

Attestation of documents: What to know



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“Please submit the attested copies of the following documents.” Whether it is for your next job application or the upcoming foreign destination, the chances of you missing this line of instruction is quite slim. Where there is official paperwork, there is a need for attestation. But what exactly is attestation and why do you need to get it done at every step?

What is attestation?

According to Investopedia, an attestation is a certification that a document and the signatures within are valid. In legal terminology, attestation is a third-party validation process of a document. The third-party attesting the authenticity of the document, in this case, is called the attester. Attestation is a formality that is often required to perform in both domestic and international documentation affairs.

Why do we need it?

In literature, attestation refers to the activity of proving something through evidence. And that is the exact reason why attestation is needed. When a document is attested, it is verified as authentic by a certified authority. The attester must be an individual authorised to attest by the Government of Bangladesh. When

the attester attests a document, the liability of testifying to the claims of the certifications falls upon the attester. The procedure ensures the legitimacy of the claims and signatures made in the document.

Which documents require attestation?

Depending on multiple purposes, a wide array of documents may require attestation. Candidates for job interviews usually need their pictures and photocopies of academic certificates attested. On the other hand, for any Bangladeshi citizen planning to fly abroad, attestation is required while submitting the certificates issued in Bangladesh. On the basis of attestation, your original documents become eligible for overseas use.

Who can attest?

Attestation is done by officials authorised to attest by the Government of Bangladesh. Unless mentioned specifically, the first class Gazetted Officers of the People's Republic of Bangladesh holds the authority to verify and attest any document. According to Banglapedia, Gazetted officers are civil servants whose appointments, posting, transfers and other career incidents in

the service are cited in a weekly official gazette series. As they hold managerial/ executive positions in the Government of Bangladesh, they are eligible to attest certificate photocopies and photos of a person. Their attestation requires the officer's signature, and stamp along with an official seal.

On the other hand, Government authorised notary public hold the privilege to attest to some cases. The authority of the Notary public is given to legal practitioners of our country backed by the laws of Notaries Ordinance 1961 and Notaries Rules 1964. For the attestation of documents like land registration documents, promissory notes, bills of exchange, buying of cars, issuing of divorce letters, translated documents, etc, notaries perform attestation with a fixed government-approved fee. Besides Gazetted Officers and Notary Public, Bangladeshi-originated documents need attestation from the Foreign Ministry of Bangladesh for visa purposes. The consular section of the ministry with a cooperative approach with other ministries processes the attestation of such documents.

Other than that, to make work easier, many forms now state multiple options for attester, e.g, the local chairman or ward councillor. But if not mentioned specifically, the attestation done by the Gazetted officers is deemed as the ideal procedure.

Although the purpose of attestation is to solidify certification claims, it is often impossible to compensate for the hassle that follows the process. For a fresh graduate applying for a job, attesting the huge pile of documents every time a job circular comes up is nothing less than harassment. Besides, many Gazetted officers deny attesting documents of unfamiliar people as attestation implies a testimony of authenticity. To avoid such inconvenience and harassment, many choose to forge signatures and use fake seals from the local seal-makers to attest documents for various important purposes. While the practice is completely illegal, it is considered the easiest way out. For the longest of times, attestation of handwritten certificates was the only way to prove originality. But now with the digitalisation of NID and passport, this ancient practice has become obsolete. So many hope that the Digital Bangladesh era will put a stop to the exercise, once and for all.

