LEAN PROGRESS IQ

YOUR PASSPORT IS THE REAL APPLICATION.

Eligibility, identity and payment rails for AI evaluation work — written for people who don't live in the United States.

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WHO THIS IS FOR

You have heard that AI companies pay people to evaluate model outputs. You have found the platforms. And then you hit something that no guide mentioned: a country that isn't on a list, an ID that doesn't match a profile field, a payout that won't arrive, or a signup that accepts you and then shows no work.

Almost every guide to this field is written by and for Americans, for whom none of that happens. This one is written from Da Nang, on a Serbian passport, with a Vietnamese bank account — a combination that breaks roughly half the verification systems in this industry. Everything in here is the result of hitting those walls, not reading about them.

WHAT I AM NOT GOING TO TELL YOU

I will not quote you a monthly income figure. Yours depends on your country's rate tier, your available hours, and which platforms accept you at all. Anyone showing you screenshots of their earnings is selling you something.

This work is real, and it is not passive. Task supply is inconsistent, rates vary by where you live, and rejection is common. What follows is the map. Walking it is your part.

WALL 01 — CITIZENSHIP VERSUS RESIDENCE

This is the wall that stops the most people, and it stops them before they ever see a task.

Most platforms ask for a country during signup, then later ask for a government ID. **Those two must match.** If your profile says one country and your passport says another, verification fails — and most platforms allow only two or three attempts before locking you out entirely.

If you are an expatriate, a migrant worker, a digital nomad, or a dual national, this is not a form field to fill in casually. It is a decision to make deliberately *before* you create the account.

THE RULE

Declare the country that issued the identity document you will upload. Not where you sleep. Not where your bank is. Where your passport was issued.

If a platform provides a *separate* field for country of residence, fill that in with where you actually live. Many do. The mistake is putting your residence in the single field a platform uses for identity.

IF YOU HAVE ALREADY FAILED VERIFICATION

Do not create a second account. Platforms fingerprint device, browser and — decisively — payment details, which would be identical across both. Second accounts are usually caught at first payout, after the work is done, and typically result in a permanent ban on *both* accounts.

Instead, email support, state that your profile country was set incorrectly, name your actual citizenship, and request a manual review plus a reset of your verification attempts. Support resets attempts for genuine data-entry errors more often than people expect. It costs you one email.

A WORKED EXAMPLE

A Serbian citizen living in Vietnam should declare **Serbia**, not Vietnam — because no Vietnamese government ID exists for them to upload. Declaring Vietnam guarantees failure. Declaring Serbia also happens to open rate tiers and language projects that Vietnam does not.

WALL 02 — WHICH PLATFORMS ARE ACTUALLY OPEN TO YOU

Some platforms exclude your country outright. Others accept your signup and then quietly show you nothing. Knowing which is which saves weeks.

PLATFORM	ACCESS	PUBLISHED PAY	WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
OpenTrain	WIDEST	$28–65/hr	Trainers across 190+ countries; Stripe payouts reach 140+. Rates published openly by task type: red teaming $65/hr, math reasoning $45/hr, content safety $28–36/hr. Best geographic coverage of the nine.
Meridial	GLOBAL	$6–65/hr	Operated by Invisible Technologies, roughly 24,000 vetted experts. Fastest onboarding here — often days rather than weeks. Language-specialist projects pay above the base band, which matters if English is not your first language.
Mindrift	BROAD	$15–100+/hr	Toloka merged its contributor base into Mindrift in July 2026. Around 70% of trainers hold a master's or doctorate; 90+ domains. Rates are adjusted to local cost of living, so the country you declare directly affects your tier.
Outlier	61 COUNTRIES	$15–100/hr	Operated by Scale AI. Most consistent task supply of the large networks. Paid weekly on Tuesdays via PayPal, Airtm or ACH. Strict on the country/ID match described in Wall 01.
Appen	SLOW START	Varies	Operates in 130+ countries and pays via Payoneer, but the first payment cycle runs 30–45 days. Treat as background income, never as urgent income.
Handshake AI	READ TERMS	$30–300+/hr	Highest published ceiling: $30–150/hr for master's/doctorate holders, $175–300+ for medicine, law and finance specialists. But content you create is assigned to Handshake and its partner labs, and there are contributor reports of withheld payments. Read the agreement before you invest hours.
Braintrust	REGION-LOCKED	$50–120/hr	Limited to the US, Canada, UK, EU, Mexico, Brazil, India, Japan, South Korea and Singapore. Note carefully: **European is not the same as EU.** Serbia, Bosnia, Ukraine and others are excluded despite being in Europe.
DataAnnotation	5 COUNTRIES	$20+/hr	United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand only. Widely recommended online without this restriction ever being mentioned.
Alignerr	US ID ONLY	$25–60/hr	Identity verification accepts only a US driver's licence, state ID, work permit or green card. No alternative document type. If you hold none of these, this platform is closed to you regardless of where you live.

Policies change without announcement. Confirm on the platform itself before uploading documents. This table reflects published policy as of August 2026.

TWO MORE WORTH KNOWING

Mercor pulls signals from LinkedIn, GitHub and Google Scholar within minutes of signup, then runs an automated video interview. The screen rejects over 80% on first pass. If you have public technical work, this rewards it more than any other platform here. Note that a March 2026 supply-chain breach exposed contractor personal data — use a dedicated email address.

AfterQuery pays $40–250+/hr with Stripe payouts to 100+ countries. Vetting is severe, but the business and engineering tracks are worth an application if you have real professional depth in a domain.

WALL 03 — GETTING PAID, ACTUALLY

Being accepted is not being paid. More people lose money at this stage than at any other, and almost always to something avoidable.

Choosing your rail

RAIL	COST	SPEED	NOTES
Payoneer	~2% per transfer; **$29.95/year if you receive under $2,000/year**	~5 business days	Reaches 190+ countries. Usually the best default. That annual fee bites hard at low volume, so consolidate your payouts here rather than splitting across rails.
PayPal	2.99% goods & services, plus ~1.5% on international commercial transactions	3–5 working days to most local banks	Widely accepted, expensive, and instant transfer is often unavailable outside a handful of countries. Use where a platform requires it, not by preference.
Stripe	Platform-dependent	Typically 2–5 days	How OpenTrain and AfterQuery pay. Coverage is good but not universal — check that Stripe supports payouts in your country before relying on it.

THE NAME-SPELLING TRAP

Payment systems match names character by character against your bank and ID records. If your passport reads `MILOSAVLJEVIC` and you type `Milosavljević`, that transfer can bounce.

Use your passport spelling — no diacritics, no accents — on every financial, tax and verification form. Keep the correct spelling for your CV and your email signature. This single mismatch delays more first payouts than any other cause.

Three checks to run at your bank before your first payout

01 **CONFIRM THE ACCOUNT ACCEPTS INCOMING FOREIGN TRANSFERS**

Many accounts do not by default, and the bank simply rejects the transfer without explaining why. Ask explicitly, and ask them to enable it if it isn't.

02 **CHECK YOUR COUNTRY'S TRANSFER-VERIFICATION THRESHOLDS**

Rules change quietly. As one live example: since July 2026 the State Bank of Vietnam has required biometric facial registration for any transfer above 10,000,000 VND (roughly $400) or daily totals above 20,000,000 VND. Without registering, larger transfers are blocked on arrival. Register via your banking app with an NFC-capable phone and a chip passport, or at the counter.

03 **ASK WHETHER A FOREIGN-CURRENCY ACCOUNT IS AVAILABLE TO YOU**

If you can hold USD instead of converting on every payout, you avoid repeated conversion spreads. In many countries this depends on your residency status — a residence card often unlocks it where a tourist visa does not.

WALL 04 — WRITING LIKE AN EVALUATOR

Most applicants are screened out on a written sample, and most of them never learn why. The bar is not fluency. Fluent, polite, confident writing gets rejected constantly.

What the reviewer is looking for is whether your rationale would let a stranger reproduce your judgement. That means being **specific**, **falsifiable**, and **useful to someone training a model** — not merely correct.

THE DIFFERENCE, IN PRACTICE

REJECTED

Response B is better. It is more detailed and better written, and it answers the question more thoroughly. Response A feels incomplete and less helpful to the user.

ACCEPTED

Response B is better on **accuracy**. A states the deadline is 30 days; the source document says 21. B gives 21 and cites the clause. B is longer, but length is not the reason — A contains a factual error a user would act on.

The rejected version is grammatical and confident and says nothing checkable. "More detailed" is not a criterion. "Feels incomplete" cannot be verified by anyone else. The accepted version names the dimension being judged, points to the specific claim, and states what a user would actually suffer.

FOUR HABITS THAT PASS SCREENINGS

- **Name the dimension first.** Accuracy, safety, instruction-following, tone, completeness. Say which one is deciding your judgement before you explain it.
- **Quote the specific span.** Point at the sentence, number, or claim. Not "the second half was weaker."
- **State the consequence.** What happens to a real user who trusts this output? That is the difference between an opinion and an evaluation.
- **Separate your preference from the failure.** "I would have phrased it differently" is not a defect. Reviewers watch for people who cannot tell these apart.

WHY THIS SECTION EXISTS

Anyone can list platforms. What almost nobody teaches is what the evaluation is *for* — and that gap is where the pay difference lives. I write agent evaluation harnesses: a 320-question benchmark with its own scoring criteria, and a 50-day longitudinal model trial publishing automated results daily. The guidance above is what I look for when I am the one grading.

THE ORDER TO DO THIS IN

01 DECIDE YOUR COUNTRY DECLARATION

Before creating any account. It is the passport-issuing country. Write it down and use the same answer everywhere.

02 SET UP PAYONEER FIRST

Do this before you apply, not after you earn. Verification takes days and you do not want it blocking a payout you have already worked for.

03 RUN YOUR BANK CHECKS

The three from Wall 03. Fifteen minutes at a branch now prevents a frozen first payment later.

04 APPLY TO THREE OR FOUR PLATFORMS IN PARALLEL

Not one at a time. Vetting times are unrelated and projects do not overlap — sequential applications waste months. Start with OpenTrain, Meridial and Mindrift, since those have the widest access.

05 WRITE YOUR SAMPLE DELIBERATELY

Using Wall 04. This is the step most people rush and most people fail.

06 TAKE A SMALL FIRST BATCH AND WATCH THE PAYOUT CLEAR

Never accumulate large unpaid hours on a platform that has not yet paid you once. Prove the rail works, then scale up.

IF YOU GET STUCK

If your country isn't covered here, if a verification has already failed, or if you want your written sample looked at before you submit it — write to me. Rates are adjusted by country using published purchasing-power figures, and the formula is public. If the adjusted number is still out of reach, say so. That conversation is not a problem.

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