

# OA GUIDELINES



## Translation Guidelines for OA Literature

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### INTRODUCTION

OA encourages literature translations to help carry our message around the world. This is an important service to our fellow compulsive eaters. OA grows in countries where compulsive eaters can read program literature in their own language.

The International Publications Committee (IPC) has produced these guidelines to help service bodies that are interested in translating OA literature. We will describe the translation process, explain OA’s legal requirements, and offer suggestions that may be helpful.

If you have questions or need additional support, please contact the World Service Office (WSO) publications manager at [info@oa.org](mailto:info@oa.org). The manager can answer your questions or can put you in touch with members of the IPC.

#### Before you start

Before starting a translation, please check with the WSO to see if the literature you want to translate has already been or is being translated into your language. You can also ask if the literature is scheduled for major revisions soon. Check with your region trustee or WSO to see if financial assistance is available.

It’s a good idea to find out what AA Conference-approved literature is available in the language you are thinking of translating into (especially the AA Big Book). The AA literature may serve as a starting point while OA literature is being translated.

## WHAT IS REQUIRED

### Ensure accurate translations

As a service body that translates literature, OA members trust you to translate accurately.

This means:

- nothing in the original text will be left out;
- nothing will be added to the original text; and
- as closely as a different language allows, the translation will have the same meaning and implication as the original text.

An inaccurate translation may damage a fellow compulsive eater's chance of recovery. Refer to Appendix C for ideas on testing a translation to ensure its accuracy. If you would like more information about making accurate translations, please contact the IPC.

### Complete the two-step license procedure

Each stage of the translation process requires a license agreement.

- License 1 gives permission to translate a particular piece of literature and to circulate the translation for the purpose of validating its accuracy.
- License 2 gives permission to print and distribute the approved translation.

These licenses are formal, legal agreements between your service body and OA, Inc. They state exactly what OA and your service body have agreed to do.

These licenses make it clear that you have permission to translate OA's copyrighted literature. If you translate and distribute the literature without permission, you are breaking the law and possibly affecting OA's ability to be self-supporting.

In the absence of a registered OA group or service body, a small group of interested members can begin the translation process while working toward registering as a service body.

For more explanation of copyright requirements, see Appendix A.

## WHERE TO BEGIN

### Create a translation committee

If you are starting OA in your country, you probably have a lot of work ahead of you. In the beginning, it is common for one or more committed OA members to carry out the service of translating literature. However, the earlier you can form a translation committee with a capable chair, the better. This will avoid overdependence on specific members and will form a structure that allows the process to develop smoothly.

One of the first things your committee will do is establish priorities for the translation work. The committee also needs to decide whether to hire a professional translator, or if not, who will do the translations and if the person is qualified (e.g., bilingual).

What literature should be translated first? You may begin anywhere you choose, but we suggest the following sequence:

#### 1. Translate a glossary of OA's special program words

A license is not needed to translate a list of OA terms.

We've found it helpful to start by compiling a list of program terms in the local language, for example: Higher Power, abstinence, plan of eating, food plan, sponsor, surrender, one day at a time, relapse, program.

These terms appear often in OA literature and need to be translated the same each time they appear. If possible, compile this list with group members so your translator or translation service can begin with a consensus.

If you are planning to use a professional translator, we suggest that you translate these terms yourselves and give a copy of the resulting glossary to the translator before he or she starts. Also, it can be useful to prepare notes on difficult words and perhaps create a list of idiomatic English phrases. Explain that it is important to translate every word in its proper context.

## 2. Translate the Steps and Traditions

Next, we suggest translating the Steps and Traditions. These lists contain words and ideas that occur frequently in the literature. Because the Steps and Traditions appear in most of the literature, you will not need to translate them each time you translate a new piece.

You will need to complete the two-step license process for translating the lists of Steps and Traditions.

## 3. Translate basic pamphlets

The OA literature listed below gives basic information about the OA program and how we use the program to recover from compulsive eating.

Working on these pamphlets will give you a good grounding in the OA program and recovery. Because they are short, you can soon have literature available for all who speak your language. The two-step licensing process is needed for each pamphlet you translate.

We suggest choosing any of the literature items below that have not already been translated into your language:

*About OA*

*A Commitment to Abstinence*

*A Plan of Eating*

*A Program of Recovery*

*A Guide for Sponsors*

*Dignity of Choice*

*Is Food a Problem for You?*

*Guide for Leading Newcomers Meetings*

*Pocket Reference for OA Members*

*Questions and Answers*

*Suggested Meeting Format*

*The Tools of Recovery*

*To the Newcomer*

## 4. Translate *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* book

*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Overeaters Anonymous* is the book probably most important for our recovery.

We've found it helpful to begin by translating one or two chapters. This will enable you to see how well things are going and to have part of the book available for members to use much sooner than if you attempt the whole book at once.

How you decide to do it will depend partly on whether it is being translated by a professional translator or by OA members.

If you start by translating one or two chapters, you need to apply for License 1, which allows you to translate and distribute for validation purposes part of a piece of literature or the whole document.

## 5. Translate other OA books

After the OA *Twelve and Twelve*, you may consider translating the following books:

*For Today*

*Voices of Recovery*

*Overeaters Anonymous, Third Edition* (referred to as the Brown Book)

## ALL ABOUT LICENSES

OA owns the copyright for all OA literature and spends considerable time and money to develop the literature. Revenues from literature sales make up a large portion of OA's income.

If service bodies translate OA literature without a license, it could be difficult for OA to prevent people outside of OA from misusing our literature or making profits for themselves.

You can download the appropriate license agreement from the "OA Literature Translations" page at [oa.org](http://oa.org). After completing the license agreement, an OA member needs to sign it on behalf of your service body or group. Then email, fax, or mail the license to the WSO. The managing director will sign on behalf of OA, and the WSO will keep a copy on file. The signed license agreement will be returned to you, and you may then begin translating and validating or printing and distributing the literature.

### **License 1: Agreement to Translate and Distribute for Validation Purposes Overeaters Anonymous Literature**

You may not start translating any literature until you complete License 1 and receive the signed original back from the WSO.

License 1 grants your service body the following rights:

- To translate the copyrighted literature, or part thereof, named in the license, with a period of up to eighteen months to complete the translation;
- To circulate copies of the draft among all members who may be able to help test and validate the translation, with up to six months to complete the validation.

After License 1 is signed by both parties, the WSO will send you electronic or paper copies of the current version of the literature to be translated. (OA literature is periodically updated, so it's important to ensure you are working from the most recent version.)

*What is testing and validation? How and why do we do it?*

Your goal is to enable OA members who speak your language to get exactly the same message from the translation as that given in the English text. It may be helpful to ask an English-speaking OA member to verify this by comparing the translation to the original text.

When you translate, be careful not to change the meaning of the original text. This text has been approved by the worldwide Fellowship.

During the testing period, you will be actively soliciting feedback on the clarity and accuracy of the translation. The purpose is to allow interested OA members who are working the program in the language of the translation to comment on the translation.

This may require tough face-to-face discussions about the exact meanings of words. Such discussions can lead to a better translation and a deeper understanding of the program.

You are free to organize the testing period in whatever way works in your area. Refer to Appendix C for suggestions.

At the end of the testing period, all comments and suggestions should be given to the person or committee that made the translation. It is important to rely on the judgment of our trusted servants—the translator or translating committee. They will prepare the final draft with the increased understanding they have gained from members' comments and suggestions.

We recommend that you ensure all drafts are returned and destroyed. People need to use the final approved version, not the drafts. Having different drafts causes confusion and controversy.

As soon as the final draft is finished, you need to complete License 2.

### **License 2: Agreement to Publish and Distribute Overeaters Anonymous Literature**

This is the final license, giving your service body permission to print and distribute the final draft of the translated text. License 2 grants full permission to print and distribute the translation in any way that works in your area.

At this stage you will also need to obtain permission to use the OA logo on your printing of the translation. The OA logo is a registered trademark and may not be used without permission. When you fill in License 2, be sure to complete pages 5–7. These pages are your application for permission to use the logo.

When you sign License 2, you agree to:

- ensure that every copy has the precise copyright notice, in your language, as given on page 2 of the license agreement;
- ensure that the printed copy has the exact form of the OA logo as agreed;
- send one printed copy and one electronic copy of the final, published translated OA publication to the WSO;
- send 10 percent of revenues from sales of the text to the WSO (because the WSO can incur high international bank charges, it

is best to send a few large sums instead of frequent small sums); and

- ensure that all surplus funds from sales of the translation will be used for OA purposes.

As soon as you have printed the translation, send one printed copy and one electronic copy of the final, published translated OA publication to the WSO. The WSO staff will label these copies with the English title of the work, date of the translation, date of the English version that was translated, and translating service body information.

The WSO staff will also add your translation to the master list of approved translations. When someone asks the WSO for literature in languages other than English, the WSO will provide the inquirer with a list of approved literature in that language, along with the service body contact information.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Copyright Information

OA's licenses are formal agreements permitting you to translate, duplicate and distribute OA's copyrighted literature. What does that mean?

The licenses tell the world that your service body has permission to use OA texts. If you did not have OA's permission, you would be breaking the law. It's much the same as lending your bicycle to a friend; your friend is not breaking the law if he or she rides the bicycle. But if someone takes your bicycle without your permission, he or she is stealing and breaking the law.

Books and pamphlets belong to the people who create them. This kind of ownership is called copyright and allows an author to be paid for writing books. The author does not own the physical book, but owns the arrangement of words, the text.

OA owns the text in whatever language it is written. When you print an OA book in your language, the physical book belongs to your service body. You've paid the printer and are free

to sell the book. However, the text belongs to OA, so you pay OA 10 percent of your net income from sales.

Because OA holds these licenses, it is easier to prevent people and organizations outside OA from misusing our literature; for example, distorting our message or making profits for themselves.

### Appendix B: Suggestions on Choosing Translators

If you use OA members as translators, you may encounter some problems. For example, an OA member may start a translation but not finish it. Nevertheless, OA members are usually the best choice. No professional translator, as good as the person might be, will understand our literature so well (unless he or she is also an OA member). OA members put more love and effort into the task than any non-OA translator could.

If you work with a professional translator, we suggest giving the person your glossary of OA terms, along with any notes or explanations. Ask him or her to translate a small piece of literature. If you like the result, you can build on that relationship, but if you're not satisfied, you can find another translator. Also, if the translator doesn't want to use your glossary, it may be better to find a different person.

We suggest that your service body use a contract with the translator right from the start. This will ensure both parties fully understand what is being asked of them. Also, you will be protected from any attempt by the translator to put his or her name on the document or to include additional text from an outside source.

### Appendix C: Suggestions for Testing and Validating Translations

The purpose of testing a translation is to highlight lack of clarity and show areas where the translator's understanding of the text varies from the general understanding. Here are some ways you may test a translation:

- You may use the draft in meetings. One

group read a few paragraphs in each meeting and then discussed the clarity of the message.

- Small groups or committees may meet to discuss the translation.
- Sponsors may use the draft in their conversations with sponsees.

*How can people who do not speak English play a part in validating a translation?*

A good translation is not only accurate but is also clear and well-expressed in the language of translation.

Someone may make a valid point about the way something is expressed without understanding the English from which it was translated. This may spark a discussion with those who can read English, and from that discussion a new and better translation may be reached.

*How can we deal with members' comments most effectively?*

- Probably the simplest method is to use printed copies with a separate sheet for comments. By using printed copies instead of electronic copies, you can avoid the problem of people amending or corrupting the draft. Also, it helps ensure you can take all the draft copies out of circulation at the end of the test period.
- If you must use electronic copies, it is safest to create a PDF file and ask for comments on a separate sheet.
- Number the lines of text. This can make it easier to relate a comment to the draft.
- Ensure everyone knows to whom they should give their comments.

*Distributing printed copies will be a cost to the service body. How can a service body with very little money afford this?*

Once your service body has published some items, you can set the price of that literature to fund drafts of the next items you translate.

Another idea is to charge members for the draft. When the literature is published, they can receive a discount on the final version when they return the draft to the service body. This has the added advantage of encouraging the return of all the drafts. If you do this, you will need to allow for it in the price you set for the final version.

## **Appendix D: Suggestions for Printing and Selling Translations**

*What should we consider when we start printing our translations?*

- Check carefully for typographical errors before printing. Some errors can be overlooked even though the text has been circulated and validated.
- In addition to including the copyright notice and the address of the WSO, be sure to include the contact information for OA in your country.
- Where possible, the WSO asks that you make your final product match the overall appearance of the original in layout, graphics, color, and style of binding. When your version matches the WSO version, the WSO can send you a digital file of the cover in most cases. This should enable you to print at a slightly lower cost.

*How can we start printing in a country where OA is just beginning?*

- In a country where OA is just starting and has little money, it may not be possible to match the WSO versions exactly.
- The most important point is to make accurate translations available. The text, not the appearance, enables members to recover.
- As literature becomes available in your language, OA will start to grow in your country, and it will not be long before you can print better quality copies.
- At the beginning, when there are only a few OA members, you may not be able to

use a professional printer. You can print from your computer or make photocopies when people wish to buy literature.

- When you use a professional printer, consider ways to keep costs down. It is usually less expensive to print literature in just one color. You can also save money by having OA members fold, collate, and staple the pamphlets themselves.

You need to work toward producing better quality items as soon as possible. Our literature carries OA's message to newcomers and health-care providers, so it's important that it looks professional. By the time you are printing books, you will need to use a professional printer.

In whatever form you produce your first printing of the literature, send the WSO one printed copy and one electronic copy of that version. As you are able to improve the quality of the printing, you need to send the WSO one printed copy and one electronic copy of your updated versions.

#### *How should we deal with selling price and royalties?*

Your service body needs to make a surplus on sales of literature, so you can establish a prudent reserve that will enable you to translate and print more literature.

This means charging more for books and pamphlets than it costs to print them. Here are some reasons for this:

- The cost of printing is not the only cost involved in producing and distributing literature. For example, you may make several visits and phone calls to the printer, or you may need to pay for storage space for your stock.
- As your sales of literature increase, the number you need to order from the printer will increase. Yet you will only receive money for this larger number *after* you have paid the printer.
- The cost of printing will probably increase.

- You need to allow for paying royalties to the WSO on the literature you sell.
- You need to build up a prudent reserve for printing literature.
- We suggest selling the literature at a price that produces a surplus you can use for OA service in your country.

To help calculate what your service body should charge for literature, we suggest that you set prices to realize a gross profit of 60 percent of sales. The recommended formula to achieve this is to multiply production costs by 2.5 and divide that figure by the number of books or pamphlets printed. For example, if your production cost for 500 pamphlets is US \$1,500, you can multiply by 2.5 (US \$3,750), and divide by 500 (US \$7.50). This will be the price for each copy.

As soon as a small prudent reserve for literature service has been established, your service body should send royalties to the WSO. Royalties should be set at 10 percent of net income from sales. This small amount will help OA continue to serve the Fellowship worldwide. Please remember that the WSO can incur high international bank charges, so it is best to send a few large sums instead of frequent small ones.

#### **Appendix E: Suggestions for Overcoming Difficulties**

*What happens when two service bodies want to translate the same text?*

For example, your service body asks the WSO if the text you want to translate has already been translated into your language. The WSO answers that the text has already been translated and validated, or that the text has been translated and drafts are currently circulating for comments.

What can you do? In both cases, you can work with the service body that has the translated text. If the text has been translated and drafts are being circulated, perhaps you could circulate drafts in your area also. This can be particularly useful if language usage is slightly different in the two areas.

If the translation has already been validated, you can agree on the best way to share the translation. Here are two possibilities:

- Will the other service body sell copies to you? Usually the cost of printing each item is greatly reduced when a large number of pamphlets or books are printed. Even if you pay shipping costs, it might be less expensive for the other service body to do all the printing.
- Is the other service body willing to send an electronic file you can print from? If they do this, you can print the literature and include contact information for your country.
  - If you print the translation without changing the text, you need to obtain License 2 so your service body will have permission to print and distribute the literature.
  - If you change the text to reflect differences in language, you need to follow the two-step licensing process.

*What should we do when OA updates literature we've already translated?*

If you've already translated a piece of OA literature and still have copies in stock, but you find that OA has updated the item, we recommend that you insert a correction sheet to reflect the changes. If the changes are substantial, we recommend you update the literature at the next printing.

#### **FINALLY . . .**

Remember you can download the two license agreements from the "OA Literature Translations" page at [oa.org](http://oa.org).

You are not alone. If you have any questions, please contact the WSO publications manager at [info@oa.org](mailto:info@oa.org). The WSO and the International Publications Committee will do our best to help you. Together we can!

OA Board-approved

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Overeaters Anonymous®, Inc.  
6075 Zenith Court NE  
Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87144-6424 USA  
Mail Address: PO Box 44020, Rio Rancho, NM 87174-4020 USA  
1-505-891-2664 FAX: 1-505-891-4320  
email: [info@oa.org](mailto:info@oa.org) • website: [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org)  
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