

International Certification Study: Accreditation Program in Brazil

By Jiri Stejskal

In the June issue of the *ATA Chronicle*, I introduced the ATA International Certification Study, which explores the possibilities of cooperation with foreign organizations of translators and interpreters. The following is an adaptation of a letter received from Astrid Figueiredo and Vagner Fracassi, head and deputy head of the ABRATES Accreditation Committee.

The Brazilian Translators Association, ABRATES (Associação Brasileira de Tradutores), is among the FIT member organizations which expressed interest in cooperation with ATA and other fellow members of FIT. According to the information supplied by the ABRATES representatives, ABRATES is solely responsible for the accreditation program for translators. ABRATES, a sister organization of SINTRA (Brazilian Translators Union), was established to develop cultural, educational, and social activities to benefit Brazilian translators. To stress the convergence of the interests of both SINTRA and ABRATES, the two organizations currently have the same board of directors.

The accreditation program developed by ABRATES tests professional translator skills. Those translators who pass the exam are entitled to a certificate and can refer to their accreditation on résumés, business cards, etc. Only members of ABRATES can participate in the program. To be a member of ABRATES, a translator must produce evidence of graduation in specific and recognized translation or interpretation courses, or effective and proven experience working as fully qualified professional translator. There are no restrictions to the participation of foreigners in the program, provided that they have enrolled as ABRATES members.

ABRATES's accreditation program aims at the objective recognition of professional skills of translators by submitting the translator to specific texts to evaluate his or her translation for adequacy and quality. The examination consists of the translation of three texts, with the use of dictionaries of the candidate's choice, and takes up to three and a half hours. To be considered "satisfactory," the translation of a text of 275-300 words shall not exceed the following limits:

- two important errors; or
- one important error and three complementary errors; or
- no important error and six complementary errors.

To be considered "approved," the translator has to achieve a "satisfactory" grade in the three texts he or she has chosen from the five texts covering the following areas:

- Literary
- Technical

- Medical-scientific
- Legal-commercial
- General

The approved candidates are entitled to an accreditation certificate and can make full use of the accreditation for a period of 10 years while remaining affiliated with ABRATES.

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ABRATES is planning to approach other FIT member organizations to establish a cooperative framework in which ABRATES would administer examinations of translation from a foreign language into Portuguese, and the foreign FIT organization would administer examinations of translation from Portuguese to a foreign language. Such a cooperation would provide reciprocal recognition to accredited translators. Therefore, the recognition of credentials earned through other organizations would be granted by this cooperative framework.

The next article will bring you information on accreditation offered by the South African Translators' Institute. As the editor of this series, I encourage readers to submit any relevant information concerning non-U.S. certification or similar programs, as well as comments on the information published in this series, to my e-mail address at jjiri@cetra.com.

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