



Advancing Global Higher Education

The Use (or not) of Electronic Transcripts

Results of the AACRAO September 2017 60-Second Survey



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Introduction

In 2014, we completed a comprehensive survey (n=315) with our members asking about electronic transcript use and return on investment. The 2014 survey was an update to the 1997 SPEEDE/ExPRESS study titled, *A Business Case for the Electronic Exchange of Student Records*, conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The results of the 2014 survey indicated that paper was still the predominant method for sending and receiving transcripts even though institutions had also adopted electronic formats such as EDI, XML and PDF transcripts. At the time we noted:

“This implies that staff at many institutions are now expected to know how to process EDI/XML, PDF, fax, and other forms of transcripts, in addition to paper. We can also reasonably hypothesize that transcript volume has increased in the same period of time because enrollment has increased for most institutions.

Together, these two items beg the question of whether the true benefits of eTranscripts have been realized by the institutions that accept or send transcripts in this manner. While the cost per transcript appears lower, in most instances, for eTranscripts, the annual volume of transcripts received in this manner typically represents less than half of the total transcript volume. Furthermore, few institutions report using the receipt of eTranscript data to its full capacity. In other words, they do not use the data in an automated manner for transfer articulation, admissions decisions, and other tasks.

These survey results point to real value—both in the saving of staff time and dollars—by using eTranscripts. It behooves AACRAO to gain an understanding of why institutions are not fully adopting the features and reaping the benefits of eTranscripts¹ (pg. 24).

The September 2017 60-Second survey (Appendix A) was designed to be a short follow-up to the 2014 survey. We did not seek cost information in this survey. We did, however, ask similar questions about the format and rate of use of electronic transcripts, the use of paper, and the use of automated processes with the electronic transcripts. We differentiated the data by postsecondary transcripts (sending and receiving) and the receipt of high school transcripts.

After the data was cleaned, we were left with responses from 1,077 institutions representing several combinations of control, size and type (Appendix B) as well as several countries (Appendix C). A handful of institutions submitted more than one response because the transcript practices varied by department, college or student level. Even with an adjustment

¹ <http://www.aacrao.org/docs/default-source/PDF-Files/aacrao-transcript-practice-and-costs-report-june-2014-final.pdf?sfvrsn=2>



for more than one response for a handful of institutions, this topic was popular among our members and represents one of the larger response rates for our 60-Second surveys.

Key Findings

- PDF transcript use is now the most reported format for receiving and sending postsecondary transcripts, a change from 2014
 - 91% of all institutions report using PDF to receive postsecondary transcripts; in 2014 that value was 74%
 - 83% of all institutions report using PDF to send postsecondary transcripts, compared to 43% in 2014.
- Among the small percentage of institutions who report still using paper-only processes for the receipt or sending of transcripts, a “lack of technological resources” is frequently noted as the reason for not using an electronic transcript process.
- Although the percentage of institutions reporting the use of paper for the receipt of high school transcripts has decreased, paper (90%) is still the most reported format closely followed by PDF (84%), compared to 98% paper and 58% PDF in 2014.
- PDF adoption has greatly outpaced the adoption of EDI or XML.
 - The EDI and XML formats were presented as a single combined response choice in 2014 and as separate response choices for the 2017 survey. Even with this disaggregation of data, it is clear that the use of either EDI or XML has not changed much since 2014.
- Although an increase over 2014 (11%), only 38% of institutions now report using electronic transcript data in any automated processes such as transfer articulation, workflow kick off, admissions assessment and imaging.
 - Among those that have automated processes associated with electronic transcripts:
 - 25% report using the data for admissions requirements including marking requirements as “met”, an increase of 14% since 2014.
 - 23% also use the data automatically for transfer articulation, an increase of 12% since 2014.
- Institutions are still not taking full advantage of the automated processes that can be implemented with electronic transcripts.
 - This can likely be attributed, in part, to the adoption of PDF transcripts over EDI and XML because PDF transcripts typically require additional technology or processing to transform to data used in automation.
- Between 13 and 30 percent of institutions could not quantify what percentage of transcripts were received or sent electronically.
 - Among those who could, the most often selected percentage range varied by the type of transcript.
 - For the receipt of postsecondary transcripts, 29% selected “25-49%”
 - For sending postsecondary transcripts, 36% selected “50-75%”



- For the receipt of high school transcripts, 22% selected “25-49%”

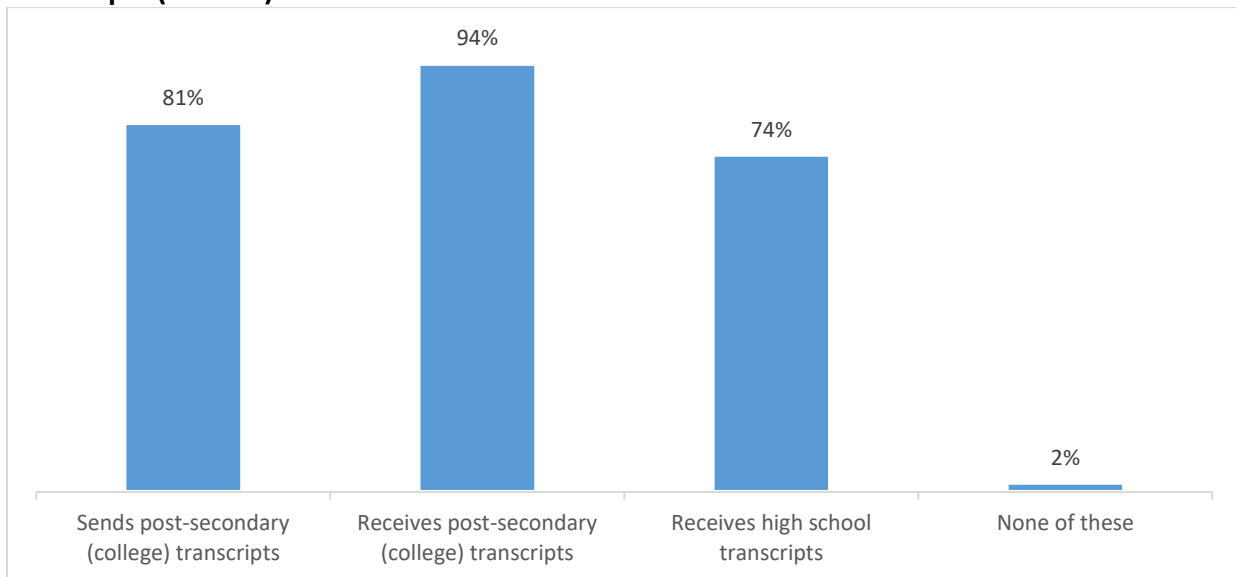
The [AACRAO SPEEDE committee](#) maintains several free resources to help institutions implement EDI/XML transcript exchanges. Among the benefits of EDI/XML compared to other transcript types are:

- “Time savings in getting information from the sender to the destination institution;
- Increased accuracy of data;
- Elimination of data entry at the destination institution;
- Data transmitted from the sender is exactly equal to the data received at the destination;
- Improved data integrity when used in conjunction with a data encryption software;
- Improved privacy of confidential data;
- Increased data authenticity;
- Cost savings as manual systems are replaced by electronic ones.²”

The remainder of this report contains figures summarizing the aggregate results and disaggregated results by institutional size, type and control when appropriate. Questions regarding this or any other AACRAO research should be directed to Wendy Kilgore, AACRAO Director of Research, at wendyk@aacrao.org.

Results

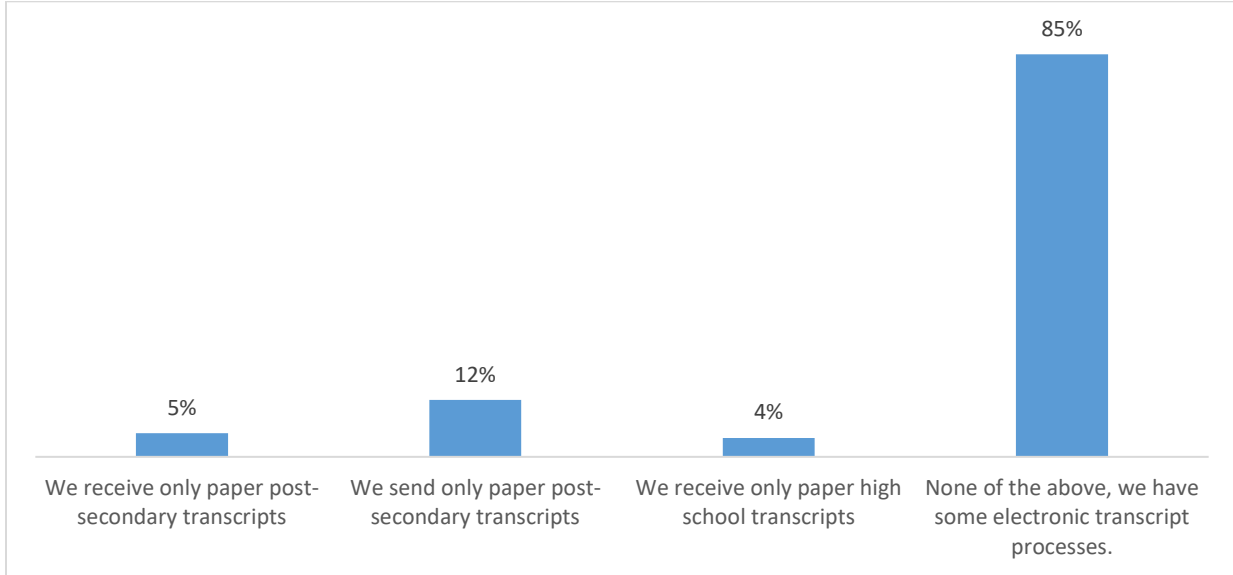
Q1 - Please indicate whether or not your institutions sends or receives the following types of transcripts (n=1077)



² <http://www.aacrao.org/about/committees/aacrao-speede-committee/how-is-edx-used-in-higher-education->

Q2 - Please indicate whether your institution has a paper-only transcript process for any of the following.

Note: The first three response choices were only visible to those who indicated that transcript type in Q1. The total equal more than 100% because only the final response choice was an exclusive choice.



Q2 by Institution control, size and type – Please indicate whether your institution has a paper-only transcript process for any of the following.

Note: The first three response choices were only visible to those who indicated that transcript type in Q1. The totals equal more than 100% because only the final response choice was an exclusive choice.

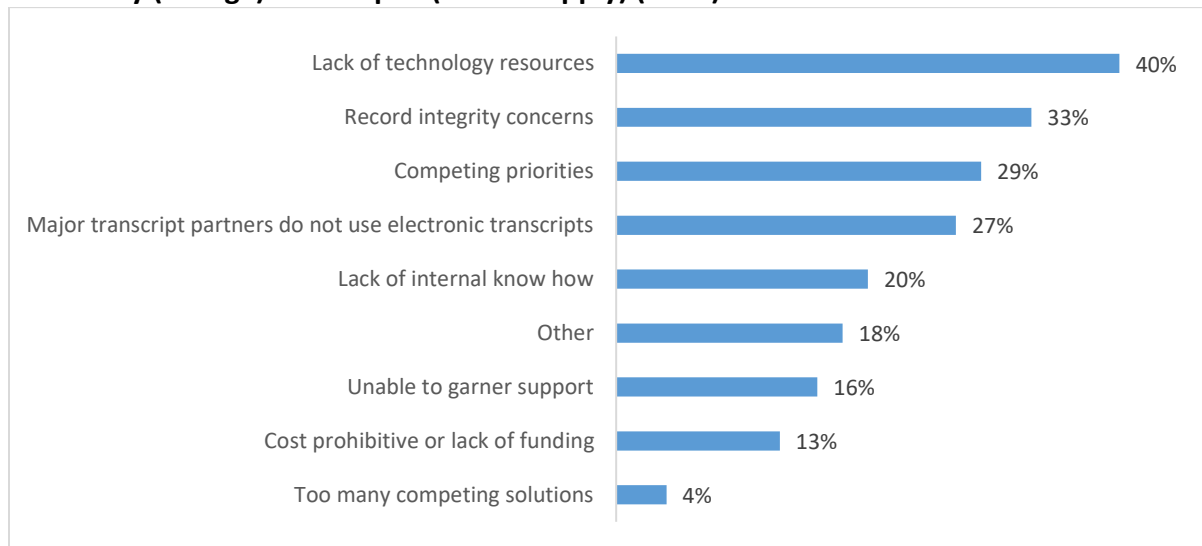
		We receive only paper post-secondary transcripts	We send only paper post-secondary transcripts	We receive only paper high school transcripts	None of the above, we have some electronic transcript processes.
Control	Public (n=487)	5%	9%	4%	88%
	Private, not-for-profit (n=506)	4%	14%	4%	84%
	Private, proprietary (n=30)	10%	23%	7%	73%

Size	Under 1,000 (n=197)	9%	24%	9%	73%
	1,000 - 2,499 (n=252)	2%	11%	2%	88%
	2,500 - 4,999 (n=180)	3%	9%	3%	88%
	5,000 - 9,999 (n=155)	4%	9%	3%	88%
	10,000 - 19,999 (n=123)	5%	9%	2%	89%
	20,000+ (n=116)	5%	8%	3%	91%

Type	Lower Division Only (n=184)	7%	11%	8%	85%
	Undergraduate (n=143)	4%	15%	6%	83%
	Undergraduate, graduate and/or professional (n=656)	3%	11%	2%	87%
	Graduate and/or professional (n=34)	12%	29%	0%	68%
	Other (n=3)	33%	67%	67%	33%



Q3 - From the options below, please select the reasons for not receiving electronic post-secondary (college) transcripts. (All that apply) (n=45)

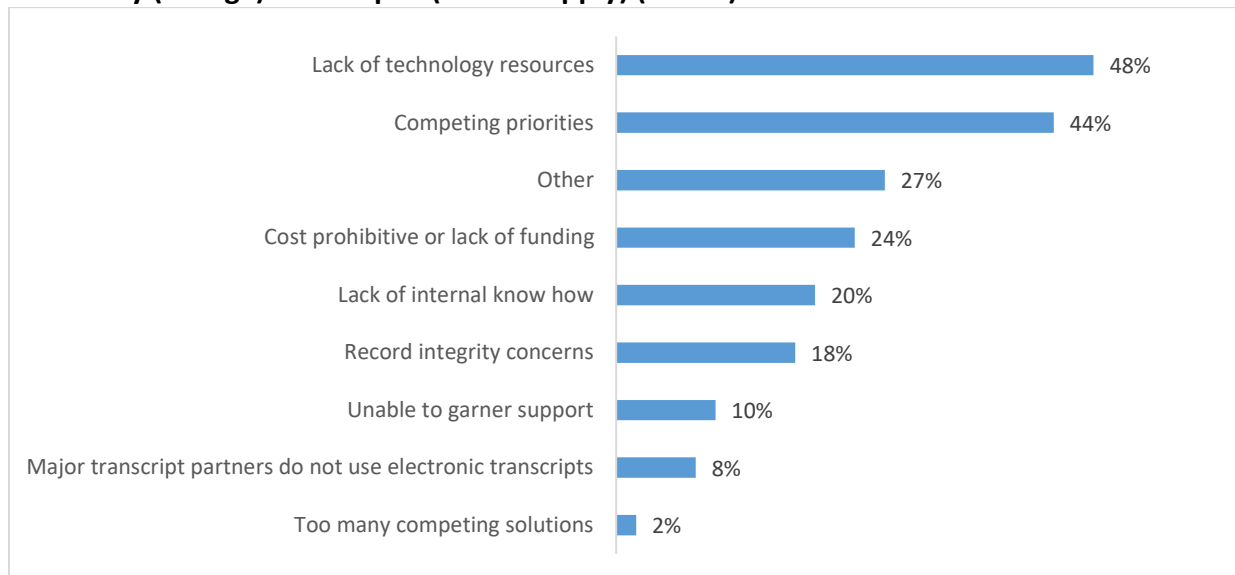


Other reasons:

- Not in line with policies
- Working on a solution
- Cyber Safety concern
- Have been trying unsuccessfully to implement electronic transcript system for a long time
- Against the legislation of the country of our institution
- Not yet implemented
- Admissions Office needs to get moving
- Our admissions office will not accept but the registrar's office does accept electronic transcripts



Q4 - From the options below, please select the reasons for not sending electronic post-secondary (college) transcripts. (All that apply) (n=124)



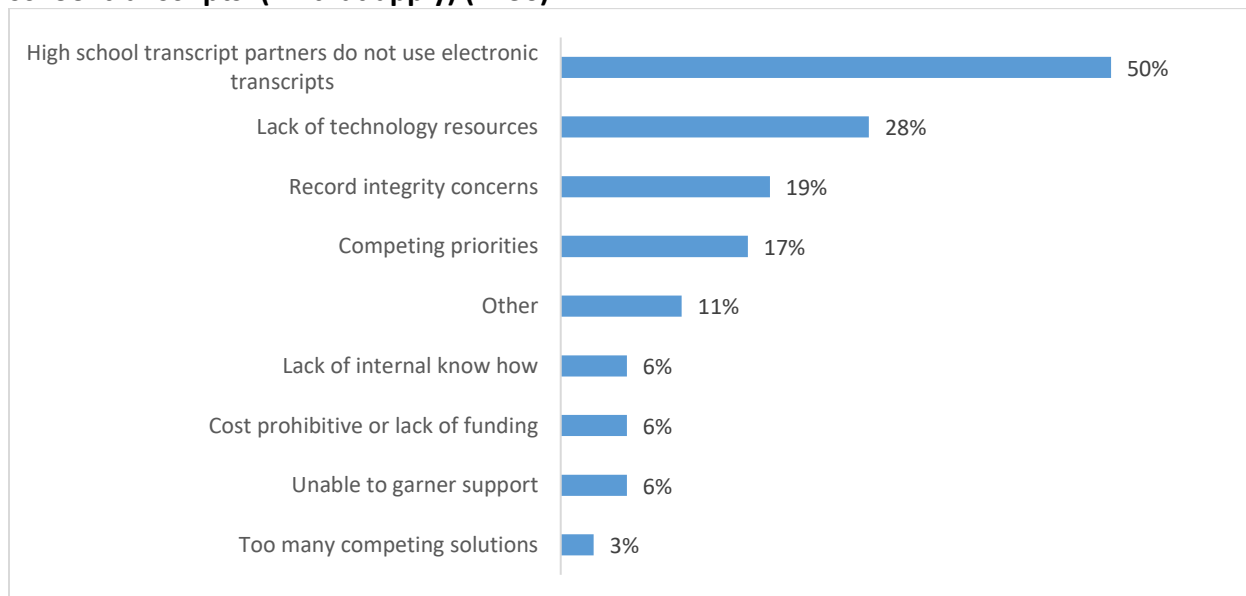
Other reasons:

- not widely accepted by others
- We have a customized transcript and it's unclear if we can make use of e-transcripts with our configuration.
- current contract
- Will begin sending e-scripts within 6 months
- Not set up to do so, currently working with parchment
- Implementing many systems & lack of IT resources to move FW on this as of yet
- Will be very soon
- We do send electronic post-secondary (college) transcripts but some companies and universities don't take and want an official paper transcript
- Cyber Safety concerns
- We have additional documents that need to accompany the transcript, so our registrar elects to keep our outgoing transcripts paper.
- I am new to this role and am looking into it, previous registrar didn't want to do it
- in process of shopping for 3rd party transcript service
- time to implement
- We are in the process of offering this service
- Cannot set up electronic transcript system
- I am not sure of the reasoning.
- against the legislation of the country of our institution
- Not yet implemented
- arduous set up process, time/priority limitation for small operating office
- Primarily, time and resources are the main deterrent to electronic transcripts.
- Plan to implement in the coming academic year



- We choose to send paper copies at this time
- There was interest before regarding electronic transcripts. It is in the very slow process of changing
- Lack of understanding by procurement office for sign-off on contract
- We are one large district with seven separately accredited colleges that use one transcript. SACS needs the registrar name of the transcript and no service is known to us on how to meet that regulation
- In the process of implementing an electronic option, just not live yet
- Small school not a lot of transcripts
- Many older records not maintained electronically, a couple different SIS's
- Waiting on IT Department
- We are in the implementation process
- Lack of staffing to focus on solution
- Not enough staff time in Records Office & ITS in order to complete the initial set-up of system
- Waiting on State-wide solution

Q5 - From the options below, please select the reasons for not receiving electronic high school transcripts. (All that apply) (n=36)

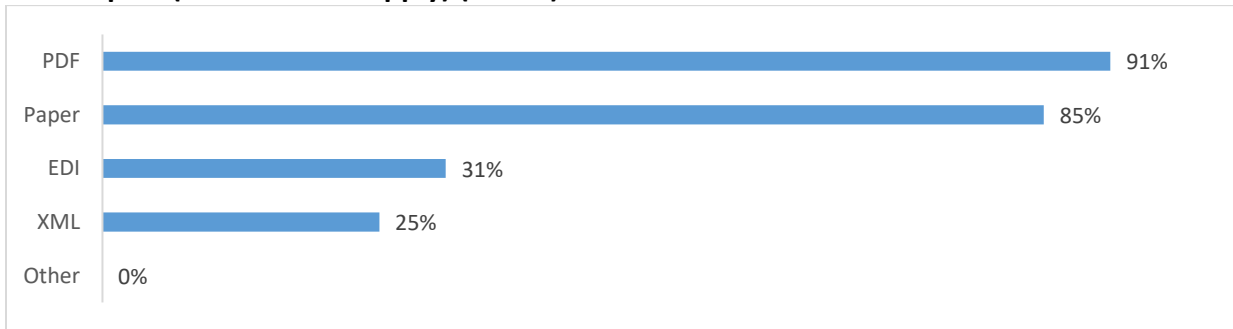


Other reasons:

- Not set up to do so, working with Parchment
- HS transcripts not required; only process paper received
- We are small office and we ask that all materials come in as a complete packet. In addition, electronic transcripts often get got in our spam filter
- Not yet implemented



Q6 - Please indicate in what format your institution receives post-secondary (college) transcripts. (Check all that apply) (n=920)

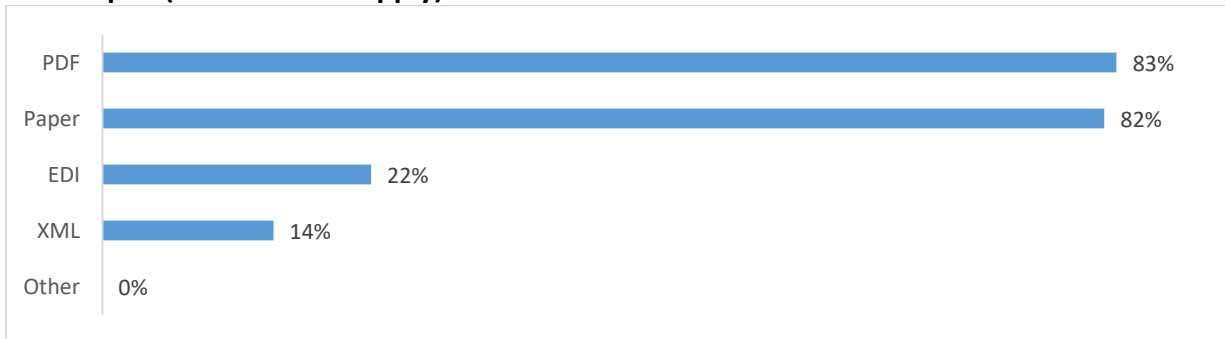


Other formats:

Note: This data had to be cleaned because respondents were confusing transcript vendors with electronic transcript types (e.g., Parchment, National Student Clearinghouse, Ohio’s Clearinghouse, etc.)

- Secure encrypted transcripts
- Direct data synch through our statewide SIS
- HTML
- In house transcript sharing through our state higher ed system
- Very limited acceptance of pdf since processing them is so time consuming
- We can take any format, as long as it's official!

Q7 - Please indicate in what format your institution sends post-secondary (college) transcripts. (Check all that apply)



Other formats:

Note: This data had to be cleaned because respondents were confusing transcript vendors with electronic transcript types (e.g., Parchment, National Student Clearinghouse, Ohio’s Clearinghouse, etc.)

- Email
- Unofficial via fax
- Direct data synch through statewide SIS
- Fax



Q8 - Please indicate in what format your institution receives high school transcripts. (Check all that apply)(n=685)



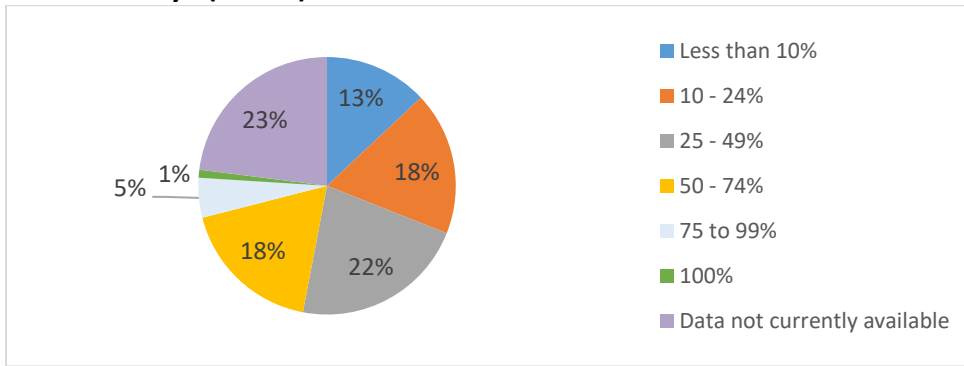
Other formats:

Note: This data had to be cleaned because respondents were confusing transcript vendors with electronic transcript types (e.g., Common Application, Naviance, Parchment, etc.)

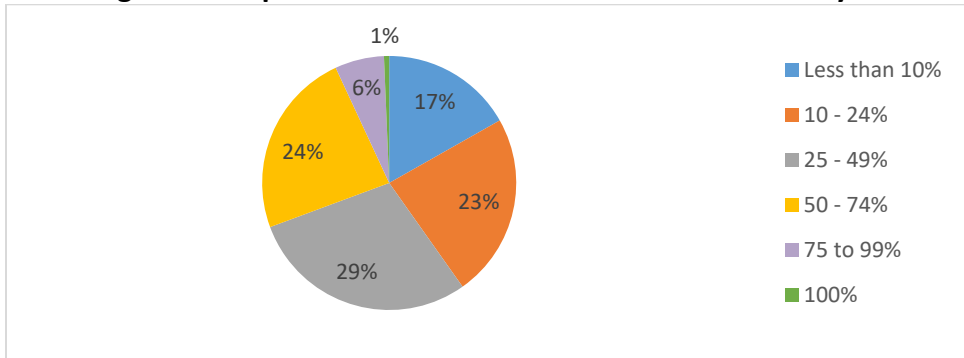
- Secure encrypted
- Email
- Electronic batch file from Ministry of Education
- Fax
- HTML
- Unofficial may be delivered as TIF or JPEG
- Students can upload transcripts in many formats
- We accept unofficial too
- Data exchange with the state
- Load from state transcript database system



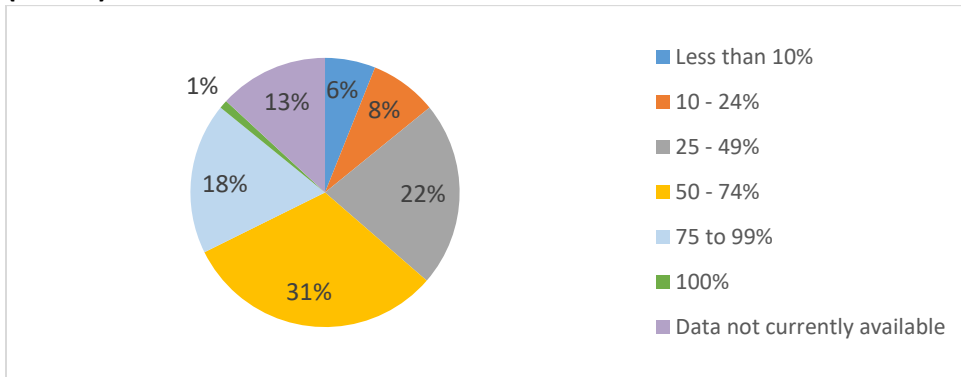
Q9 - Approximately what percentage of post-secondary transcripts are received electronically? (n=789)



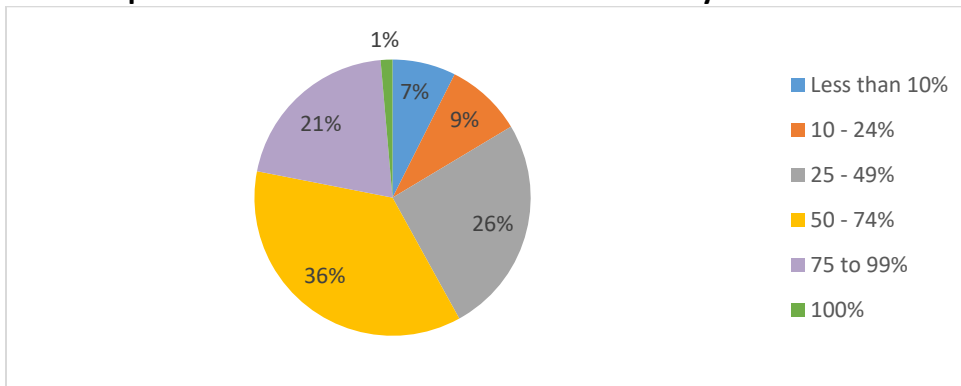
Q9 Disaggregated: The percentage of postsecondary transcripts received electronically excluding those respondents for which the data was not readily available.



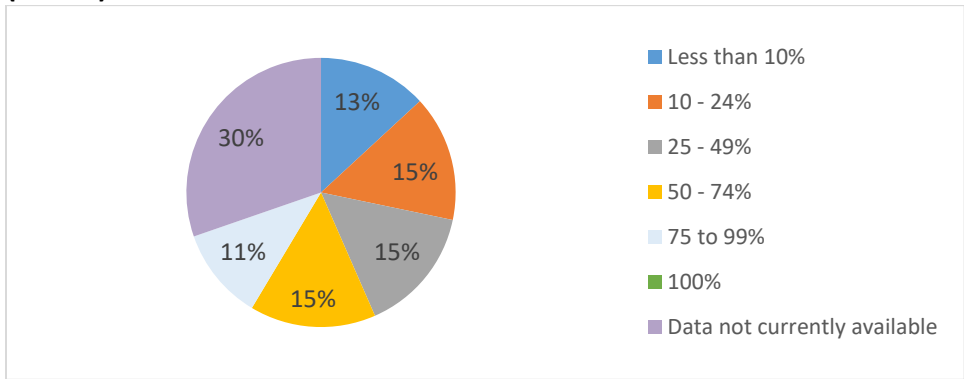
**Q10 - Approximately what percentage of post-secondary transcripts are sent electronically?
(n=665)**



Q10 Disaggregated: The percentage of postsecondary transcripts sent electronically excluding those respondents for which the data was not readily available.

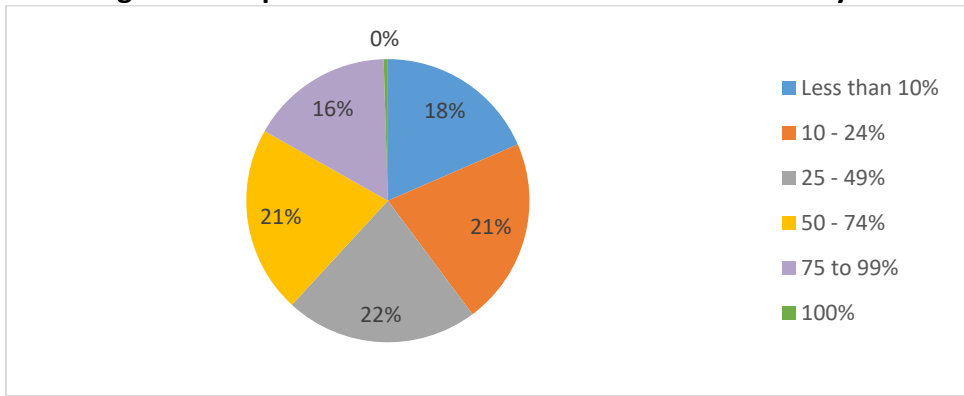


**Q11 - Approximately what percentage of high school transcripts are received electronically?
(n=606)**

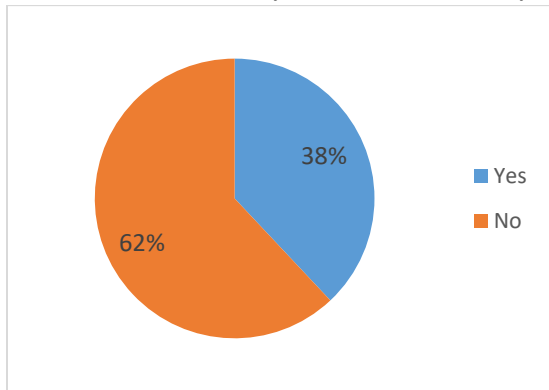


Note: Only two out of 606 respondents selected the “100%” response choice.

Q11 Disaggregated: The percentage of high school transcripts received electronically excluding those respondents for which the data was not readily available.



Q12 - Is the electronic transcript data received used in any automated processes (e.g., transfer articulation, workflow kick off, admissions assessment, and imaging)? (n=946)



Q12 by Institution control, size and type - Is the electronic transcript data received used in any automated processes (e.g., transfer articulation, workflow kick off, admissions assessment, imaging)? (n=946)

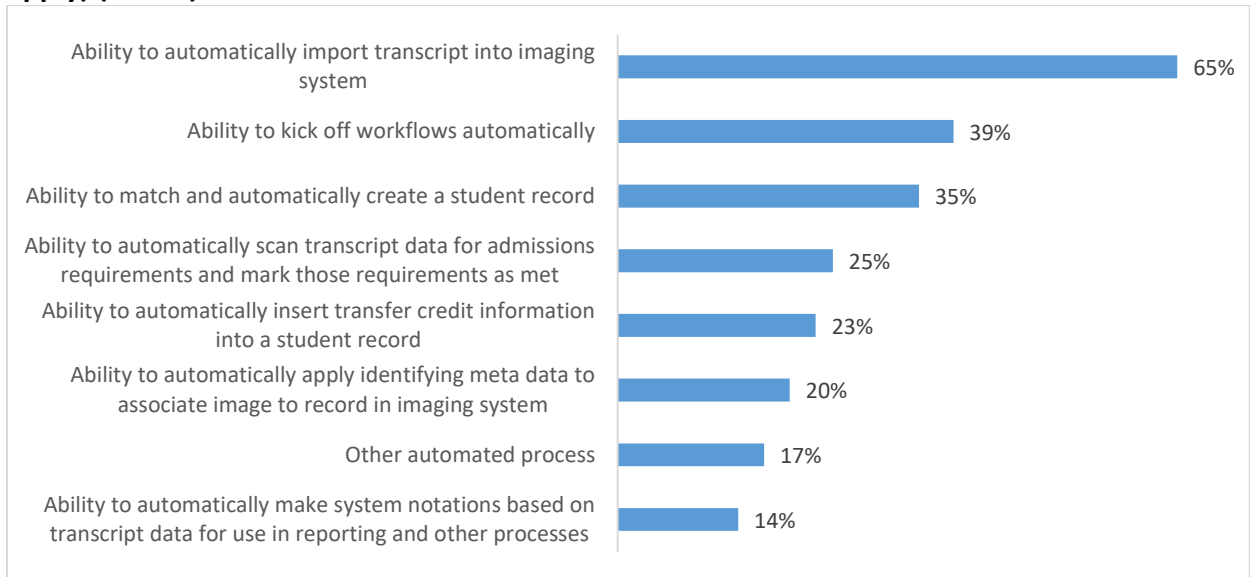
		Yes	No
Control	Public (n=448)	47%	53%
	Private, not-for-profit (n=469)	29%	71%
	Private, proprietary (n=29)	34%	66%

Size	Under 1,000 (n=182)	23%	77%
	1,000 - 2,499 (n=244)	26%	74%
	2,500 - 4,999 (n=174)	29%	71%
	5,000 - 9,999 (n=138)	51%	49%
	10,000 - 19,999 (n=105)	55%	45%
	20,000+ (n=103)	73%	27%

Type	Lower Division Only (n=173)	29%	71%
	Undergraduate (n=138)	30%	70%
	Undergraduate, graduate and/or professional (n=598)	42%	58%
	Graduate and/or professional (n=33)	27%	73%
	Other (n=2)	100%	0%



Q13 - What automated processes are associated with electronic transcript data? (All that apply) (n=312)



Appendix A: AACRAO September 2017 60-Second Survey

The Use (or not) of Electronic Transcripts

Introduction

This month's 60-Second Survey seeks to gain an understanding of the adoption rate of electronic transcripts or the reasons for not doing so. This data will provide an update to similar data collected in 2014.

Q1 Please indicate whether or not your institutions sends or receives the following types of transcripts.

- Sends post-secondary (college) transcripts
- Receives post-secondary (college) transcripts
- Receives high school transcripts
- None of these \

Q2 Please indicate whether your institution has a paper-only transcript process for any of the following. (Check all that apply)

- We receive only paper post-secondary transcripts
- We send only paper post-secondary transcripts
- We receive only paper high school transcripts
- None of the above, we have some electronic transcript processes.

Q3 From the options below, please select the reasons for **not receiving electronic post-secondary (college) transcripts**. (All that apply)

- Competing priorities
- Unable to garner support
- Lack of technology resources
- Too many competing solutions
- Cost prohibitive or lack of funding
- Record integrity concerns
- Major transcript partners do not use electronic transcripts
- Lack of internal know how
- Other, please describe _____

Q4 From the options below, please select the reasons for **not sending electronic post-secondary (college) transcripts**. (All that apply)

- Competing priorities
- Unable to garner support
- Lack of technology resources
- Too many competing solutions
- Cost prohibitive or lack of funding
- Record integrity concerns
- Major transcript partners do not use electronic transcripts
- Lack of internal know how
- Other, please describe _____



Q5 From the options below, please select the reasons for **not receiving electronic high school transcripts**. (All that apply)

- Competing priorities
- Unable to garner support
- Lack of technology resources
- Too many competing solutions
- Cost prohibitive or lack of funding
- Record integrity concerns
- High school transcript partners do not use electronic transcripts
- Lack of internal know how
- Other, please describe _____

Q6 Please indicate in what format your institution **receives post-secondary (college) transcripts**. (Check all that apply)

- EDI
- XML
- PDF
- Paper
- Other, please describe _____

Q7 Please indicate in what format your institution **sends post-secondary (college) transcripts**. (Check all that apply)

- EDI
- XML
- PDF
- Paper
- Other, please describe _____

Q8 Please indicate in what format your institution **receives high school transcripts**. (Check all that apply)

- EDI
- XML
- PDF
- Paper
- Other, please describe _____

Q9 Approximately what percentage of post-secondary transcripts are received electronically?

- Less than 10%
- 10 - 24%
- 25 - 49%
- 50 - 74%
- 75 to 99%
- 100%
- Data not currently available

Q10 Approximately what percentage of post-secondary transcripts are sent electronically?

- Less than 10%
- 10 - 24%
- 25 - 49%
- 50 - 74%
- 75 to 99%
- 100%
- Data not currently available



Q11 Approximately what percentage of high school transcripts are received electronically?

- Less than 10%
- 10 - 24%
- 25 - 49%
- 50 - 74%
- 75 to 99%
- 100%
- Data not currently available

Q12 Is the electronic transcript data received used in any automated processes (e.g., transfer articulation, workflow kick off, admissions assessment, imaging)?

- Yes
- No

Q13 What automated processes are associated with electronic transcript data? (All that apply)

- Ability to match and automatically create a student record
- Ability to automatically import transcript into imaging system
- Ability to automatically apply identifying meta data to associate image to record in imaging system
- Ability to kick off workflows automatically
- Ability to automatically insert transfer credit information into a student record
- Ability to automatically scan transcript data for admissions requirements and mark those requirements as met
- Ability to automatically make system notations based on transcript data for use in reporting and other processes
- Other automated process

Note: The supplemental question about the chief enrollment management officer position removed and reported in report on same topic.



Appendix B: Respondent Count by Institution Control, Type, Size and Control

Control, Type and Size	Count
Public	512
Lower Division Only	176
Under 1,000	23
1,000 - 2,499	49
2,500 - 4,999	43
5,000 - 9,999	42
10,000 - 19,999	17
20,000+	2
Undergraduate	34
Under 1,000	5
1,000 - 2,499	13
2,500 - 4,999	5
5,000 - 9,999	2
10,000 - 19,999	5
20,000+	4
Undergraduate, graduate and/or professional	294
Under 1,000	6
1,000 - 2,499	14
2,500 - 4,999	39
5,000 - 9,999	70
10,000 - 19,999	67
20,000+	98
Graduate and/or professional	5
Under 1,000	2
1,000 - 2,499	2
10,000 - 19,999	1
Other	3
Under 1,000	2
1,000 - 2,499	1
Private, not-for-profit	530
Lower Division Only	12
Under 1,000	7
1,000 - 2,499	2
5,000 - 9,999	1
20,000+	2
Undergraduate	108
Under 1,000	48
1,000 - 2,499	51
2,500 - 4,999	8
20,000+	1
Undergraduate, graduate and/or professional	376
Under 1,000	72
1,000 - 2,499	122
2,500 - 4,999	89
5,000 - 9,999	41
10,000 - 19,999	40
20,000+	12



Graduate and/or professional	31
Under 1,000	25
1,000 - 2,499	5
2,500 - 4,999	1
Other	3
Under 1,000	1
1,000 - 2,499	1
5,000 - 9,999	1
Private, proprietary	35
Lower Division Only	3
Under 1,000	2
10,000 - 19,999	1
Undergraduate	8
Under 1,000	4
1,000 - 2,499	2
2,500 - 4,999	2
Undergraduate, graduate and/or professional	23
Under 1,000	9
1,000 - 2,499	5
2,500 - 4,999	2
5,000 - 9,999	2
10,000 - 19,999	3
20,000+	2
Graduate and/or professional	1
Under 1,000	1
Grand Total	1077



Appendix C: Respondent Country, State/Province

Country, State/Province	Count
Armenia	1
Australia	1
VIC	1
Bulgaria	1
Canada	35
AB	8
BC	5
MB	2
NL	1
ON	14
QC	3
SK	2
China	1
Costa Rica	1
SJO	1
Cote d'Ivoire	1
Grenada	1
Hong Kong	1
Hungary	1
Jamaica	1
Manchester	1
Lebanon	1
Saudi Arabia	1
Singapore	1
Switzerland	1
United Arab Emirates	3
United States	1025
AK	4
AL	15
AR	11
AZ	14
CA	78
CO	23
CT	8
DC	9
DE	2
FL	15
GA	17
GU	1
HI	3
IA	23
ID	7
IL	50
IN	23
KS	21
KY	11
LA	11



MA	49
MD	27
ME	7
MI	28
MN	35
MO	20
MP	1
MS	6
MT	8
NC	31
ND	11
NE	11
NH	6
NJ	17
NM	7
NV	7
NY	73
OH	38
OK	14
OR	20
PA	67
PR	1
RI	3
SC	13
SD	6
TN	19
TX	58
UT	9
VA	34
VT	4
WA	12
WI	23
WV	12
WY	2
Grand Total	1077

