

ATA Certification Exam Candidate Information Handbook



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Table of Contents

Overview	4
Scope of the Handbook	4
Introduction to the ATA Exam	4
Purpose of the Exam	4
Benefits of Certification	5
Eligibility	6
Preparation	6
Exam Dates and Locations	6
Application	6
Refunds	7
Requests for ADA Accommodations	7
On the Day of the Exam	8
Exam Procedure	8
Before Starting the Exam	8
Handwritten Exams	9
Computer Requirements	9
Technical Requirements and Internet Access	9
Exam Resources	9
Signed Statement	10
The Exam Process	10
Exam Passages	11
Taking the Exam	11
Turning in the Exam	11
After the Exam	12
Grading Procedure	12
Exam Results	12
Review Process	13

Review Procedure	13
Review Period	14
Appeal Process	14
Appeal Instructions	15
After Passing the Exam	17
Certification Maintenance	17
Certification Maintenance Requirements and Reporting Period	17
Ethics Module	17
Activities Accepted for Continuing Education Points	17
Not Pre-Approved for CE Points	18
Record Keeping and Verification	19
Loss of Certification	19
List of Websites Allowed and Restricted as Online Resources	20
Tips for Candidates	21
Explanation of Error Categories (Version 2020)	23
Flowchart for Error Point Decisions	27
Framework for Standardized Error Marking	28
Continuing Education Categories	29
Independent Study Verification Paper	31
Frequently Asked Questions about the ATA Certification Program	32

Overview

Scope of the Handbook

The American Translators Association has prepared this handbook as a guide for candidates interested in taking the ATA Certification Exam. The handbook is an overview of the process before, during, and after a candidate takes the ATA Certification Exam.

Introduction to the ATA Exam

ATA has established a certification program that allows translators to demonstrate that they meet certain standards of translation proficiency. Translators who pass the examination are certified by ATA in a specific language pair and direction (from or into English).

An ATA certification examination is a three-hour, open-book, NO RETURN, proctored exam that requires the candidate to translate two passages of about 225 to 275 words each (actual text for passages with English as a source language and the English equivalent for passages with English as a target language). Three passages are provided; candidates must select and complete a translation of two of these passages.

Certification is currently available¹:

- into English from Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Ukrainian.
- from English into Arabic, Croatian, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Ukrainian.

Examinations in specific language pairs are set up by groups of ATA member volunteers. If you do not see your language pair in the list above and are an ATA member, you can learn more about how to start your language combination at:

https://www.atanet.org/certification/aboutcert_new_language.php.

Certified **translators** are different from certified **translations**. Certified translators are people who pass the ATA certification exam. A certified translation is a document. Detailed information can be found on the ATA website at:

https://www.atanet.org/clients/client_certified_translation.php

Purpose of the Exam

The ATA certification examination tests for professional translation skills. It is designed to determine whether a candidate is able to produce a translation within a reasonable but limited amount of time that is professionally usable and complies with the Translation Instructions (instructions accompanying the exam passage that provide context, such as the audience and other important information you should consider before starting your translation). The skills in question are defined by positive answers to the following four broad questions:

Does the translation demonstrate compliance with the specifications of the Translation Instructions? Yes, if:

- The translation is usable and intelligible in the specified context.

¹ The available combinations may change. Please check the ATA website for the most up-to-date information.

- Register, style, and wording match comparable documents written in the target language.

Does the translation demonstrate understanding of the overall content, purpose, and argument of the examination passage? Yes, if:

- Translation problems are solved and a correct rendering is achieved.
- Dictionaries are used effectively to resolve word-level problems.
- All meaning integral to the source text is included in the target text and no meaning that is not implicitly or explicitly stated by the author is added.
- The source text is accurately interpreted to ensure that the target text reflects the view, argument, or presented information on all levels (text, sentence, and word).

Does the translation demonstrate competent familiarity with various translation strategies? Yes, if:

- The text's point of view, argument, and information are presented appropriately for the target culture.
- Syntax is appropriate to the target language; the target text does not necessarily imitate the sentence structure of the source text.
- Idioms in the source text are rendered so as to convey a comparable meaning in the target text.
- Wording is as unambiguous as possible.

Does the translation demonstrate good writing in the target language? Yes, if:

- The target text flows smoothly and does not contain awkward expressions that mark it distinctly as a translation.
- There are few or no mechanical errors (relating to grammar, usage, spelling, or punctuation).

Benefits of Certification

Certification offers qualified and independent evidence to both translator and client that the translator possesses professional competence in a specific language combination.

Passing the certification exam automatically converts an Associate membership to a Voting membership. Student members who have paid discounted membership dues are not promoted to voting membership unless they upgrade their membership. Voting members are entitled to be listed as ATA-certified in the Directory of Translator and Interpreters. Only Voting members may vote in Association matters.

Certified translators may refer to their certification and are entitled to use the designation CT after their names in their résumés, websites, email signatures, business stationery, cards, and other related materials, provided they specify the language pair(s) and direction(s).

Certified translators are provided with a seal that they can use on documents and provide to clients proving their certification.

Eligibility

There are currently no eligibility requirements for the ATA certification exam. However, ATA certification is a mid-career credential for experienced, professional translators or interpreters.

Preparation

The certification exam is challenging, with the current overall pass rate below 20%. Candidates are encouraged to take a practice test (which can be ordered at:

https://www.atanet.org/certification/practice_test_order.php) to prepare for the exam. Test passages are former exam passages that are no longer in use. When taking the practice test, a candidate should replicate the exam conditions as closely as possible by limiting testing time to 1.5 hours per passage, simulating exam conditions, and only using permitted resources.

Translating such a test passage and studying the grader's feedback is one of the most helpful ways to prepare for taking the examination, since it is the only feedback ATA offers (certification exams are not returned to candidates).

Candidates should also read all of the information about certification preparation provided on the ATA website and in its magazine, *ATA Chronicle*. The Association also periodically holds exam workshops at the ATA Annual Conference and at some ATA chapter locations. The ATA website has more information on these opportunities.

There is a booklet of *ATA Chronicle* articles about preparing for the exam on the ATA website at: <https://www.atanet.org/certification/ATAExamPrepTips.pdf>.

Exam Dates and Locations

There are usually about 30-40 certification exam sittings per year, scheduled on various dates in a variety of locations beginning in March and ending at the ATA Annual Conference in October or early November. Candidates must travel to one of the scheduled exam sittings. Consider checking with a chapter or group near you to see if they have organized a geographically convenient sitting. The list of currently available exam sittings can be found on the ATA website at: https://www.atanet.org/certification/upcoming_exam_sittings.php.

ATA Headquarters itself only schedules those exam sittings offered at the ATA Annual Conference: http://www.atanet.org/events/annual_conference.php. All other exams are scheduled by local groups and chapters, language industry groups, academic institutions, or individuals who combine their efforts to schedule a sitting. Therefore, ATA cannot guarantee that an exam sitting will be held on any particular date or in any particular location. The list of locations and dates is updated as new sittings are added. Please check the list periodically to see if an exam is scheduled near you.

Application

Arrangements for taking a certification exam are made through the ATA Headquarters website. The fee of \$525 includes all administrative and grading expenses. ATA Headquarters must receive registration with payment of \$525 at least two weeks before the exam is administered. Each sitting has a limited capacity, and exam sittings in major metropolitan areas frequently fill up weeks or months in advance, so you are advised to register as early as possible.

You must be a member prior to registering for an exam. It is advised that you join ATA at least four weeks before the exam date to allow time for paperwork to be processed.

Candidates will be given further information once they have registered for an exam.

Refunds

No refunds will be made unless ATA Headquarters receives written notification of the candidate's withdrawal and request for refund prior to the exam date. All requests for refunds are subject to a \$25 administrative fee. Requests should be sent to the Certification Program Manager.

Requests for ADA Accommodations

Whenever possible, ATA is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities taking the ATA Exam. Appropriate accommodations will be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities to the extent that such accommodations do not fundamentally alter the examination or cause undue burden to ATA or the volunteer groups hosting the exam.

It is the responsibility of individuals with disabilities to notify ATA in writing of the applicant's need for accommodation and provide supporting documentation in electronic format no later than 45 days before taking the ATA exam.

The request for accommodation must come in the form of a letter from the physician treating you for this disability and must include the nature of the qualifying disability; the requested/suggested accommodation to take the exam; and contact information for the physician.

On the Day of the Exam

Exam Procedure

An ATA certification examination is a three-hour, open-book, NO RETURN, proctored exam that requires the candidate to translate two passages of about 225 to 275 words each (actual text for passages with English as a source language and the English equivalent for passages with English as a target language). Three passages are provided; candidates must select and complete a translation of two of these passages.

Each examination passage is chosen in such a way as to avoid highly specialized terminology challenges requiring research. There are indeed terminology challenges, but they can be met with a good general dictionary.

In addition to the text to be translated, each examination passage includes Translation Instructions, specifying the context within which the translation is to be performed (e.g., text source and translation purpose, audience, medium) and providing specific instructions such as “text is intended for educated non-specialists” or “translate the term xxx as XXX.” Translation Instructions can be thought of as reflecting the client’s expectations, were the examination a real-life translation assignment.

Exam sittings require use of a laptop computer. Candidates must bring their own laptops to the exam sittings. ATA will provide the exam and a USB drive for saving the exam files. ATA does not provide laptops.

Before Starting the Exam

You should arrive at the exam location 30 minutes prior to the exam start time. You must present a valid photo ID to the proctor to enter the sitting. If you arrive late, you may be allowed into the exam room as long as this will not cause undue disruption to the other candidates. Latecomers will not receive additional time, but will be required to submit their exams at the same time as the other candidates, i.e. three hours after the official start time.

You will translate the exam source text using your own laptop and your own permitted resources, electronic and/or hardcopy. Internet access is provided. You are permitted to use non-interactive resources, e.g., online dictionaries and databases, but not email or chat rooms. This is to ensure that the work is the translator’s own and that the carefully vetted exam passages are not shared.

All cellphones and internet-capable devices (other than the computer you are using for your exam) must be turned off and stowed or placed on the proctor table.

Only one physical screen (such as a computer monitor) per candidate is allowed. You may use as many dictionaries and other reference materials as you need, as long as these will fit in the table space provided. Remember, exam sittings generally fill to capacity and physical space is limited.

You should bring general bilingual dictionaries, monolingual dictionaries for the source and target language; specialized dictionaries or glossaries are not necessary. While Internet access is provided, it is not guaranteed, so candidates are highly encouraged to have a variety of resources available including print and downloaded dictionaries.

Do not rely on internet resources alone.

Handwritten Exams

The option of handwriting the exam will be available as a backup in case of technical malfunctions. Be prepared for this eventuality by bringing a few dark ball point pens. We do not provide any supplies other than the paper on which you do your work. Remember that the written exam will be photocopied and must be legible.

Computer Requirements

All candidates must bring their own computers to the exam.

Candidates input their translations using the approved word processing program—WordPad on PCs and TextEdit on Macs, with grammar and spell check utilities disabled— onto an ATA-supplied USB drive. Familiarize yourself with how to use these programs before arriving at the exam and make sure you are able to use a standard USB with your computer.

Technical Requirements and Internet Access

You must supply your own computer and any computer accessories you need, such as a mouse, power cord, etc. In order to use the internet during the exam, your computer must be configured to access standard Wi-Fi; proctors will give you instructions for network access before the exam begins.

Your computer must have at least one USB port, since your work will be saved on an ATA-supplied USB drive. You are responsible for bringing any peripherals needed if your laptop does not have a USB port.

There is no technical support at the exam. Proctors are present for registration and supervision only. It is up to you to be familiar with your computer and operating system. You must be able to operate your computer under exam conditions on your own before you can take the ATA exam. If you are unable to do so on the exam date or if you have technical difficulties, you may be offered the opportunity to handwrite the exam or to take the exam at a later date.

In particular, you must be able to:

- Safely mount and eject a USB drive. If you have a newer Mac, you will want to be sure you can use a USB-A. You may need an adaptor
- Locate and open the approved word processing program: WordPad for Windows, TextEdit for Mac(due to its many built-in capabilities, **Microsoft Word is not allowed**)
- Adjust font size in the approved word processing program
- Disable spell and grammar check in TextEdit (Mac users only)
- Save your file as a PDF
- Activate Wi-Fi for internet access

Exam Resources

During the exam, you may:

- Use any dictionaries, glossaries, or word lists stored on your computer

- Use any non-interactive Internet dictionary or reference sites
- Use any print resources
- Use search engines such as Google

You may not:

- Copy or in any way save the source texts or your translations on to your computer or memory
- Use CAT tools or translation memories (except as noted below), either web-based or housed on your laptop
- Use email, chat, or other interactive means of communication
- Use Internet forums, including ProZ
- Use machine translation sites, such as Google Translate. Note that you are allowed to use translation memories only if you export them to text format in advance. Contact the Certification Program Manager if you have any questions about whether specific sites may be accessed during the exam.

These rules help to ensure that the work is the translator's own and that the carefully vetted exam passages are not shared.

A list of approved and banned sites can be found in the appendices of this handbook and is available at: https://www.atanet.org/certification/aboutexams_computerized_resources.php.

Signed Statement

Candidates must sign a statement acknowledging that certain activities are prohibited during the sitting (e.g., use of email and chat, copying the exam passages) and specifying the consequences of noncompliance.

Candidates who violate these rules may face restrictions on future certification eligibility and could be subject to ATA ethics violation proceedings.

The Exam Process

The proctor(s) will distribute the test packets. The envelope indicates the code number assigned to you by ATA Headquarters. To maintain anonymity, you will use that number, not your name, on your exam.

The proctor(s) will ask you to print your name on the test packet envelope as you wish it to appear on the certificate and the address to which you want the results mailed. If the address label on the exam envelop and your address do not match, you will need to update your address through your online account after the exam.

Make sure you sign the certification policy statement, which is printed on the front of the test packet. When the proctor announces it is time to begin, open the packet. The proctor will ask you to insert the enclosed and labeled USB drive. You will save your work to this USB drive.

The proctor will have paper if you need to handwrite your exam. Leave one-inch margins on the top, bottom, and sides of the paper. This is to ensure that the photocopying does not omit any of your exam. Do not double space the handwritten exam.

Exam Passages

In your packet, you will find three passages for your language combination, each labeled with a different four-digit passage number. You may write on the passages, as they will not be reused. Follow the instructions provided and include this four-digit number at the top of the two passages you translate for submission.

All three source-language passages must be returned in your exam packet or your exam will not be graded, the exam fee will be forfeited, and you will not be able to take another exam in that same language combination for the rest of the exam year. As stated in the policy statement you signed, all exam materials must be returned to ATA.

Taking the Exam

It is recommended that you read through all three passages, with translation in mind, before deciding which two passages you will translate. If you do not, you may encounter a sentence or phrase that you are unable to translate only after it is too late to begin another passage in its place.

Do not translate more than two passages.

Pace yourself carefully so that you will have time to reread your translation for accuracy.

Should you need to leave the room during the exam for any reason, bring your exam packet, computer with USB drive, and scratch paper to the proctor desk. If you have a cellphone with you, it must be placed in the exam packet envelope and may not leave the room with you.

Plan to use all of the time allotted. Should you finish before the three-hour period has ended, use the remaining time to recheck terminology and the accuracy of your translation.

Turning in the Exam

When you turn in the exam, you will need to put all scratch paper, your translations, the USB drive, your signed agreement, and the original passages back in the envelope. All three passages must be returned or the exam will not be graded and the exam fee will be forfeited. Complete the checklist on the back of the envelope and present the unsealed envelope to a proctor for processing.

After the Exam

Grading Procedure

It can take up to 16 weeks to grade ATA exams.

ATA certification examination graders are trained to be objective and uniform in their grading. Copies of the examination, identified only by code number, are sent to two graders. Graders mark errors on a scale of 1, 2, 4, 8, or 16 error points. (Up to 3 quality points may be subtracted from error points.)

In reviewing and grading examinations, they are guided largely by two documents, which are available at https://www.atanet.org/certification/aboutexams_overview.php:

- The **Flowchart for Error Point Decisions**, which looks at how an error affects the explicit meaning, understanding, usefulness, or content of a translation;
- The **Framework for Standardized Error Marking**, which specifies errors by type.

The ATA standard for a passing examination is a level of obvious competence with some room for growth. Candidates can obtain an idea of what this means in practical terms by consulting the ILR Skill Level Descriptions for Translation Performance (<https://www.govtilr.org/Skills/AdoptedILRTranslationGuidelines.htm>). A passing grade in the ATA examination is roughly equivalent to a minimum of Level 3 as described in that document

A successful passage is one with 17 or fewer error points; passages with a final score of 18 or higher are marked as failing. Candidates who receive a pass on **both** passages from **both** graders will receive certification. In cases where the graders disagree on the outcome, a third grader is asked to grade the passages in question. Candidates who fail the examination may apply for certification exam review (see below). If candidates dispute the review, they can request an appeal of the review results.

Exam Results

Exam results are mailed to candidates via the US Postal Service. It is up to the candidate to make sure his or her mailing address on file with ATA is correct. If yours is not correct, log in to your account and update it accordingly.

Your graded exam is not returned to you. This is a no-return exam.

If your exam is graded as “pass,” you will receive a congratulatory letter, continuing education information, and a certificate.

If your exam is graded as “fail,” you will receive a letter showing your average score from both graders for each passage. You need to pass both passages to pass the exam. In the event you pass one passage and fail the other, you will be told which passage you passed and the average score of the passage you failed.

Review Process

The ATA Certification Committee has established the Review Procedure as a way to address candidates' concerns that errors may have been made in the processing or grading of the certification exam.

The procedure, as detailed below, has two possible outcomes:

- If processing or grading errors are identified that would alter the outcome, the grade is reversed from fail to pass; or
- If the grade of fail is verified, the candidate receives a more complete explanation of why the exam did not meet the standards for ATA certification.

Given the nature of translation and translation quality evaluation, it is possible that a candidate will disagree with the explanation received. In that case, the only way to contest a review decision is to follow the directions for a review appeal. There is no further recourse available after an appeal. In electing to sit for the exam and again in applying for review and appeal, the candidate agrees to abide by the outcome of these procedures.

Review Procedure

Candidates who are currently members of ATA and interested in having their exam reviewed may obtain a Request for Certification Review form from ATA Headquarters or the ATA website. As part of the application, they will be asked to sign a statement indicating that they understand the conditions of the review and agree to abide by them. They return the completed application to ATA Headquarters along with the payment to cover the administrative costs of the review. The fact that the certification exam is being reviewed will be kept confidential by Headquarters and the Certification Committee. The candidate's identity will not be revealed to those performing the review.

The Exam Review fee is \$250 per passage.

Upon receipt of the Request for Review, a file containing the original translations, the envelope on which the candidate wrote his or her name and the contact information on the day of the exam, the copies of the exam as marked by the graders, and exam-related documents will be scrutinized for possible processing errors. During the annual review period (January-February of the following year), the respective Language Chair or a reviewer assigned by the Language Chair, will be given copies of the exam and will evaluate the errors marked by the original graders in accordance with the Certification Committee's current grading criteria. The candidate's name will not appear in any of the documents. The reviewer will also grade the exam again. At that time, the reviewer will decide either to uphold the grade of fail or to reverse the grade, awarding certification to the candidate.

In the case of a reversal, the review fee will be refunded in full and the candidate will receive a Certificate of Certification dated as of the original notice of failure, upgraded membership (if applicable), and all of the rights and privileges of certification. The candidate's name will be published in the *ATA Chronicle* along with the names of other recently certified members. No disclosure will ever be made of the fact that the certification was awarded based on a review.

In the event that the reviewer upholds the grade of fail, the marking of errors supporting at least the minimum standard for failure will be recorded on a clean review copy of the translation. The

nature of the errors will be indicated. The review copy of the failed passages and the original source texts and evaluation summary for those passages will be mailed to the candidate. This is the final step for most candidates, and no further information will be supplied to the candidate or anyone else regarding the review.

If the exam receives a grade of fail on review, the candidate may dispute the error marking through the appeal process.

Review Period

Factors influencing the timing of reviews include the need to maintain confidentiality about the content of current exam passages and the recognition that the Certification Program workload typically peaks in October, November, and December.

Reviews are conducted after the close of the examination year, which runs from March to November. The first batch of reviews goes to reviewers in January, with subsequent batches going out as needed. Candidates who fail a certification exam and retain their ATA membership have six months from the date of their results letter to apply for the review. After that date, a review is no longer possible.

Appeal Process

Any candidate for ATA certification who receives a reviewed exam with a grade of fail may dispute the error marking through the certification review appeal process, following the instructions outlined below.

A panel of three Certification Program graders will consider each appeal. The panel will include:

- A Certification Committee member (designated by the Committee Chair), who will chair the panel, monitor compliance with ATA Certification Program policies and procedures, and document the process for record-keeping at ATA Headquarters
- The original reviewer or the workgroup Language Chair, and
- One grader who has not graded the exam before. In small workgroups, this may mean a grader from another workgroup.

The panel may consult other graders and outside experts as necessary.

The certification panel will decide whether to uphold or overturn the grade of Fail. The panel's decision is final.

The Certification Program Manager at ATA Headquarters will inform the candidate of the outcome and the reasons for the panel's decision. This concludes the appeal process.

If the certification panel overturns the exam outcome, the appeal fee and the review fee will be refunded, and the candidate will receive a Certificate of Certification dated as of the original notice of failure, upgraded membership (if applicable), and all of the rights and privileges of certification. The candidate's name will be published in the *ATA Chronicle* along with the names of other recently certified members. No disclosure will ever be made of the fact that the certification was awarded based on an appeal.

The Certification Committee reserves the right to disqualify from the appeal process any candidate who:

- Does not follow the instructions;
- Attempts to challenge the exam outcome in any way not specifically permitted under ATA's Certification Program policy; or
- Includes unprofessional statements (e.g., threats, invectives, or personal attacks) in any written or oral communication about the review addressed to ATA Certification Program volunteers or staff.

If the Certification Committee disqualifies from the appeal process a candidate who has paid the appeal fee, the appeal fee only (less a \$25 processing fee) will be refunded.

The Certification Program Manager at ATA Headquarters handles all communications from candidates about exam outcomes, reviews, and appeals. Communications about certification exam outcomes addressed to anyone else will not be read or forwarded.

Appeal Instructions

- Copy the graded review copy of your exam. Keep the original review copy for your records.
- On the appeal copy of your exam, insert an asterisk next to each error marking you choose to dispute, and number them in the order that they appear.
- In a separate document, list each numbered error marking and give the specific reasons you disagree.
 - State why the graders should accept your rendition or penalize it with fewer error points in the context of the exam passage.
 - For renditions marked as translation errors, support your statements with citations from bilingual dictionaries and/or other reference materials (complete with publication data). Keep in mind that not all renditions found in a multilingual dictionary apply in a given context.
 - For renditions marked as target-language errors (e.g., grammar, punctuation, spelling, usage), support your statements with citations from reputable usage and style guides and/or other reference materials (complete with publication data).
 - If you cite Internet search results to support your statements, give the complete URL and the date accessed. Quote as much of the content as necessary to establish the context and provide information justifying the authoritative character of the site.
- Mark each page of supporting documentation with the test number that appears in the upper right corner of your exam. Do not identify yourself by name in these materials.
- Read the Certification Program policy on appeals and sign the statement that you agree to abide by the decision of the certification panel. This document will go on file at ATA Headquarters.
- Send the following to the Certification Program Manager at ATA Headquarters:
 - the appeal copy of your exam,
 - your supporting documentation,
 - the signed Request for ATA Certification Review Appeal, and

- the appeal fee by credit card authorization (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover) or check payable to the American Translators Association

The Exam Review Appeal fee is \$200 per passage.

After Passing the Exam

Certification Maintenance

ATA has established continuing education requirements to ensure that ATA certified translators keep abreast of developments in the profession and maintain the skill level demonstrated at the time they passed the certification exam.

The role of continuing education (CE):

- is an integral aspect of ATA's mission to help all of its members provide high quality translation, demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the profession, and educate clients and the public about the translation and interpreting professions
- allows ATA-certified members to meet the requirements for maintaining their certification
- helps ensure that every member is aware of changes within the translation and interpreting professions
- improves our membership's combined knowledge and helps make the ATA a stronger association
- brings the ATA Certification program in line with the credentials of other professional organizations
- enhances the prestige and recognition of ATA's certification program and of ATA-certified translators

Certification Maintenance Requirements and Reporting Period

ATA requires its certified members to accrue twenty (20) CE points in every three-year reporting period and pay the recertification fee of \$30. The three-year reporting period begins when a member first becomes certified, or immediately following the previous reporting period. Any CE points earned must be verifiable; continuing education that is not verifiable is not accepted for CE points. There are two exceptions to the CE point requirements:

1. Certified members who were born before 1963 are exempt from this requirement.
2. Headquarters has the authority to extend the deadline for accruing CE points, upon request, for up to one year based upon extenuating circumstances such as long-term illness, undue hardship, military duty, etc. Additional one-year exceptions may be granted if required. Any points earned during such extension shall not count toward the next reporting period.

Ethics Module

All newly-certified members must complete either the free online ATA Ethics Module or the in-person Ethics Module offered at the ATA Annual Conference during their first reporting period. The module need not be repeated in subsequent reporting periods. Ethics courses offered by third parties do not qualify. The ATA Ethics Module is equivalent to one (1) Category A CE point.

Activities Accepted for Continuing Education Points

CE points can be accrued in a variety of ways. Many activities reasonably deemed to be related to translation and interpreting (T&I) are considered qualifying, including CE points earned from other T&I associations worldwide.

ATA will not authorize or approve specific continuing education courses offered by entities outside the T&I industry but will instead provide guidelines that the certified member may consult in order to determine if a given activity meets the ATA requirements.

CE course work or activities must contribute to the professional knowledge and development of the T&I practitioner or must demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the profession and client education through service and volunteerism.

CE-qualifying activities may include but are not limited to:

- Attending T&I (or T&I-related specialty field or business practice) conferences, courses, seminars, and workshops offered or authorized by state, private, national, and international organizations, corporations, agencies, or institutions of higher learning, whether online or onsite.
- Independent study of educational T&I audio or video, films, slides, web pages, or articles on T&I, T&I technology and business practices, or the translator's specialty fields published by recognized private, national, and international trade associations, corporations, or organizations.
- Writing or editing books or articles on T&I.
- Teaching or developing a T&I (or T&I-related) course, seminar, or workshop. Credit may be earned only for new presentations.
- Provision of pro-bono T&I services, grader training, service in ATA School Outreach/Mentorship, or client education in a formal volunteer capacity.
- Membership in professional T&I associations other than ATA.

Repeating an identical continuing education opportunity does not earn additional CE points. All CE points must be earned in the three years following the date CE points were last reported.

Not Pre-Approved for CE Points

ATA maintains a database of approved events at which ATA-certified members may earn CE points. For events not listed, an ATA approval request must be completed and submitted to ATA Headquarters.

Approval may be requested either prior to or after an event, with the understanding that approval may be denied if documentation is insufficient or if the educational content does not meet ATA criteria. Individuals and groups requesting CE points will be notified by ATA Headquarters either that the event has been approved for a particular number of CE points or that the request is denied.

ATA offers one CE point per hour for approved seminars, workshops, conferences and presentations, based on full hours (not including meals, breaks, networking sessions, etc.) up to a maximum of 10 CE points per event. No partial hours will be counted.

ATA offers a maximum of 5 CE points for an approved college, university, or other course regardless of its length.

The form to request CE points can be found on the ATA website at:

https://www.atanet.org/certification/CE_approve_form.php.

Record Keeping and Verification

The certified member must accrue the required CE points within the three-year reporting period and is responsible for keeping a record of all CE activities (e.g., conference attendance certificates, course completion letters) and completing ATA's online CE reporting form. ATA may randomly audit certified members within a period of one year after the conclusion of a reporting period. Certified members will be given 30 days' notice to provide documentation of their CE points to ATA Headquarters.

Records are to be kept by the certified member for a period of one year after the conclusion of a given reporting period but do not need to be sent to ATA unless requested by the Association in the event of an audit.

Loss of Certification

A certified member's certification will be rescinded if the appropriate CE requirements have not been reported by the deadline or extended deadline, as appropriate. ATA will remove any certifications from a member's listings or profiles in the ATA online directories. ATA members whose certification has been rescinded may not use the designation "ATA-certified," "certified by the American Translators Association," or the professional designation "CT" after their name until they complete the outstanding CE requirements. Loss of certification does not affect a person's membership status.

Members who have lost their certification will be encouraged to reactivate their certification as long as they are still members of ATA and active in the profession. Members whose certification is lapsed less than three years may renew certification by contacting ATA and submitting CE points. Members whose certification is lapsed more than three years must take the exam and pass to be certified again.

Appendix A

List of Restricted and Permitted Online Resources

The following internet resources are explicitly **prohibited** during the exam:

- Email sites or programs of any kind
- Forum sections of dictionary sites that are otherwise allowed
- Google Translate, DeepL, and other machine translation services
- ProZ and other forum-oriented sites and services
- Sites with both dictionary and human translator components, such as TransDict.com
- Sites with both dictionary and machine translation components, such as Reverso.net, Babylon.com
- Sites with chat functionality
- Social media: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, flickr, YouTube, etc.
- Online groups

The following internet resources examples of sites that are explicitly **permitted** during the exam:

General/multilingual

[Bab.la](#)

[Dictionary.com](#)

[Eudict.com](#)

[Glosbe.com](#)

Glossaries of international organizations (UN, WTO, IMF, etc.)

Google, Yahoo, Bing, and other general search engines

[Iate.europa.eu](#)

[Linguee.com](#)

[Merriam-webster.com/](#)

[Thesaurus.com](#)

[Wikipedia](#)

[Wiktionary](#)

[Wordreference.com](#) (no forums)

A list of the most up-to-date resources including language specific resources can be found online at: https://www.atanet.org/certification/aboutexams_computerized_resources.php. This list is updated frequently.

If you do not see a resource that you wish to use, you may submit a request to review it to ATA Headquarters at certification@atanet.org. All requests must be received 30 days before a candidate's exam sitting to allow time for review.

Appendix B

Tips for Candidates

Read all of the passages before you decide which to translate. Are you familiar enough with the subject matter? Are there complicated sentences that will take time to untangle?

When you finish a paragraph of your translation, read it over to yourself. Does it sound right, or does it sound awkward and stilted? Will changing the word order make a difference?

You will be graded on your ability to render the entire message of the original in the target language, not on your ability to rewrite or improve upon it.

- Carefully read the Translation Instructions at the top of each passage and choose the correct register (language level, degree of formality) based on the specified target audience. The Translation Instructions set the context for the translation. Failure to follow the instructions will be penalized when the translation is graded.
- Observe the formatting of the original. Keep the same number of paragraphs as in the source text. If paragraphs are separated by a line, do the same in the translation.
- Do not add clarifications unless you are certain that readers from the target-language culture will miss the meaning without them.
- The Translation Instructions also say “Translate everything below the horizontal line.” This is a reminder that any titles, headings or subheads, for example, are considered part of the passage. Follow the conventions of your language combination with regard to words or terms that remain in the source language. Be sure not to add or omit information. Additions and/or omissions can change the meaning. Qualifiers are also important.
- Be careful where you place qualifiers and modifiers. Remember that word order is not the same in all languages and that careless placement can completely change the meaning.
- Alternative translations will be considered errors. It is up to you to select a viable translation; the graders will not choose for you.
- Unwieldy sentences can be broken into shorter ones, provided nothing is added or omitted to change the meaning.
- Avoid regionalisms wherever possible, using instead more standard words.
- Candidates are expected to use U.S. English spelling, style and usage.
- Pretend you are reading the passage aloud in the target language. Does it sound both grammatically correct and natural? Following the syntax of the source text too closely may be penalized if the resulting sentence is unidiomatic or awkward in the target language.
- It is especially dangerous to translate idiomatic expressions literally. Try to find an equivalent expression in the target language. For example, in the phrase “... hanging around the house,” “hanging around” conveys the idea that one is relaxing, being lazy. Don’t omit an idiom just because you can’t find an exact translation.

Use dictionaries judiciously, and be sure your word choices are correct in context. If a dictionary offers more than one translation for a word, don’t assume you can use any of them interchangeably. It sometimes helps to cross-check an unfamiliar term you have tentatively selected by looking it up in the other direction.

If a word or phrase is not in your dictionaries, apply your translation skills. Perhaps it is a compound whose parts are in the dictionary, a derivative of a word that is listed, or a cognate you can look up in the target language. In other cases, you are expected to determine the meaning from the context and determine the correct term/phrase in accordance with the translation instructions. Texts selected as exam passages are modified to avoid obscure terms, and you will be penalized if you simply note “not in dictionary.”

Remember that you will be working without a spell checker. Consider bringing a monolingual dictionary in your target language.

Pay attention to spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Conventions vary from one language to another, and failure to follow target-language rules will be penalized, especially if your spelling/punctuation choice changes or obscures meaning.

Consider bringing a grammar book for your source language and a stylebook for your target language. You may use online grammar and style guides during the exam.

You are not expected to make mathematical conversions of measures, distances, money, and the like. You will not be penalized if you convert correctly, but you will if the conversion is wrong.

Proofread carefully. Check:

- proper names
- numerals and dates
- commonly misspelled words
- placement of punctuation and diacritical marks
- repetition (e.g., “a bird in the the hand”)

Also proofread for grammar and usage: subject/verb agreement, prepositions, verb tenses, and syntax (too close to the source text?) Don’t make hasty last-minute changes unless you’re sure you made a mistake. If you’re undecided, it’s safer to trust your first instinct.

Special note for candidates taking the exam from English into German: The new German spelling was introduced in 1996/97 and the “grace period” ended in 2006. All candidates are expected to use the new German spelling rules or spelling errors will be marked.

A comprehensive guide for translators working into English can be found on the ATA website at: https://www.atanet.org/certification/Into_English_Grading_2017.pdf

Special tips for English into Spanish candidates can be found on the ATA website at: https://www.atanet.org/certification/aboutexams_tips_ES.pdf

Appendix C

Explanation of Error Categories (Version 2020)

Section 1. MEANING TRANSFER

- The following errors affect (distort) the reader’s understanding of facts/ideas in the source text and/or the original author’s evaluation of them.
- For errors that do not affect understanding but “sound wrong,” go to the next section (Target Language Mechanics).

Transfer Errors at the Word/Phrase Level

Addition (A): An **addition** error occurs when the translator introduces superfluous elements of meaning, including aspects of tone (irony, intensification, etc.). Candidates should generally resist the tendency to insert “clarifying” material. Explication is permissible. Explication is defined as “A translation procedure where the translator introduces precise semantic details into the target text for clarification or due to constraints imposed by the target language that were not expressed in the source text, but which are available from contextual knowledge or the situation described in the source text” (Jean Delisle, *Translation Terminology*, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1991 p. 139).

Omission (O): An **omission** error occurs when one or more elements of meaning in the source text (ST) are left out of the target text (TT). This covers not only textual information but also the author's tone (irony, intensification, etc.). Implication is permissible. Implication is defined as “A translation procedure intended to increase the economy of the TT and achieved by not explicitly rendering elements of information from the ST in the TT when they are evident from the context or the described situation and can be readily inferred by speakers of the TL” (*Translation Terminology*, p. 145). For more substantial omissions, see below under **Unfinished (UNF)**, in this section.

Terminology (T): A **terminology** error occurs in a general text when the candidate chooses a content word or phrase (noun, verb, modifier) with an incorrect or inappropriate meaning in relation to the source text. The **T** error also applies when a term appropriate to a specific subject field is not used when the corresponding term is used in the source text. NOTES: (a) If the erroneous word or term is based on the choice of a target-language cognate that has a different meaning, the subcategory **Faux Ami (FA)** may be used; see below. (b) If the word choice violates conventions of collocation (e.g., subject-verb or adjective-noun combinations that are specific to the target language), then a **usage (U)** error may be marked. See **Section 3. Writing Quality** below.

Faux ami: (FA): A *faux ami* error occurs when words of similar form but dissimilar meaning across the language pair are confused. *Faux amis*, also known as false friends, are words in two or more languages that probably are derived from similar roots and that have very similar or identical forms, but that have different meanings, at least in some contexts.

Verb Form (VF): A **verb form** error occurs when the translation includes a verb in a grammatically possible form (as to person, number, gender, tense, mood, aspect, etc.) that conveys a meaning different from that of the source text. Examples: (a) “I lived here for 20 years” instead of “I have lived here for 20 years.” (b) “When he arrived, she made tea,” where “When he arrived, she was making tea” is meant, or (c) “It is difficult to succeed,” for “It would be difficult to succeed.” NOTE: If a verb is incorrectly inflected (for person, number, gender, etc.), use **G** (Grammar) instead; see explanations below in Section 2. Target Language Mechanics.

Transfer Errors That Can Apply to Various Levels

Ambiguity (AMB): An **ambiguity** error occurs when either the source or target text segment allows for more than one semantic interpretation, where its counterpart in the other language does not.

Cohesion (COH): A **cohesion** error occurs when a text is hard to follow because of inconsistent use of structural elements such as terminology, pronouns, inappropriate or missing conjunctions, etc. Cohesion is the network of lexical, grammatical, logical and other relations that provide links between various parts of a text, assisting the reader in navigating the text. Although cohesion is a feature of the text as a whole, graders will mark errors for individual elements that disrupt cohesion.

Faithfulness (F): A **faithfulness** error occurs when the target text does not respect the meaning of the source text as much as possible. Candidates are asked to translate the meaning and intent of the source text, not to rewrite it or improve upon it. The grader will carefully compare the translation to the source text. If a “creative” rendition changes the meaning, an error will be marked. If recasting a sentence or paragraph—i.e., altering the order of its major elements—destroys the flow, changes the emphasis, or obscures the author’s intent, an error may be marked.

Misunderstanding (MU): A **misunderstanding** error occurs when it is obvious that the error arose from misreading a word, for example, or misinterpreting the structure of a sentence.

Indecision (IND): An **indecision** error occurs when the candidate gives more than one option for a given translation unit. Graders will not choose the right word for the candidate. Even if both options are correct, an error will be marked. More points will be deducted if one or both options are incorrect.

Unfinished (UNF): A substantially **unfinished** passage (more than a full sentence missing at the end) is not graded. Missing titles, headings, or sentences within a passage may be marked as one or more errors of **omission**, depending on how much is missing (see **Omission** in this section).

Other Meaning Transfer Error (OTH-MT): Use this category only if meaning is affected *and* only if no other descriptions above apply. If meaning is not affected, go to the next section.

Section 2. Target Language Mechanics

- The following errors clearly violate one or more rules that prescribe the “correct” written forms of the Target Language – e.g., grammar and spelling.
- For errors that do not overtly violate any rules but still “sound wrong,” go to the next section (Writing Quality).

Grammar (G): A **grammar** error occurs when a sentence in the translation violates the grammatical rules of the target language. **Grammar** errors include lack of agreement between subject and verb, incorrect verb inflections, and incorrect declension of nouns, pronouns, or adjectives. NOTES: (a) In applicable cases, the **G** error should be subcategorized as **syntax (SYN)** or **word form/part of speech (WF/PS)**; see explanations below. (b) If a verb form is grammatically possible in the sentence but changes the meaning of the source text because of its tense, aspect, mood, etc., the category **verb form (VF)** should be used; see explanation in the **Meaning Transfer** section above.

Syntax (SYN): A **syntax** error occurs when the arrangement of words or other elements of a sentence does not conform to the syntactic rules of the target language. Errors in this category include improper modification, lack of parallelism, unnatural word order, and run-on structure. If incorrect syntax changes or obscures the meaning, the error is more serious and may be classified as a different type of error using the Flowchart and Framework. NOTE: In the Framework grid, the **SYN** error is a subcategory of **Grammar (G)** errors.

Word Form / Part of speech (WF/PS): A **word form** error occurs when the root of the word is correct, but the form of the word (*e.g.* number or case of noun or pronoun) is incorrect or nonexistent in the target language (*e.g.*, “tooths,” or “conspiration” instead of “conspiracy”). A **part of speech** error occurs when the grammatical form (adjective, adverb, verb, etc.) is incorrect (*e.g.*, “a conspire” instead of “a conspiracy”). NOTE: In the Framework grid, the **WF/PS** error is a subcategory of **Grammar (G)** errors.

Spelling (SP) / (Character (CH) for non-alphabetic languages): A **spelling/character** error occurs when a word or character in the translation is spelled/used incorrectly according to target-language conventions. A **spelling/character** error that causes confusion about the intended meaning is more serious and may be classified as a different type of error, using the Flowchart and Framework. If a word has alternate acceptable spellings, the candidate should be consistent throughout the passage. NOTE: In applicable cases, the **SP/CH** error should be subcategorized as **capitalization (C)** or **diacritical marks (D)**, as in the Framework; see explanations below.

Capitalization (C): A **capitalization** error occurs when the conventions of the target language concerning uppercase and lowercase usage are not followed.

Diacritical marks / Accents (D): A **diacritical marks** error occurs when the target-language conventions of diacritical marks and accents are not followed. If incorrect or missing diacritical marks obscure meaning (sense), the error is more serious.

Punctuation (P): A **punctuation** error occurs when the conventions of the target language regarding punctuation are not followed, including those governing the use of quotation marks, commas, semicolons, and colons. Incorrect or unclear paragraphing is also counted as a **punctuation** error. NOTE: If a punctuation choice creates ambiguity or changes meaning, it constitutes a **transfer** error; see categories above.

Other Errors: For target-language errors that do not clearly fit the descriptions above, use the category **OTH-ME**, or go to the next section (**Writing Quality**).

Section 3. Writing Quality

The following are target-language errors that do not clearly violate rules of spelling, grammar or punctuation, but detract from the quality of the translation with non-idiomatic, inappropriate or unclear wording/phrasing.

Usage (U): A **usage** error occurs when conventions of wording or phrasing in the target language are not followed (“We don’t say it that way”). Correct and idiomatic usage of the target language is expected. This category includes definite/indefinite articles, idiomatic use of prepositions (e.g., “married to,” not “with”), and collocations (“committed a crime,” rather than “performed a crime”). NOTES: (a) When a Usage error is due to “word-for-word” translation and extends longer than a phrase, it may be subcategorized as **Literalness (L)** – see below. (b) If incorrect usage ends up changing the meaning (e.g., “She took a train *in* Berlin,” when “*to* Berlin” is meant), then go to **Section 1. Meaning Transfer**. Similarly, an incorrect collocation that changes meaning (e.g., “He *illustrated* the conclusion” rather than “He *drew* the conclusion”) is a **meaning transfer** error.

Literalness (L): A **literalness** error occurs when a translation that follows the source text word for word results in an awkward and/or unidiomatic rendition – for example, “reductions of taxes of income” instead of “income tax reductions.” NOTE: A “literal” translation of just one word that results in incorrect meaning (e.g., “actually” for French *actuellement*) is a **Terminology** error (optional subcategory **FA**; see **Section 1. Meaning Transfer**).

Text Type (TT): A **text type** error occurs when some component of the translation is either inappropriate for the implied target audience of an exam passage (educated monolingual speakers of the target language) or fails to comply with specifications stated in the Translation Instructions (TIs). For example, if the TIs specify that the largest city in Vietnam should be rendered as “Ho Chi Minh City,” it is a **TT** error to use the former name “Saigon.” The **TT** category also includes the subcategories of **Register** and **Style**:

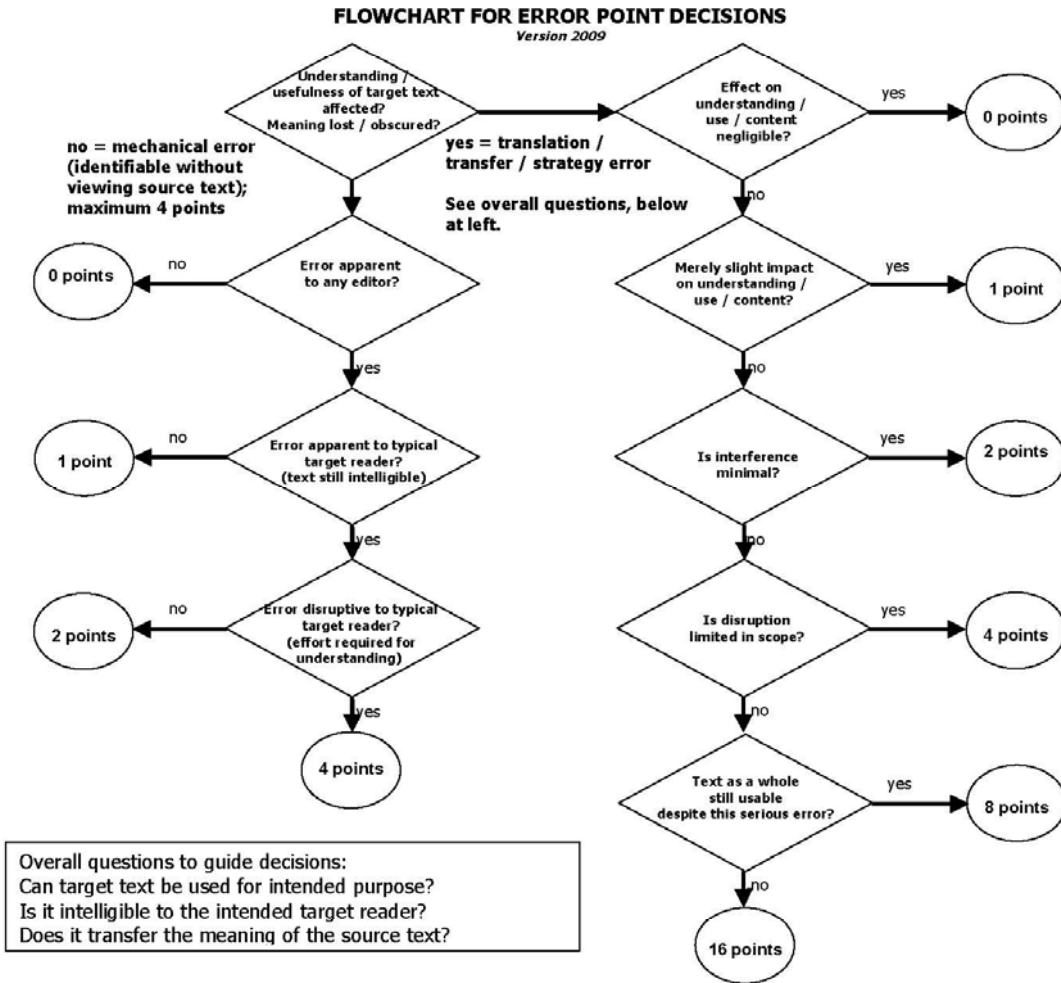
Register (R): A **register** error occurs when the language level or degree of formality is not appropriate for the implied target audience of the exam passage. Example: In an academic textbook: “Some years, El Niño comes on with a vengeance” (instead of “occurs with particular intensity”).

Style (ST): A **style** error occurs when choices of grammatical structure or other elements are inappropriate for the type of publication or other functional use specified by the TIs. Examples: (a) step-by-step instructions: if the target language typically uses infinitive verb forms, then the use of imperative verbs is an **ST** error; (b) numerals: e.g., “39 thousand” is standard in some languages, but not in English.

Illegibility (ILL): (Handwritten exams only) An **illegibility** error occurs when graders cannot read what the candidate has written. It is the candidate’s responsibility to ensure that the graders can clearly discern what is written. Candidates are instructed to use pen or dark pencil and to write firmly enough to produce legible photocopies. Deletions, insertions, and revisions are acceptable if they do not make the intent unclear.

Appendix D.

Flowchart for Error Point Decisions



Appendix E

Framework for Standardized Error Marking

The **Framework** is used to determine the kind of error in the translation.

ATA CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FRAMEWORK FOR STANDARDIZED ERROR MARKING Version 2017						Exam No.: 23456	Passage No.: 1000
1	2	4	5	16	Code	Reason	
Errors that concern the form of the exam.							
Treat missing material within the passage as an omission.						UNF	Unfinished (if a passage is substantially unfinished, do not grade the exam.)
						BL	Bleedability
						END	Indecision, gave more than one answer
Meaning transfer or strategic errors: Negative impact on clarity or usefulness of target text. Use one of the categories below whenever possible. If none are applicable, use OTH-MT							
						A	Addition
						AMB	Ambiguity
						COH	Cohesion
						F	Faithfulness (translation strays too far from ST meaning)
						FA	Faux ami (false friend)
						L	Literateness
						MU	Misunderstanding of source text (if identifiable)
						O	Omission
						T	Terminology, word choice
						TT	Text type (failure to follow Translation Instructions) This category also covers register and style.
						VT	Verb Tense (grammar correct, but conveys wrong meaning) Other (describe, use a separate page if needed)
						OTH-MT	
Mechanical errors: Negative impact on overall quality of target text. Points may vary by language. Maximum 4 points. Use one of the categories below whenever possible. If none are applicable, use OTH-ME							
						G	Grammar (use one of next two sub-categories if applicable)
						SYN	— Syntax (phrase / clause / sentence structure)
						WF/PS	— Word form / Part of speech
						P	Punctuation
						SP/CH	Spelling/Character (usually 1 point, maximum 2; if more than 2 points, another category must apply)
						D	— Diacritical marks / Accents
						C	— Capitalization
						U	Usage
						OTH-ME	Other (describe, use a separate page if needed)
A grader may stop marking errors when score reaches 40 error points (mark such exams 40+)			A grader may award a quality point for each of up to three instances of exceptional translation.			Quality points are subtracted from the error point total to yield a final score. A passage with a score of 18 or more points receives a grade of Fail.	
Total error points		14		Quality points		Final passage score 14	

Appendix F

Continuing Education Categories

Category A:		Attending conferences, courses, workshops, and seminars on T&I (or T&I-related specialty field or business practices) offered or authorized by industry-recognized professionals, state, private, national, and international organizations, corporations, and agencies or institutions of higher learning, whether online or on site
Points:		1 hour = 1 point per hour. Maximum of 5 points per day up to 10 points per event. College courses: maximum 5 points per class. No maximum per reporting period. Reading articles in ATA Conference Proceedings = 1 point per article
Documentation:		Certificate of attendance, receipt or letter of completion for each event. Copy of ATA Independent Study Verification Paper for each article read or session on CD/DVD-ROM
Category B:		Independent study of educational T&I (or T&I-related specialty field or business practices) audio or video, films, slides, Internet, or articles on T&I, T&I technology, or the translator's specialty fields published by recognized private national and international trade associations, corporations or organizations. This category includes pre-recorded webinars and conferences as well.
Points:		Each activity=1 point per hour of activity. Maximum 5 points per reporting period
Documentation:		Copy of ATA Independent Study Verification Paper for each activity (see Appendix G)
Category C:		Authoring or editing published books or articles on T&I

Points:	6 points per published book, 2 points per published article Maximum 8 points per reporting period
Documentation:	Date and title of the article or book and name of the publisher
Category D:	Teaching or developing a T&I course, seminar, or workshop. Credit may be earned only for new presentations. Repeating the same presentation does not earn additional points
Points:	1 hour = 2 points, No maximum per reporting period
Documentation:	Date, title, and length of presentation, and name of sponsoring organization
Category E:	Volunteerism (T&I-related work or school outreach presentations)
Points:	T&I-related: Two hours of service = 1 point. School outreach: 1 hour of service =1 point. Maximum 6 points per reporting period
Documentation:	Description of the activity, hours given, and name of sponsoring organization
Category F:	Membership in professional associations other than ATA
Points:	One point per membership up to a maximum 3 points per reporting period
Documentation:	Proof of membership

Appendix G

Independent Study Verification Paper

Your verification paper needs to be a brief write-up containing the following information:

Date:

Certified Translator's Name:

ATA Membership Number:

Title of Publication, Article, Book, Webinar, or educational tool:

Author/Speaker (if applicable):

Length:

Please give short answers to the following questions:

1. How does the material relate to the translation or interpreting professions?
2. How would you summarize this material?
3. What did you gain from this material?

Appendix H

Frequently Asked Questions about the ATA Certification Program

Q: What is the most common avoidable mistake?

A: Careless omissions. When you finish a passage, take a minute to check whether you have omitted a title, a heading, an item in a bullet list, a sentence, or an entire paragraph.

Q: Can I take more than one test at a sitting?

A: You may only take one test at an exam sitting.

Q: Do I need to bring a calculator to convert measures, distances, money, and the like?

A: You are not expected to make these mathematical conversions. You will not be penalized if you convert correctly, but you will if the conversion is wrong.

Q: Can I break a long, complicated sentence into two or more shorter ones?

A: Yes, provided nothing is added or omitted to change the meaning.

Q: What should I do if I find an error in the source text?

A: If you find a typographical error, please tell us in a note at the end of your translation of that passage. (Do not just write it on the exam passage itself—it might not be noticed.) If it is clear from the context what the correct spelling or wording should be, adjust your translation accordingly. Example: *Brot un Butter* instead of *Brot und Butter* (do not translate as *bread an butter*). If the error is debatable, do the best you can with what is there. Example: If you think *odd style* should really be *old style*, translate *odd style* and add a note suggesting that there is a typo. If you translate *old style* and you're wrong about the typo, an error will be marked.

Q: When will I find out whether I passed or failed?

A: Allow at least 16 weeks. There are periods of the year with a high concentration of exam sittings and the waiting period may increase.

Q: Why does it take so long?

A: The exams are sent to ATA Headquarters and then sent to two graders (working translators in the United States and abroad who receive an honorarium for their services to this ATA program). If these graders disagree on the pass/fail outcome of an exam, they consult each other to seek agreement. If they cannot reach agreement, the exam is sent to a third grader, who in turn may consult with the initial graders or other graders in the workgroup. These steps can add substantial time to the grading process. After the graded exams are returned to Headquarters, the results are recorded and you are notified by mail.

Q: Does the grader know who I am?

A: No.

Q: When will I get my exam back to see my errors?

A: The exam is a no-comment, no-return exam. You will be notified only whether you pass or fail.

Q: Is there any way to see my exam and the marked errors?

A: If you pass, you will not see your exam. If you fail, the Certification Review process allows you to see your exam and the marked errors.

Q: How do I apply for a review?

A: The review process, like all other components of the Certification Program is only open to current members of ATA. You must remain a member of ATA in order to apply for an examination review. You have six months from the date that you receive your exam results to pay a fee of \$250 per passage and apply for a review, but the review will not take place until new exam passages are issued in January of the following year. The policy and request forms are available on the ATA website. If you apply for a review during the same exam year in which you took the exam, your test should be sent to a grader in January of the following year. If you apply for a review after January, reviews will be batched and completed periodically.

Q: Why can't ATA schedule the exam in my hometown?

A: ATA only schedules the exams given at the Annual Conference. Other exams are scheduled by local groups and chapters, by agencies, or by translators who combine their efforts to schedule a sitting. If an affordable site is available and a certified ATA member is willing to serve as proctor, an exam sitting can be held for a small group of candidates. Contact ATA Headquarters or visit the ATA website for more information.

Q: How does a person become a grader for the ATA Certification Program?

A: Graders are selected from among ATA members who are certified in the language combination they will grade. Some are translators who performed especially well on the examination; others are recommended by current graders, or express an interest to the program administrator at ATA Headquarters. As part of the selection process, potential graders are asked to grade a previously marked exam, which is then reviewed to determine that the grading conforms to the established grading guidelines.

Being a grader also requires special talents. Not all good translators make good graders. Grading requires a mix of translation skill and knowledge in the source language and the target language, flexibility, creativity, an open mind, and a commitment to ATA and the profession. We are looking for a few good graders to join some of our grading workgroups. The invitation is open to anyone who is currently certified by ATA. Graders are paid a stipend. Please contact ATA Headquarters for more information.

Q: How often are the exam passages changed?

A: So that candidates who fail can take the exam again, new passages are introduced at the beginning of each calendar year. In addition, passages may be modified or new passages introduced at any time during the exam year. Because passages may be used again, candidates are bound by a confidentiality agreement not to discuss or reveal the contents of the examination. Violation of this agreement may be grounds for loss of certification.

Q: I'm a well-respected medical [legal, technical] translator, but I can't seem to pass the certification exam. Why not?

A: The only way to be sure of the reasons you failed is to apply for review. If you don't want to do that, another option is to take a practice test, which will give you some feedback on the types of errors you may be making. Keep in mind that the exam is not directed at one particular specialty area.

Q: I have X years of experience as a translator already. Is the practice test of any value for me?

A: Again, the practice test is a way for you to see what a certification passage is like, how it is graded, and what types of pitfalls to avoid when taking the exam.

Q: How does the practice test program work?

A: Practice tests are exam passages from previous years, graded by the same people who grade the exams. Your practice test will be returned with any errors marked and explained.

Q: How will certification help me? Will it guarantee me a job?

A: ATA certification will not guarantee you work, but it can help. While there are other ways to prove yourself in the marketplace, language services companies and clients often look for certification as an initial criterion when hiring a translator. ATA certification is the only widely recognized measure of competence in translation.

Q: Once I become certified, is the credential good indefinitely?

A: The credential is also only available to members and is only valid as long as ATA membership is maintained. There is also a requirement for continuing education, to be reported every three years, in order to maintain the credential.