

Your Opinions on Transcript and Other Practices

AACRAO surveyed its members in winter 2009/2010 about what they viewed to be the best practices for an institution of their type regarding:

- notation of various items on the student's transcript, including ineligibility to re-enroll for academic, disciplinary, or nonspecific reasons (Section I);
- use of social security numbers and other student identification numbers in the academic database and on transcripts (Section II);
- policies concerning requests to make name changes (Section III); and
- use of e-mail for official documentation of administrative academic decisions (Section IV).

This survey was run in conjunction with another one about respondents' actual practices in these same areas.

The 691 institutions that responded to the survey represented were of the following sizes and from the following sectors:

Size of Institutions

Size	Number of Institutions (596)
Less than 1,000	97 (16.3%)
1,000-4,999	252 (42.3%)
5,000-9,999	86 (14.4%)
10,000-19,999	81 (13.6%)
20,000 and above	80 (13.4%)

Type of Institutions

Type	Number of Institutions (596)
Private 2-year	14 (2.3%)
Private 4-year	336 (56.4%)
Public 2-year	81 (13.6%)
Public 4-year	165 (27.7%)

Section I: Inclusion of Particular Items on Transcript

The following percentages indicate the number of respondents who feel they should have the following items on their school's transcript.

	Yes	No
Leave of absence (670)	144 (21.5%)	526 (78.5%)
Withdrawal from a class after the census date (663)	565 (85.2%)	98 (14.8%)
Ineligibility to re-enroll (660)	372 (56.4%)	288 (43.6%)

Whether ineligibility to re-enroll was for academic reasons (370)	309 (83.5%)	61 (16.5%)
Whether ineligibility to re-enroll was for a disciplinary violation (370)	158 (42.7%)	212 (57.3%)
Period of time student was on probation (655)	314 (47.9%)	341 (52.1%)
Whether the student's probation was for academic reasons (312)	294 (94.2%)	18 (5.8%)
Whether student's probation was for behavioral reasons (313)	70 (22.4%)	243 (77.6%)

Section II: Student Identification Numbers

The following percentages indicate whether respondents feel that institutions should use student identification numbers on their transcripts.

The entire Social Security number	112 (17.3%)
A truncated version of the SSN	220 (34%)
Another student ID number	249 (38.4%)
No numerical student ID	46 (7.1%)
Other	21 (3.2%)

Some respondents suggested the following regarding what should be used as student identification numbers on transcripts:

- Date of birth
- Last four digits of SSN
- SSN is still needed when dealing with identity theft, transfer students, students with the same name, etc.

The following are other comments about beliefs regarding the use of student identification numbers:

- A truncated SSN is helpful for outside organizations for verification. Use an institutional identifier for all other internal needs.

- Colleges and universities should create unique student identification numbers that are different from SSNs. While the SSN may need to be stored in the institutions information system, it should only be viewable to individuals whose job responsibilities require access for verification such as financial aid.
- I firmly believe that the social security number should NOT be used as a means of identification externally, but we do need it internally to help differentiate students.
- I understand the reasoning behind not using SSN; however, it's getting harder and harder to figure out which transcript goes to which student without some way of definitely identifying them; especially when you receive transcripts from other schools.
- Our database assigns a student ID number to each student. This number is unique to the student and the college and is of no use outside of the institution. We prefer to use the SSN on transcripts so that the student can be easily matched at the receiving institution. We also like to see SSNs on the transcripts we receive for the same reason.
- We use computer-generated student ID numbers, but have found that most students do not know their ID numbers. Therefore, we have to ask them for their SSN in order to look up records.

Name Changes

The following percentages indicate what information respondents believe should suffice in order to honor a request for a name change for a currently enrolled student.

Legal proof, such as a marriage license or court order	301 (47.5%)
A government-issued photo ID (valid driver's license, passport, or Social Security card)	133 (21%)
2 government-issued IDs, such as a valid driver's license and a valid Social Security card	34 (5.4%)
2 documents: one legal proof such as marriage license or court order and the other a government-issued ID	118 (18.6%)
No document beyond a written request is required to make the name change	23 (3.6%)
Other	25 (3.9%)

Respondents made the following comments regarding what they believe should suffice for a name change request for a currently enrolled student:

- Legal proof should be presented for a formal name change, and informal (on class lists and grade rosters) changes should be possible for students who are in a gender transition.
- Social Security card with the new name

The following percentages indicate what information respondents believe should suffice in order to honor a request for a name change for a previously enrolled student.

We do not make name changes for previously enrolled students	130 (20.7%)
Legal proof, such as a marriage license or court order	233 (37%)
A government-issued photo ID (valid driver's license, passport, or Social Security card)	106 (16.9%)
2 documents: one legal proof such as marriage license or court order and the other a government-issued ID	39 (6.2%)
2 government-issued IDs, such as a valid driver's license and a valid Social Security card	79 (12.6%)
No document beyond a written request is required to make the name change	25 (4%)
Other	17 (2.7%)

The following comments represent what respondents believe should suffice for a name change request for a previously enrolled student:

- Although we will change the current name, we always retain the name at graduation.
- If they reenroll, we use the name they list on the readmit application.
- We do not enter name changes for alumni. The current name is listed at the top of the transcript next to the name attended under.

Respondents believe they should handle the name change in the database in the following ways:

Keep the new name only	14 (2.2%)
Maintain the former name as well as the new	585 (92.7%)

Depends on the circumstances	32 (5.1%)
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Respondents made the following comments as to how they believe name changes should be handled in the database:

- All names can be useful in finding the record. We add to the record, we try to never delete anything which shows a history of changes.
- For graduates, the original name should be kept and the new name should be added.
For students, the name is changed to the new name.
- In general, the database should keep the individual's former name as an alternate. But in rare instances (when a court order of protection has been issued) it is appropriate to remove the former name entirely.

In the event of a gender change, respondents believe they should handle the name change in the database in the following ways:

Keep the new name only	46 (7.3%)
Maintain the former name as well as the new	508 (80.8%)
Depends on the circumstances	75 (11.9%)

Respondents made the following comments as to how they believe name changes should be handled in the database in the event of a gender change:

- A gender change requires the same level of documentation as a name change. However, a gender change does not always require a name change also.
- At this time we have no policy for this circumstance.
- Display the new name only on transcripts and official documents. Maintain the old name for cross reference purposes, not on printed documents.

Section III: Communication of Academic Decisions

The following percentages represent which modes of communication respondents believe are considered acceptable as official documentation of academic decisions between academic/administrative offices.

The number of individuals who responded to this question was 630. Each individual could mark all responses that apply, so the percentages will not add up to 100.

In-person	156 (24.8%)
Signed, hard-copy document	549 (87.1%)
Communication within a secure portal	434 (68.9%)

E-mail	409 (64.9%)
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The following are comments made regarding what respondents believe are considered acceptable as official documentation of academic decisions between academic/administrative offices:

- Should always be followed up in writing.
- Depends on the nature of the decision.
- only through secure college network

The following percentages represent which modes of communication respondents believe are considered acceptable as official documentation of academic decisions between academic administrative offices and students.

The number of individuals who responded to this question was 626. Again, because each individual could mark all responses that apply, the percentages will not add up to 100.

In-person	156 (24.9%)
Signed, hard-copy document	562 (89.8%)
Communication within a secure portal	406 (64.8%)
E-mail	369 (58.9%)

The following are comments made regarding what respondents believe are considered acceptable as official documentation of academic decisions between academic administrative offices and students:

- Depends on the nature of the decision
- We would accept it only from the institutional email account