation for diplomats / consular officers. It is at the discretion

of each officer / consulate / embassy whether to utilise these powers. We generally advise that citizens should use the services of a local Notary Public or Solicitor, where possible.

Certifications from Diplomats / Consular Officers must contain:

- Clear statement indicating what the officer is attesting,
- Name and signature of the officer,
- Stamp / Seal of the Embassy, and
- Date.

As with Public Notaries and Solicitors, we must receive a sample signature from the officer, to maintain on file for verification. Wafer stamp is not required for documents that have been bound with a staple by Embassy personnel.

Important to note that documents that are executed by diplomatic or consular agents shall not be Apostillised (as per subparagraph 3(a) of Article 1 of the Apostille Convention). If a document notarised by an Irish diplomat is required to be presented abroad, the requirements of the foreign state should be confirmed before presenting the document abroad as no further legalisation may be required. If further legalisation is required, documents of this nature should first be authenticated, and the signature of the Department official who signed the Authentication label can then be Apostilled. Alternatively, local Authentication or legalisation procedures in the host State may be available, depending on the law and practice of that State."

Counter signing of documents by Irish Embassies (non-Hague countries)

Irish Embassies abroad may apply a counter-Authentication stamp to foreign public documents that have been authenticated by the competent authority in the issuing country, enabling those documents to be used in Ireland.

This process is generally required for documents issued in countries that are not parties to the Apostille Convention, as documents from countries who are signatory parties to the Apostille convention are legalised by means of an Apostille issued by the competent authority in the country of origin.

Customer / public interactions

We are committed to providing a high standard of service and dealing with customers courteously and helpfully at all times. This policy document should be applied consistently when considering applications for legalisation.

Impartiality should be applied when dealing with customers. Under any instances of potential conflict of interests, another member of staff should be asked to process the customer's request.

If a customer asks for an official's name, an official may provide their first name. There is no requirement for staff members to provide their surname, for their own data protection. Officials should not give out their own personal details (i.e. full name, email address, or phone number). Filming or recording staff on Department premises is not permitted without prior authorisation.

Officials working at the Public Counters of the Department are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. Under no circumstances will threatening or abusive behaviour towards staff be tolerated. Any person engaging in such behaviour will not be permitted to use our public counter and will be asked to use our postal service.

Appeals / Formal Complaints

If a decision is made not to legalise a document at our public counters in Dublin or Cork, you may request an immediate review by the supervisor on duty.

If you remain dissatisfied following the review, you may submit a written appeal / formal complaint. Appeals / complaints should include a full copy of the document(s) concerned and can be emailed to Authenticationappealsdublin@dfa.ie or posted to the below address:

Authentications Appeals Officer,
Consular Division,
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade,
Iveagh House,
80 St. Stephen's Green,
Dublin 2,
D02 VY53.

We will acknowledge correspondence within five working days of receipt. We will endeavour to reply to customer queries within 20 working days. Where a full response is not possible in that timeframe, an interim response will issue with an estimated timeframe for reply.

Data protection

The Privacy Policy of the Department can be found here.

Useful links

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Legalisation information
www.ireland.ie/documentAuthentication

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