

# LEGALIZATION OF DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY ACCREDITED SCHOOLS IN THE U.S.A.

## HOW ARE US-GENERATED EDUCATION CREDENTIALS LEGALIZED?

For Education credentials and Degrees awarded in the US to be recognized in Italy, a *Dichiarazione di valore* (A Statement of Value ) is needed.

*Dichiarazione di valore* is the statement that must accompany any official foreign academic degree and all related academic papers (diploma and transcript, etc.). This document is required by all Italian Universities and schools to formally evaluate a non EU degree.

*Dichiarazione di valore* is not an academic evaluation. It is instead a certification of the document's legal value in the United States and is intended to provide required information to the Italian Education Institutions that will perform a thorough evaluation of the foreign academic career and degree toward accreditation in Italy.

The Italian Consulate in the area where the foreign degree was issued can prepare a *Dichiarazione di valore* only after all original, a certified academic documents, presented by the applicant, with apostille attached and thorough translation into Italian, have been verified and confirmed.

*Dichiarazione di valore* will not be issued separate from the official foreign degree it refers to and it will become invalid if it separates or detaches from the academic documents it describes.

*Dichiarazione di valore* used for work or recognition of professional credentials in Italy are subject to a fee. Fees are adjusted every quarter due to the Euro/US Dollar exchange rate fluctuations.

Processing time is approximately four to six weeks, if the documentation is complete.

All documents will be returned by regular mail. A prepaid, pre-addressed envelope must be enclosed in your application. Checks, cash and overseas C.O.D. shipments ARE NOT ACCEPTED.

The documents will be returned only to the original Applicant. The Applicant is in charge of contacting the Secretary of State to have his/her documents apostilled.

The Italian education system does not accept school/academic documents mailed directly from the issuing American school/university in sealed envelopes as proof of authenticity.

## WHY MUST DOCUMENTS BE STAPLED WITH APOSTILLE BEFORE A DICHIARAZIONE DI VALORE IS ISSUED ?

The Italian Government and its agencies comply with the Hague Convention of October 5, 1961 (approved by the United States of America on October 15, 1981) that requires documents originating in a participating country be accompanied by the Apostille of the Secretary of State to satisfy the requirement of authenticity. The Apostille certifies that the signatures of officials appearing on the original document are true and legitimate.

## Authenticity of Foreign Academic Documents

Foreign academic documents to be used in Italy, in support of any application to an Italian University or to the Italian Labor office, must be original, official and accompanied by the Apostille of the Secretary of State.

In order to receive the Apostille of the Secretary of State, an original academic document must bear the autographed signature (hand signature) of the Registrar (the school authority in charge of school records) affixed on the academic document itself before a duly authorized notary public acknowledging the identity and title of the signer.

A printed signature of the Registrar on a script safe paper transcript will not suffice. The Registrar, or an associate in the office of academic records, should autograph the document and a notary public should witness the signing thus providing the required acknowledgment (statement of veracity of the autograph, the identity, and title of the Registrar) on the original document itself.

***Example of Certification of authenticity by the Registrar:***

This is the original Diploma / transcript issued by this school/University to \_\_\_\_ (full name of the student as it appears on the records) .

\_\_\_\_\_, The Registrar.

(Date, autograph and printed name of the Registrar)

***Example of acknowledgment of the notary public:***

On this day \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_\_, before me came \_\_\_\_ (full name of the Registrar whose signature has to be acknowledged ) \_\_\_\_\_, to me known to be the individual who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged that he/she executed the same.

State of \_\_\_\_\_

County of \_\_\_\_\_

Notary commission expires on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, Notary Public

(Date, autograph and printed name of the Registrar)

To avoid spoiling the art of the original Diploma (display diploma), the Registrar's statement of authenticity can be written on its back side. On a transcript or report card, the Registrar's statement of authenticity can be written at the end of the transcript or anywhere there is a blank space.

Again, the statement of authenticity should be written on the original diploma and official transcript. A notarized copy of a transcript and diploma will not be accepted. If you have lost or misplaced your original diploma and are unable to present it, you should ask the Registrar of the school or University to issue a duplicate or substitute statement of diploma on letterhead paper of the institution. In this case you should also write a statement to this Consulate stating that you are unable to present the original diploma because it is lost and you are instead providing an official duplicate or substitute statement of diploma issued by the school.

Please be aware that Notaries Public are more accustomed to executing a photocopy of a document than performing a notarial service called acknowledgement. This is because acknowledging the identity and signature of a person, requires that person to sign in front of the notary and present valid identification. Of course, that is possible only when the notary is also a staff member of the school or university and can witness the Registrar's signature when done in his/her presence. It is suggested that you inquire with the school/university about who is the staff member with a notary mandate by the State. For better explanation of the process you can also remind

the notary of the following regulations:

### **How does a notary identify a signer?**

A notary identifies a signer by carefully examining the identification presented by that person and comparing the signatures the person has made on the document with the signature on the identification or by personal knowledge. Proper "ID" should include a photograph and signature such as a driver's license or passport. It is also considered sufficient identification if, under oath, a credible witness personally known to the notary public identifies the person.

### **Can a notary notarize their own signature or the signatures of relatives?**

A notary cannot notarize his or her own signature. A notary is to be an impartial witness. The law does not forbid notaries from notarizing the signatures of relatives. However, if the notarized document was ever the subject of a court suit, a judge might determine the notary was not an impartial witness.

Also, on the official documents no other marks or signatures by pen should appear other than those required above. Any marks made by you on the official document will be considered an alteration and invalidate the document.

Once your document has been certified as authentic through the above process, you should mail it to the Secretary of State with your request for an Apostille for Italy. To know more about the Apostille and how to obtain it via postal service, visit the web site of the Secretary of State of the State where your document was issued.

This Consulate General of Italy in San Francisco will process academic documents issued in **Alaska, California** (**except** the following counties, which are under the jurisdiction of the Italian Consulate in Los Angeles: Imperial Valley, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Santa Barbara, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Ventura) **Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington, American Territories of Samoa, American Territory of Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Johnston Atoll, Wake Island, Midways Islands**. If you have obtained your degrees in States other than those mentioned, you should contact the Consulate General of Italy in the United States that covers that territory for information on the Secretary of State in that area. The academic office of the same Consulate is also in charge of verifying the correctness of the process and issue the consular certification and validation called dichiarazione di valore required by the Italian authorities for any foreign academic document.

See the website of the Secretary of State in your State for information on how to obtain an apostille by mail:

CALIFORNIA: <http://www.sos.ca.gov/notary/authentication/>

UTAH: <http://www.authentications.utah.gov/process.html>

IDAHO: <http://www.sos.idaho.gov/NOTARY/apostille/index.html>

MONTANA: <http://sos.mt.gov/Notary/Apostilles/index.asp>

WASHINGTON: <http://www.sos.wa.gov/corps/apostilles/>

HAWAII: <http://ltgov.hawaii.gov/the-office/apostilles-and-certifications/>

ALASKA: <http://ltgov.alaska.gov/Mallott/notaries/authentications.html>

## List of documents required to obtain a Dichiarazione di Valore, by level of school

### 1. PRIMARY SCHOOL (K-8)

The student's legal guardian will act on behalf of the student.

- Application Form (annex 1)
- **Original school report card**, signed by the principal or keeper of records. The “**Apostille**” seal of the Secretary of State **legalizing the signature of the above-mentioned school official MUST be attached to the report card.**

**-Word-for-word Italian translation of the report card.** The translation must be complete and accurate. Handwritten translations will not be accepted.

Translations of transcripts must show the grades exactly as they are on the originals (A, B, C, etc.). Translations by the applicants can be accepted.

- A copy of the **applicant's passport (and his/her legal guardian's if the applicant is a minor)**
- A prepaid, pre- addressed envelope **must be enclosed in your application bundle.**
- Please note that checks and overseas C.O.D. shipments are NOT accepted.

### 2. HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9 TO 12) (only for US residents, NOT for Italian exchange students)

- Application Form (annex 1)
- Authentic “**official transcript**”, signed by the principal, counselor or keeper of records. The “**Apostille**” of the Secretary of State **legalizing the signature of the above-mentioned school official MUST be attached to it** (in order to obtain an Apostille on a document, the school official's signature must be acknowledged by a notary public).
- **Original “diploma” degree** duly signed by the principal, counselor or keeper of records. the “**Apostille**” seal of the Secretary of State **MUST be attached to it** (as above);
- **Word-for-word Italian translation** of all of the documents. The translation must be complete and accurate. Handwritten translations will NOT be accepted. Translations of transcripts must show the grades exactly as they are on the originals (A, B, C, etc.).

- A copy of the **applicant's passport** (and his/her legal guardian's if the applicant is a minor)
- A prepaid, pre-addressed envelope **must be enclosed in your application bundle**. Please note that checks and overseas C.O.D. shipments are NOT accepted.

### 3. HIGH SCHOOL (Italian Exchange Student)

PLEASE REMEMBER: YOUR DOCUMENTATION MUST BE LEGALIZED AND FINALIZED **BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE JURISDICTION OF SAN FRANCISCO**

#### Required documents:

- Application Form (annex 1)
- Authentic "**official transcript**", signed by the principal, counselor or keeper of records. The "**Apostille**" of the Secretary of State **legalizing the signature of the above-mentioned school official MUST be attached to it** (in order to obtain an Apostille on a document, the school official's signature must be acknowledged by a notary public). The official transcript must bear the **date of start and end of the program** as well as the **grading system** adopted by the school.
- a **letter from the exchange program Association, acknowledging the applicant's participation to the exchange program,**
- **Word-for-word Italian translation** of all of the documents above. The translation must be complete, accurate and formatted as the original transcript. Handwritten translations will NOT be accepted. Translations of transcripts must show the grades exactly as they are on the originals (A, B, C, etc.).
- A copy of the **applicant's passport** (and his/her legal guardian's if the applicant is a minor)
- A prepaid, pre-addressed envelope **must be enclosed in your application bundle**. Please note that checks and overseas C.O.D. shipments are NOT accepted.
- International vouchers in lieu of stamps are NOT accepted.

### 4. COLLEGE – HIGHER EDUCATION DEGREES (AA – BA/BS – MA/MS – JD - Ph.D/ED, Professional Certificates, Licenses)

- Application Form (annex 1)
- A copy of the **applicant's passport**
- Original **official Transcript**, The "**Apostille**" of the Secretary of State **MUST** be attached to the transcript

- **Original Diploma**, signed by the university keeper of records and duly acknowledged by the notary public. The “**Apostille**” of the Secretary of State **MUST** be attached to the original Diploma.
- **Word-for-word Italian translation** of the above-mentioned documents. The translation must be complete and accurate. Handwritten translations are **NOT** accepted. **The terms “Associate Degree” “Bachelor”, “Master” and “PhD’s “ MUST remain in their original denomination.**
- For **DOCTORAL DEGREES (Ph.D., EDs ) Required documents: original Transcript and original Diploma.** Evidence of criteria and requirements to admission to Doctoral Programs, minimum and maximum duration of the program, graduation requirements.
  - a) **ASSOCIATE DEGREE or a BACHELOR.**  
**Required documents: original Transcript and original High School Diploma**  
**Italian translation** of all of the documents.
  - b) **MASTER:**  
**Required documents: original Transcript** with Apostille, **original BA/BS Diploma with Apostille.**  
**Italian translation** of all of the documents.
- **A prepaid, pre- addressed envelope must be enclosed in your application bundle.**
- Please note that checks, cash, overseas C.O.D. shipments are **NOT** accepted.