

# TEACHERS COLLEGE

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

525 West 120<sup>th</sup> St. New York, NY 10027  
212-678-3000 | [www.tc.columbia.edu](http://www.tc.columbia.edu)

## TRANSLATION OF STUDY DOCUMENTS AND VERIFICATION OF TRANSLATION ACCURACY

### INTRODUCTION

Translations of study documents are required for research studies submitted to Teachers College (TC) Institutional Review Board (IRB) when the potential participant speaks or reads a language other than English. If researchers plan to individually translate the study documents, they must specify their language fluency in the IRB application.

The use of electronic translator applications (e.g., Google Translate) alone are not appropriate for generating final translations. Such applications should be used in combination with other validated measures for translating documents (e.g., back translate, professional translators, etc.). Ultimately, the accuracy of the translated documents is the researcher's responsibility.

This Verification of Translation Accuracy Form **is not required** for an IRB review or approval. However, in some cases, the researcher may request an expert in the culture of people being studied—including fluency of language—to translate study documents. This form can serve as verification of the translation accuracy.

TC IRB may choose to require a certified translation, to have an independent back-translation, or to have a review of the translated documents by an IRB member or other person who is fluent in that language.

#### **For new studies enrolling:**

- **Only non-English speakers**, study approval will not be granted until the translated documents are reviewed and approved by the IRB. Translated documents can be uploaded for review when it is unlikely the English documents will undergo significant changes, but before the IRB approves the study.
- **Some non-English speakers**, researchers may submit the translated documents for non-English speakers as a modification, especially in cases when translations may take time and non-English speakers are not the primary population of interest. For more information on submitting a modification to TC Mentor IRB, please visit <https://www.tc.columbia.edu/institutional-review-board/how-to-submit/modification/>

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### **Requirements for Translated Documents:**

- Study-related information given to a subject or a subject's legally authorized representative must be in a language understandable to the subject or representative.
- Language should be culturally appropriate for the population to whom the documents are being presented.
- Reading level should be at maximum of a 6<sup>th</sup> grade level for adults or at the reading-level of the child (under age 18 years old).
- Translated documents provided to subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to use.
- The translated versions must reflect the approved English documents.

### **Examples of research documents subject to translation:**

- Verbal consent, permission, or assent scripts.
- Written informed consent, parent permission, or assent documents.
- Information sheets to participants.
- Recruitment materials.
- Study measures (e.g., surveys, questionnaires, interview questions, etc.).
- Letters that are not written in English, such as international ethics committee letters or site permission forms, are to be accompanied by an English translation when submitted to the IRB for review and approval.
- Other documents as requested at the discretion of the IRB.

### **Researchers working with non-English-speaking participants should know these differences:**

- Certified Translator: A professional translator who has successfully completed a certification program or exam providing them with certified translator credentials.
- Interpreter: A person who accompanies researchers, in real time, to convey verbal information to another person in their native language. This person may or may not be credentialed.
- Medical Interpreter: An interpreter who is familiar with medical terminology.
- Non-English speaking: Someone unable to comprehend or has limited comprehension of the English language.
- Translator: A person who converts written materials from English to another language.

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**VERIFICATION OF TRANSLATION ACCURACY FORM**

This Verification of Translation Accuracy Form **is not required** for an IRB review or approval. If you use this form, please upload it with your IRB application and translated documents onto TC Mentor IRB. If you choose to submit your revised translated documents to the IRB through a modification and you use this form, please include it with the revision. Researchers(s) may translate documents but may not verify the accuracy of the translation. The verification may, for example, be provided by a member of the Department of World Languages and Literatures or an individual who has a bachelor's degree in that language. The translator should also demonstrate expertise in the culture of people being studied—including fluency (or mastery) of language—to translate study documents.

**The IRB does not require that a certified translator perform the document translation.** If applicable, the form must be filled out and **signed** by the individual providing the verification. If documents are submitted in multiple languages (e.g., Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, etc.) and require verification from different individuals,

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Name of Researcher(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Title of IRB Protocol: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ IRB Protocol # (e.g., 18-222): \_\_\_\_\_

.....

Name of Verifying Individual (Translator): \_\_\_\_\_

Translator Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Translator Affiliation (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Language Translated (English to Spanish): \_\_\_\_\_

Translator's Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Translator's Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**I, the undersigned, verify that all translated materials related to the above named study reflect the intent and spirit of the English text.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date