

Association des traducteurs et interprètes de la
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On Dossier Certification

PLEASE NOTE that to request certification on dossier, you must be a Candidate for Certification (associate member) of ATINS. To submit a request for certification by dossier, you must first obtain the status of a Candidate for Certification in the relevant category (e.g. translator, interpreter).

On-dossier certification is intended for practicing professionals who can prove at least five years of full-time experience (or two years if they hold an honour's bachelor degree, or equivalent, in their occupational category). The evaluation leading to certification thus does not just rely on a single time-limited examination, but rather on a full portfolio, which includes substantial and varied examples of work produced by the candidate during regular work as a translator, conference interpreter, court interpreter or terminologist.

Is On-Dossier Certification easier than certification by examination?

The ATIO Committee report presented to CTTIC in October 1996 was absolutely clear on this point: the criteria for the new method, although different, were to be just as stringent as those for the examination, both in fact and in perception. Indeed, these criteria might be seen by some as being more difficult or demanding. In fact, on-dossier certification is hardly an open-door policy; it requires extensive professional experience, proof of the various diplomas, experience, work; confirmation from clients and managers, etc. Just getting a full portfolio together is a formidable task that could even dissuade some candidates.

How does On-Dossier Certification ensure that high professional standards are maintained?

First of all, the candidate has to be proposed by three certified ATINS members (or another CTTIC member association, or another organization deemed equivalent), who are certified in the same language combination as the candidate. These sponsors demonstrate, among other things, their knowledge of the candidate's professional activities (a quantitative and qualitative assessment). In adopting this criterion, ATINS wanted to ensure that the sponsors would not be just "friends", but certified professionals who could formally confirm specific facts about and qualities of the candidate.

Once the dossier is to be considered complete, it is forwarded to the On-dossier Certification Committee, which evaluates the contents based on the established criteria, specifically the breadth and nature of experience, diplomas, the relevance of the confirmations from clients, employers and supervisors, the evaluation of the work submitted, the opinions of the three sponsors, if required, and finally an overall judgement accompanied by explanations.

As you can see, the submission of a complete dossier does not in any way guarantee the outcome of the procedure. All items are reviewed by the Committee members and, if required, by outside reviewers.

But could a candidate not simply present work done by another?

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On this point, the regulations leave no doubt: it is up to the candidate to prove that he or she is indeed the author of the work submitted. If the Committee considers the proof inadequate, study of the dossier is deferred until adequate proof has been presented. But what kind of proof is needed? Let's take the example of a professional who works for the government: the name of the translator or terminologist could appear on the published translation or terminology work itself, on an attached document or on a client's receipt for the work; a supervisor or a department head may confirm in writing that the document is authentic and is the work of the author as claimed, etc. A candidate who is an independent conference interpreter might provide names of sponsors or referees who worked in the booth with him or her, or confirmation from the clients showing that the candidate actually interpreted during a certain conference.

Under this provision it is obvious that a testimonial from a colleague would not be deemed adequate. It is also certain that the Committee will return a dossier that does not contain direct and verifiable proof. Why all these precautions? It's a question of fairness: certification examination candidates must be certain that if they are asked to prove their identity before going in to sit the examination, candidates for certification on dossier should also provide unequivocal proof that they are the authors of the documents submitted.

Can I use the fact that I passed a professional examination administered by my employer?

Of course! Passing this kind of examination may, after evaluation by the Committee, allow for exemption from certain criteria or any other requirement, depending on the type of examination and the part it plays in the overall proficiency evaluation.

Why do I have to become a Candidate for Certification member before submitting my Dossier?

Admission as a Candidate for Certification member is the first stage in the evaluation of certification candidates, no matter which certification method is chosen. In other words, ATINS will only consider candidates for certification who have already met the basic criteria in terms of experience and/or diplomas. You might look at it as a kind of screening!

How long do I have to wait for an answer from the committee?

Remember that there are two aspects involved here: first of all, the dossier examination fee only covers the direct expenses Candidate for Certification with administering the on-dossier certification system, as is the case with the certification examination. Secondly, the study of the dossiers is assigned to volunteer peers across Nova Scotia and the rest of Canada who have agreed to give some of their time and energy to their professional Association, often to the detriment of their own practice. The combination of these two factors means that a little patience is required!

Based on the four years that this system has been in place, we can tell you that, as a rule, it can take between 1 and 3 months for official languages and up to 5 months for foreign languages.