

# International Certification Study: OTTIAQ

By Jiri Stejskal

In the last issue we took a look at the so far unavailing, but promising, efforts of the new Czech certification body. In comparison, the Canadian *Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec* (OTTIAQ) not only administers a widely recognized certification process within the province of Quebec, but is also currently reviewing the possibility of mutual recognition of certification by other Canadian translator associations, as per the letter we received last year from Diane McKay, OTTIAQ executive director and secretary.

A little history first. The OTTIAQ was founded in 1940 under the name *Société des traducteurs du Québec* (STQ), making it the oldest association of its type in the province. In 1968, the members of the *Cercle des traducteurs* and the *Corporation des traducteurs professionnels du Québec* joined in to ensure the continuing pursuit of the common goals that had prompted the founding of all three associations. In 1992, the STQ became the *Corporation professionnelle des traducteurs et interprètes agréés du Québec* (CPTIAQ) and in 1994, in compliance with the Act to amend the Professional Code and other Acts respecting the professions, the CPTIAQ changed its name to the *Ordre des traducteurs et interprètes agréés du Québec* (OTIAQ). Finally, in July 2000, the Quebec National Assembly approved the addition of the title “*terminologues*” to its name. Thus, the OTIAQ officially became the *Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec*—the current OTTIAQ.

The OTTIAQ belongs to the Council of Translators and Interpreters of Canada, which comprises 11 associations (eight in the provinces and three in the territories—Yukon and Northwest Territories) and is affiliated with the International Federation of

Translators. Further information on the OTTIAQ is available at [www.ottiaq.org](http://www.ottiaq.org).

Certified members of the OTTIAQ are granted a license entitling them to use the title “certified translator,” “certified terminologist,” or “certified interpreter.” The candidates should have a degree in translation, terminology, or interpretation (or their equivalent) from a university program recognized under OTTIAQ regulations. Then, they must enter a six-month mentoring program organized and

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supervised by the OTTIAQ. This program enables candidates for certificates in translation, terminology, or interpretation to take advantage of the advice and supervision of an experienced mentor, who helps them integrate the standards, regulations, tools, and responsibilities of the profession, along with more formal skills, within a professional context. Candidates should also acquire two years of relevant full-time work experience in their profession (five years for those without a degree in translation, terminology, or interpretation). In addition, all candidates must attend a 12-hour course given by the OTTIAQ, covering the Quebec professional system and OTTIAQ regulations.

The regulations, the full text of which is available at [www.ottiaq.org/en/index.html](http://www.ottiaq.org/en/index.html), describe the certification procedure in great detail. Candidates can initiate the certification process through the OTTIAQ website. The

process consists of the following five steps:

1. The candidate selects whether he or she wants to apply as a translator, terminologist, conference interpreter, or court interpreter.
2. A list of Quebec institutions and B.A. degrees recognized by the OTTIAQ is presented to the candidate. If the candidate holds one of the listed degrees, he or she can proceed to the next step. Otherwise, he or she can contact OTTIAQ's representative to obtain information about equivalency requirements.
3. Candidates enroll in the mentoring program or request equivalency credits after demonstrating that they have at least two years' relevant full-time work experience in translation in the language combination. This combination must include English or French as the source or target language. “Relevant full-time work experience” is defined by the OTTIAQ as follows:

#### For translators:

- Work as a salaried full-time translator for at least two years.
- Work as a salaried part-time translator (at least two years of professional experience and at least 450 days of work experience).
- Translator in private practice or freelance. This requires the equivalent of at least two years of professional experience and translation of at least 220,000 words for the official languages, 160,000 words for Spanish, and 60,000 words for other foreign languages.

#### For terminologists:

- Work as a salaried full-time terminologist for at least two years.
- Work as a terminologist in private practice (freelance or salaried

part-time). This requires the equivalent of at least two years of professional experience and at least 450 days of work.

**For conference interpreters:**

- Work as a salaried full-time conference interpreter for at least two years.
- Work as a conference interpreter in private practice (freelance or salaried part-time). This requires the equivalent of at least two years of professional experience and at least 200 days of work as an interpreter.

**For court interpreters:**

- Work as a salaried full-time court interpreter for at least two years.
- Work as a court interpreter in private practice (freelance or salaried part-time). This requires the equivalent of at least two years of professional experience and at least 400 court sessions worked as an interpreter.

4. The next step in the certification process is the filing of all supporting documentation with the Certification Committee. The documentation required in the process includes:

- Completed application form for OTTIAQ certification;
- Photocopy of the recognized degree;
- Proof of at least two years of relevant full-time work experience; and
- Academic records, including a description of the courses taken and marks obtained.

The candidate also has to pay the application fee of \$120 CDN (plus applicable taxes).

5. Lastly, each candidate has to take a 12-hour training course on pro-

fessional practice standards which covers the following:

- Professional Code;
- OTTIAQ Code of Ethics;
- Other regulations and standards governing professional practice;
- Civil Code of Québec; and
- Act respecting the protection of personal information in the private sector.

Clearly, these are rather stringent requirements, and the certification process is the most complex of the ones we have examined so far. However, criteria for certification have been designed so that the OTTIAQ can fulfill its mission to promote the quality and effectiveness of communication by ensuring that its members have the requisite skills in the fields of translation, terminology, and interpreting. In this way, the OTTIAQ is able to fulfill its mandate to protect the public. If you would like to find out more about the OTTIAQ certification process, please contact Pauline Pomet, OTTIAQ certification coordinator, at [ppomet@ottiaq.org](mailto:ppomet@ottiaq.org).

Next time, we will review the certification process in Finland and Sweden. 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 [jiri@cetra.com](mailto:jiri@cetra.com).

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