

Get your British diploma legalised

FAQs

December 2021

Which of my educational documents are accepted in Bulgaria?

If you need to use your UK diploma in Bulgaria, or elsewhere in the world, you may need to get it legalised (obtain an apostille). Please ensure you consult all relevant institutions and check any deadlines you may have to comply with, as these procedures can be time-consuming and costly.

What documents do I need for a driving licence?

A copy of a document for completion of at least the first high school year of secondary education, and in case the education was completed in a foreign country – a certificate under Art. 110, para. 2 of Ordinance No. 11 of 1 September 2016 for evaluating the results of students' studies.

Once your secondary education diploma is certified and legalised in the UK, you will need to translate it in Bulgarian (by a sworn translator) and the translation should be legalised by the Legalisation Office in Bulgaria. You will need to submit a valid ID document or a valid residency permit when applying.

When you have your diploma translated and legalised in Bulgarian, you can submit it to your local [Regional Management for Education \(RUO\)](#). They will provide you with a decision letter allowing your British diploma to be recognised and used locally in Bulgaria.

What documents do I need to continue my education in Bulgaria?

The procedure via RUO is the same when **the diploma is needed to allow enrolment onto higher or secondary education programmes in Bulgaria**. You need to consult and make the submission of your legalised diploma to the RUO in your area.

The process may vary if you are practicing a regulated profession, and your diploma is in a regulated field, or is a specific professional diploma. In those cases, you may get your diploma recognised, but you also may be subject to additional exams or interviews to obtain local permissions to practice. If you are in a regulated profession, your qualification submission may need to be further provided to the local ministry responsible for the field, e.g., Ministry of Health, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, etc.

[National Centre for Information and Documentation \(NACID\)](#) is the organisation which holds the Archives for all legalised documents and will inform you if you need an apostille.

British diplomas for Higher Education from recognised providers are recognised in Bulgaria since 2016 and do not require legalisation. The NACID decision is not affected by EU Exit.

If you wish to use your British diploma to continue your education in the United Kingdom you will not require legalisation, verification or translation of your certificates.

How do I certify and legalise my UK diploma?

Please find below a more detailed description of what you need to do to certify and legalise your UK diploma.

First make sure that you have the correct documents:

- Higher Education diploma and academic transcript

Please have a look at the [List of recognised UK education providers](#).

We refer to Bachelor, Master, PhD, and other higher education diplomas issued by a UK university.

Academic transcripts are also called Supplements, or Notification of results, Summary or Statement of Results, and they are all the same type of document.

The Diploma and the Academic transcript are two separate documents, which can be used individually if needed, so **check with the institution** which one or both are required.

- Secondary Education diplomas

Recognised official UK examinations boards and qualification types are as follows:

GCSE, IGCSE, GCE, NVQ, BTEC and National Diploma qualifications issued by one of the recognised examinations boards.

The 5 boards in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are:

- [AQA](#)
- [Council for Curriculum and Examinations Assessment \(CCEA\)](#)
- [Pearson Edexcel](#)
- [Oxford, Cambridge, and RSA Exams \(OCR\)](#)
- [Welsh Joint Examinations Committee \(WJEC\)](#)

Contact the [Scottish Qualifications Authority \(SQA\)](#) for Scottish qualifications.

If you have various certificates, issued by different examination boards, you may be able to submit only one of the certificates for verification and legalisation. You need to submit all certificates in original, issued for the same candidate, in the same exam centre for the same exam session (e.g., June 2016, City College).

If they are issued for different examination sessions the most recent diploma should be used, however this is not mandatory.

- Primary School reports and letters

The provision of Notarial Services at the British Embassy is very limited. The [British Embassy Sofia](#) can make a certified copy of a document. In the United Kingdom primary schools do not issue a diploma. They issue a letter or report, which can be certified by the Embassy. The Consular team of the British Embassy in Sofia cannot facilitate the process of legalising a document. For more information about how to legalise a document, please liaise with the [Legalisation Office](#). Please have a look [at the notarial services the British Embassy in Sofia can provide](#).

For reports or other formal letter documents to be accepted by the Embassy they need to be issued in original and bear the school's stamp or official signature. Letters issued on school letterhead paper without stamp, or an official signature may not be accepted.

Now let's look at the process:

- Certification

This is the process where a 'true copy' of the document is certified and stamped by authorised official or a registered UK notary public or solicitor. A certified copy can only be issued to an original document, issued by recognised UK educational bodies, and bearing the security features of the originals. The officers completing the certification are not permitted to disclose the security features. IELTS certificates cannot be photocopied and certified.

The British Council in Bulgaria does not offer this service.

- Verification

This is the process where the authenticity of the documents is checked. For higher education diplomas, the system for conducting checks is unified, but some universities have separate processes. The examinations board is contacted for secondary education diplomas.

The verification is complete when the issuing body confirms that they issued the diploma, and it is their original certificate. The verification process is mandatory before legalising an original diploma. These checks are conducted by a British Council official authorised to verify documents.

The British Council in Bulgaria does not offer this service.

Please also find below information about the examination board requirements to complete the verification process.

Pearson Edexcel and BTEC diplomas	They require two forms of different valid IDs for the candidates, consent form to submit
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<p>Online Verification System</p>	<p>information to a third party and a fee. The fee for standard request is 47 GBP and it is completed within 20 working days. For an express service the fee is 67 GBP, and it takes 5 working days. The express service is not available for BTEC diploma holders. In the section for additional comments a needed specification is added to clarify if it is a request for verification only or for replacement documents to be issued.</p>
<p>AQA via Verifications@aqaco.uk</p>	<p>43 GBP for every document. The fee must be paid via bank transfer to AQA; they require valid candidate ID and 20 working days to complete.</p>
<p>Cambridge International Examinations (C1 Advanced, C2 Proficiency, CELTA, DELTA, GCE, IGCSE and GCSE) via info@cambridgeinternational.co.uk</p>	<p>22.50 GBP for each document, request form and valid candidate ID. They have 28 working days timeframe for completion.</p> <p>The request for CELTA or DELTA diplomas is free of charge. Language qualifications such as C1 Advanced, for example, usually are only available for certification, and that is sufficient for the institutions.</p>
<p>OCR Online Verifications System</p>	<p>50 GBP per document valid candidate ID and 6 weeks for completion.</p>
<p>WJEC via email</p>	<p>30 or 35 GBP for every document submitted. Candidates need to pay directly to the examinations board and submit a filled in request form.</p>
<p>SQA via email</p>	<p>No fee for the submission, it is submitted via email in writing, again with consent from the candidate, and a valid ID document.</p>
<p>CCEA via email</p>	<p>No fee for the submission is required. Candidate ID and consent form must be submitted to the examinations board via email. The check is completed within 10 working days.</p>

- Legalisation

Legalisation has two meanings: on the one hand this is the process whereby the document obtains an APOSTILLE. This is a stamp provided on the back of the diploma. The only institution which can provide an APOSTILLE for British diplomas is [FCDO Legalisation Office](#).

Legalisation is also the process whereby a notary legalises a translation or a copy of the document with their stamp. The translation must be completed by a 'sworn translator' meaning they have the right to translate official documents. British Council offices do not offer this service in most cases.

APOSTILLE costs 30 GBP per document. In order to legalise a document, you need to apply [online via FCDO Legalisation portal](#) **ONLY** and pay online. They do not accept applications in person and candidates cannot complete the process at FCDO's offices. The documents should be submitted via courier or royal mail to the UK. At the moment, the timeframe for completion is 10 working days. There is a fast-track service available only for businesses registered and based in the UK within 2 working days.

Please find below FCDO Legalisation Office contact details:

Legalisation Office

legalisation@fcdo.gov.uk

Telephone: 03700 00 22 44

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

[Find out about call charges](#)

What can I do if I am still in the UK?

If you are based in the UK, **or before you relocate to a country where you will need to legalise your diploma**, you can seek the services for the initial mandatory verification or certification from a local, registered UK solicitor or notary public. In these cases, they provide a certified copy of the diploma, which is then sent to FCDO Legalisation Office for an APOSTILLE. Via this route the need for verification and stamping the original document is circumvented. The conditions, timeframe and fees for these services will depend on the selected office. You will still need to submit the original diploma in most cases, so the certified copy can be made.

Educational documents NOT eligible for these services

Legalisation, verification, or certification cannot be completed on documents that are not original.

These services cannot be provided for the following documents:

- Photocopies, printouts, documents submitted in PDF;

www.britishcouncil.org

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- IELTS and other diplomas or certificates which have an expiration date;
 - Documents that do not bear the official stamp and/or signature of the institution that has issued them;
 - For ID, marital documents, drivers' licence and deed polls, these notary or document services must be directed to the local British Embassy or High Commission;
 - IB certificates can be verified and apostilled by the UK institutions only in the instances they were issued by a recognised UK programme or college.