

Response

1. In Trinidad and Tobago the three authorities designated to issue apostilles on public documents are the Registrar General Department, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and the Chief of Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In respect of diplomas and other education documents, the apostille is issued principally by the Ministry of Education and in some circumstances the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

There is no distinction made between diplomas from private as opposed to public institutions. The policy of the Ministry of Education is to authenticate certificates or diplomas from institutions, for which the records of results of Trinidad and Tobago students are lodged with the Ministry. These bodies are the approved institutions through which the Government of Trinidad and Tobago access certification for secondary school students.

The Ministry does not authenticate diplomas or certificates from those institutions for which the results are not lodged in their registry. In such instances, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues apostilles upon prior certification from the relevant institution.

2. Procedure leading to an Apostille in relation to diplomas.

Documents issued with an apostille by the Ministry of Education require no prior certification. When authenticating any certificate or diploma, the Ministry of Education first verifies the details of the results with their official records, and then affixes the apostille.

In respect of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, before a diploma or degree is authenticated prior certification from the Ministry of Education or the relevant University/Institution must be obtained. The certified document is then submitted to the Consular Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which will verify the certification and then affix the apostille. In respect of degrees obtained from the University of the West Indies, the Registrar of the University is the designated officer to make such certification.

3. Competent Authority to issue Apostille.

In respect of the secondary school level certification, the Ministry of Education is the appropriate authority to authenticate education documents considering that the details of the results of these examinations are held as official records at the Ministry. In essence, because these results can be easily verified by the Ministry of Education, they are the most competent authority to issue apostilles for education documents.

4. The Ministry of Education authenticates or issues apostilles in respect of original certificates and certified copies as long as all the details of the results have been checked with the records.

5. **On line Diplomas**

Apostilles are not issued in respect of on line diplomas or certificates.

6. There is no objection on the part of Trinidad and Tobago for including on diplomas for emphasis purposes a statement that the apostille does not authenticate the content of the underlying document.

Legal and Marine Affairs Division