

Possibilities for Recognition of Digital Documents

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Gunnar Vaht

Head of the Estonian ENIC/NARIC

Gunnar.vaht@archimedes.ee

Revised Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications (2010, a subsidiary text to the Lisbon Recognition Convention)

Provisions from Paragraphs 25-26:

- In view of the occurrence of falsified documents, verification of the authenticity is important:

whether they have been issued by the institution and to the person indicated in the document, and not altered.

- While certified copies of official documents will be sufficient in most cases, the recognition authorities should be in a position to require originals for the purpose of detecting the use of forgeries.

Revised Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications (2010, a subsidiary text to the Lisbon Recognition Convention)

Provisions from Paragraph 27:

- **States are encouraged to reviews national laws requiring overly complicated authentication procedures, such as full legalisation of all documents, apostilles, etc.**
- **Modern communication tools make it easier to verify the authenticity. Communication between recognition authorities and awarding institutions, between centres in the network.**

Two different issues

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- **Using digital databases**
- **Receiving digital applications**

Very few countries or national examination agencies have **national databases of graduates** with full data and/or access to digital transcript or results of examinations.

- fine and trustworthy

Institutional databases usually only list of graduates

- fine but not fully trustworthy
 - fake databases exist
 - fake verification sites

Digital databases are most useful tools in assessment of foreign qualifications if the database include as much as possible information about examinations and graduation.

1) On-line applications; 2) centralised e-applications; 3) documents by e-mail

1) and 2) are fast and well-organised application systems in admission procedure at HEIs

Main reason of use the system:

- short admission period
- fast submission of applications
- international candidates reside abroad in time of application

All submitted documents will be copies and not official documents.

A HEI may accept these copies according to their internal rules unless it is not regulated at national level.

The responsibility to trust the authenticity of a copy or verification lies with the receiving HEI.

NB! Applications signed digitally mean that attached documents are uploaded by the applicant and are not considered as official and authentic documents.

Receiving digital applications (III)

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Digital documents considered as official in case the e-documents are sent directly by an awarding institution by a certain on-line system.

Competent recognition authority is responsible to check authenticity.

Original documents may have several security features or other features visible on original documents only (watermark, hologram, microtext, ink, etc).

It is very easy to alter a document before scanning it (name of holder, classification, grades, title of degree, field of study, etc).

On-line applications are fast and easy for applicants, but a lot of time and effort putting for credential evaluators/national recognition authorities on verification.

Digital documents or all other forms of relevant data could be considered official, if the documents/data are from the nationally coordinated databases:

- digital diploma
- digital transcript
- digital examination results

If all such e-documents and data are available, paper documents actually will be not needed.

Thank you!