

DOCUMENT LEGALISATION- Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS AN AUTHENTICATION OR AN APOSTILLE?

Overseas governments sometimes need proof that Australian documents, or the signatures of Australian officials on documents, are genuine before they will accept them. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) will certify that a signature, stamp or seal on an official Australian document is genuine by checking it against a specimen held on file, and stamping the document with an **AUTHENTICATION** or **APOSTILLE**.

This is a **LEGAL** process. DFAT will only issue stamps once satisfied the signature, stamp or seal on a document is not fraudulent. Instances of attempted fraud in the past mean that DFAT needs to be cautious about issuing its stamp.

WHICH STAMP DO I NEED AUTHENTICATION or an APOSTILLE?

This advice can *only* be provided by the overseas government you are dealing with through their embassy and/or consulate in Australia (e.g. if you are obtaining a document for Vietnam, you will need to ask the Vietnamese Consulate or Embassy).

As a general guide, documents going to countries that are party to the 1969 Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents require an **APOSTILLE**. For example: Italy, Greece, The Netherlands and many others.

Documents going to countries that are not party to The Hague Convention generally require an **AUTHENTICATION**. For example: China, most Middle Eastern countries and many others.

HOW DO I GET AN AUTHENTICATION OR AN APOSTILLE?

You can lodge your document at any DFAT office located in all Capital cities, or send it by post.

WHAT DOCUMENTS ARE ACCEPTED?

Original documents issued by Australian Government Departments with an official signature, seal or stamp; or documents signed and sealed by a Notary Public.

All Australian public documents must have an **ORIGINAL** signature, stamp or seal on it (e.g. the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages is a Government Official) in order to be stamped. If the document is not government issued (such as a power of attorney or an article of association for a company) it must be **NOTARISED** by a **NOTARY PUBLIC**.

You can find your nearest Notary Public by looking in the Yellow Pages

NB: When presenting the document(s) to DFAT, please ensure **EVERY** page requiring a stamp has been signed by either an authorised officer from the issuing authority or the notary public. Documents legally bound by a Notary Public are acceptable.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Apostilles - \$60 for a single-sided page document - \$80 for a Binding (documents of two or more pages)

Authentication - \$20 for a single-sided page document - \$40 for a Binding (documents of two or more pages)

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

In most cases, documents can be processed within three working days. There may be a delay if:

- We don't have a specimen signature of the person who has signed the document (this means we will need to verify their signature)
- You have more than one document
- There is any question about the authenticity of the document.

WHERE DO I HAVE TO GO?

Address	Postal
Level 7	DFAT
Henry Deane Square	Authentication Section
26 Lee Street	GPO Box 9807
Sydney	Sydney NSW 2000

Hours: 9am-1pm (closed from 1pm)

No appointments necessary

WHAT IF I CAN'T GET TO THE SYDNEY OFFICE?

You can send your document to us with a money order made payable to Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, or with your credit card details (we take Visa, MasterCard, AMEX) to the above address. If you want to pay by credit card please include your name, card number, expiry date, 3 digit security code on back of card and card holder's signature. Send the document and payment to the above address. We will send the document to you by standard post – **not registered**. You may also enclose a Self-addressed Express Post envelope if you prefer.

For further information refer to the Department's website www.dfat.gov.au Australian State & Territory Offices or call **(02) 9207 6904**.

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