

Academic Transcript Translation & Legalisation Guide for Austria (2025)

Step-by-step instructions for applicants to Austrian universities (Bachelor, Master, PhD)

This guide summarizes common requirements used by Austrian universities and public authorities. Always verify program-specific rules on the target university website and with the competent Austrian authority/embassy.

At a Glance (Quick Checklist)

1. **Identify your situation:** Determine the country where your documents were issued and whether they need an *apostille*, *full legalisation*, or are exempt by agreement.
2. **Prepare originals:** Obtain official *final* documents (diplomas, transcripts, degree statements). Make sure names and dates match your passport.
3. **Legalise the originals in the issuing country:** *Apostille* for Hague Convention states; *full legalisation* where required (often a multi-step chain ending at the Austrian embassy/consulate).
4. **Translate after legalisation:** Use a *sworn/court-certified translator*. The translator must see and include the legalisation/apostille in the translation package.
5. **Prepare copies:** Follow the university's rules for certified/simple copies and file format (usually PDF for online submission).
6. **Submit on time:** Keep scans of originals, legalisations, and translations together. Bring originals for enrolment if required.

Scope

This guide covers academic documents intended for **use in Austria**, e.g., transcripts and diplomas submitted to Austrian universities for admission or recognition. If you need to use Austrian documents abroad, see §.

Key Concepts

- **Legalisation:** A formal act confirming authenticity of signature/seal and capacity of the signer on a public document for international use.
- **Apostille:** A simplified form of legalisation used between members of the Hague Apostille Convention. Replaces further consular legalisation.
- **Full legalisation:** A longer, country-specific chain of authentications when the apostille does not apply. Often ends with the Austrian mission abroad.
- **Sworn (court-certified) translation:** Translation performed by a translator registered and certified according to Austrian (or relevant) law.¹

¹See §.

Step-by-Step Guide

Step 0 — Collect and verify your originals

- a) Request **final, official** documents: transcript(s), diploma/degree certificate, and (if applicable) proof of grading scale.
- b) Ensure all data (names, dates of birth, titles) matches your passport. Correct any errors before legalisation/translation.
- c) Ask your target university which **documents and formats** they require (e.g., certified copies, digital uploads, sealed envelopes).

Step 1 — Determine what kind of legalisation you need

- a) **Countries with recognition agreements (no legalisation):** Some countries have bilateral/multilateral agreements with Austria under which *no legalisation or apostille* is required. Check your issuing country against the current list provided by Austrian institutions.²
- b) **Apostille (Hague Convention):** If your issuing country is a party to the Hague Apostille Convention, obtain an *apostille* from the competent authority in that country. Apostille *replaces* consular legalisation.
- c) **Full legalisation:** If apostille does not apply, follow your country's full legalisation chain (often: ministry of education → foreign affairs → Austrian embassy/consulate).

Step 2 — Get the legalisation on your original documents

Option A: Apostille

Typical sequence (your country may differ):

1. Pre-authentication if required (e.g., by your institution or a competent authority).
2. Submit original to the **apostille authority** in the issuing country.
3. Receive the apostille *on the original* or attached by an additional sheet. Keep everything stapled/bound as issued.

Tip: Apostilles are issued only by authorities in the **issuing country**. Austrian bodies do not apostille foreign documents.

Option B: Full legalisation

1. Complete all **domestic** authentications required in the issuing country (university/ministry/notary, then Ministry of Foreign Affairs or equivalent).
2. Present the document to the **Austrian embassy/consulate** responsible for the issuing country for final legalisation.³

²Examples of countries often listed under mutual recognition agreements include: Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia. Always verify the **current** list before proceeding.

³Many Austrian universities explicitly require that, after domestic legalisation, documents be legalised by the competent Austrian representation.

Step 3 — Arrange certified translation (*after* legalisation)

- a) **Timing:** Translate *after* legalisation, because the apostille/legalisation stamp must also be translated.
- b) **Language:** Most Austrian universities accept documents in **German or English**. If your documents are in another language, a translation is mandatory.
- c) **Who may translate:** Use a **sworn/court-certified translator** (“beeidete/r Gerichtsdolmetscher/in”) registered in Austria or a suitably certified translator abroad (check university policy). The translation package typically includes: translator’s stamp/signature, a copy of the original and its legalisation, and pagination tying them together.
- d) **Where to find translators in Austria:** Search the official register of court-certified interpreters/translators; many universities link to it.

Step 4 — Prepare copies and submit

- a) **Digital submission:** Scan originals, legalisation, and translation as **one PDF per document type**, preserving all seals and attachments.
- b) **Certified vs. simple copies:** Follow your program’s rules. Some steps (e.g., enrolment) may require **certified paper copies** or presentation of **originals**. When in doubt, bring originals to Austria.
- c) **File naming/metadata:** Use clear names (e.g., Surname_DegreeCertificate_Apostille_EN.pdf). Keep a checklist (see below).

Country & Scenario Guide

EU/EEA or countries with mutual recognition	Usually no legalisation needed for public documents covered by the agreement; verify your country’s status and any university-specific rules.
Hague Apostille countries	Obtain apostille from the issuing country; then translate in German or English by a sworn/certified translator.
Non-apostille countries	Follow the full legalisation chain in the issuing country and then at the Austrian mission . Afterwards, arrange sworn translation.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Translating *before* legalisation (the legalisation itself must be translated).
- Removing staples/rivets from apostilles or legalisation attachments.
- Using non-certified translations where a sworn translator is required.
- Submitting partial scans that omit the back side or the legalisation page.

Practical Timeline (indicative)

Start planning **8–12 weeks** before deadlines (varies by country and season). Legalisation and translation times differ by authority and language pair; plan extra time for embassy appointments and postal return.

Useful Links (verify the latest rules)

- Austria MFA (BMEIA): Documents, Authentication, Apostille — <https://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/travel-stay/documents-and-authentications/>
- University guidance (examples): University of Vienna (legalisation/translation), Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU) (apostille vs full legalisation).
- Official registers of sworn translators/interpreters in Austria (Gerichtsdolmetscher).
- Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH): Apostille authorities by country.

Templates

Email to ask your university about legalisation/translation

Subject: Question about legalisation and translation requirements (Applicant: **Name**, Program: **Program Name**)

Dear Admissions Team,

I plan to apply for **Program Name** (entry term **Term/Year**). My degree documents were issued in **Country**. Could you confirm whether **apostille/full legalisation** is required and whether translations by **Austrian sworn translators/foreign certified translators** are accepted?

Thank you in advance.

Kind regards,

Name

Personal Checklist

#	Item	Done
1	Original diploma/degree certificate (final)	☐
2	Official transcript(s) with grading scale	☐
3	Legalisation determined (agreement / apostille / full)	☐
4	Apostille or full legalisation obtained on originals	☐
5	Sworn/court-certified translation <i>after</i> legalisation	☐
6	Certified copies prepared (if required)	☐
7	PDFs created (complete, legible, all pages)	☐
8	Submission portal upload completed	☐
9	Originals prepared to present at enrolment (if required)	☐

FAQs

Do I need to legalise documents already issued in English? Yes, language and legalisation are *separate*—many universities require legalisation regardless of language.

Can I translate in my home country? Often yes, but the translator must be appropriately certified/recognised. Some universities require Austrian court-certified translators; check your program rules.

Will a notarised translation suffice? Not necessarily. Universities typically request *sworn/court-certified* translations; a general “notarised” translation may not meet requirements.

For Austrian documents being used abroad

If your documents were issued **in Austria** and must be used abroad, higher-education documents typically need attestation by the competent Austrian ministry (e.g., *BMBWF*), followed by an apostille or consular legalisation by the *BMEIA*. Consult the destination country's rules.

Disclaimer: This guide is informational and does not replace official instructions by Austrian authorities or your target university. Always consult the latest requirements published by the *Bundesministerium für europäische und internationale Angelegenheiten (BMEIA)*, the *Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH)*, and your program's admissions page.