

27<sup>th</sup> August 2020

## **GUIDE TO NOTARISING EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS**

The international traffic in fake education certificates means that countries are taking particular care where foreign nationals are moving to the country to work or study. They will ask for your qualification to be notarised.

Notarising a qualification, whether it is a degree, a GCSE or a vocational qualification, or other, means that the notary must independently verify the authenticity of the qualification. This involves contacting the university, college or award body. Usually you will have to sign an authority to enable this to be progressed. A fee is often payable to the university or award body. This can vary from between about £14 to £50. The fee is per qualification or set of exams (i.e. taken at one sitting).

Bodies can take up to 28 working days to verify a qualification though many are quicker than this. There is usually no way of speeding this up. Fortunately, many university and college degrees can be verified online in a few days. However, verifying transcripts is more difficult and time consuming and has to be done directly with the university. GCSEs and A levels take longer and generally is more costly.

I will need the original of the certificates or transcripts. I also need to identify you, so a personal attendance will be necessary. If you are abroad, I can usually accept the originals from a relative or friend if they attend and identify themselves. I will however need a scan of your passport and a Skype or Zoom meeting may be necessary.

If you have multiple certificates to be notarised, these cannot normally be bundled together under a single certificate and a notarial certificate is required for each educational certificate. If you ask for them to be bundled the onus is on you to check with the receiving country or body that this is acceptable.

The notarised certificates will almost always need to be legalised with an apostille at the Foreign Office. I use an agent for legalising documents, as they are quicker and safer. The Foreign Office charges £30 per document.



If you are going to a number of middle or far eastern countries, they will usually require further legalisation at their consulates in London. Prices and time scales vary tremendously, but to be on the safe side, allow at least 28 days for the entire notarisation and legalisation process.

In summary, the steps are the following:

- Produce your original certificates, whether in person or via a relative or friend
- Pay the fee to the university or college for verification of the qualification (few days to 3 – 4 weeks)
- Once verification has been received, notarial certificates for each education certificate are prepared (generally 1 – 2 working days)
- Document is sent for legalisation at the Foreign Office (4 working days)
- Document goes for consular legalisation (2 days to 3 weeks)
- Document dispatched to you or direct to the country concerned.

Note that the time scales are approximate. In relation to consular legalisation, I cannot “chase” the consulate or the agents handling the work. The consulates always work at their own speed and to their own requirements. Some for example are only open on certain days.

Note that consulates can be particularly bureaucratic. China requires additional documents to be filled in (typed, not handwritten) and a wet signature on each. China also requires a statutory declaration where the name on your education certificate differs from that on your passport. Others require copies of passports or multiple copies of the document. I will deal with all these requirements, but my charges will reflect the work required to ensure your documents are legalised without difficulty.

At an early stage, once I know what is involved, I will quote you for the work and if acceptable invoice you at that point. My fees are payable before any significant work is done.

Finally, note that the Covid-19 pandemic can result in the above timescales changing. Many consulates were closed completely for several weeks and this might occur again if there are further spikes of infection.

