

## Transcript Practices, Student ID Numbers, and Name Changes, 2009/10

AACRAO conducted a survey of its members in winter 2009/10 to determine their practices 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 and other communications as official documentation of administrative academic decisions (Section IV).

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

*The 655 institutions that responded to the survey about their practices are of the following sizes and sectors.*

### ***SURVEY RESPONDENTS (655 total)***

#### *Size of Institutions*

Size	Number of Institutions (497)
Less than 1,000	82 (16.5%)
1,000-4,999	209 (42.1%)
5,000-9,999	72 (14.5%)
10,000-19,999	70 (14.1%)
20,000 and above	64 (12.9%)

#### *Type of Institutions*

Type	Number of Institutions (497)
Private 2-year	4 (0.8%)
Private 4-year	290 (58.4%)
Public 2-year	61 (12.3%)
Public 4-year	142 (28.6%)

### **Section I: Inclusion of Particular Items on Transcript**

The following percentages indicate the number of institutions that noted having the indicated items on their school's transcript.

	Yes	No
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	Yes	No
Leave of absence (655)	115 (17.6%)	540 (82.4%)
Withdrawal from a class after the census date (654)	559 (85.5%)	95 (14.5%)
Ineligibility to re-enroll (655)	246 (37.6%)	409 (62.4%)
Whether ineligibility to re-enroll was for academic reasons (246)	207 (84.1%)	39 (15.9%)
Whether ineligibility to re-enroll was for a disciplinary violation (245)	70 (28.6%)	175 (71.4%)
Period of time student was on probation (655)	257 (39.2%)	398 (60.8%)
Whether the student's probation was for academic reasons (255)	219 (85.9%)	36 (14.1%)
Whether student's probation was for behavioral reasons (256)	Yes 16 (6.3%)	240 (93.8%)
Dates of transfer courses taken (653)	328 (50.2%)	325 (49.8%)
Regarding the amount of credit accepted for transfer courses, transcript notes ONLY the TOTAL amount (650)	222 (34.2%)	428 (65.8%)
Actual coursework the student transfers in and for which he (she receives credit (652)	453 (69.5%)	199 (30.5%)
Whether the transfer credits accepted apply to the student's major or minor (653)	58 (8.9%)	595 (91.1%)
Academic honors*: Dean's list (654)	402 (61.5%)	252 (38.5%)
Academic honors*: Phi Beta Kappa (652)	121 (18.6%)	531 (81.4%)

	Yes	No
School-wide Honor Program* (653)	331 (50.7%)	322 (49.3%)
Departmental honor program* (654)	168 (25.7%)	486 (74.3%)
Class rank (655)	38 (5.8%)	617 (94.2%)
Date degree completed, if different from date of degree conferral (652)	195 (30%)	457 (70.1%)
Date degree completed, if same as date of degree conferral (651)	447 (68.7%)	204 (31.3%)
Date degree completed, if student has not received degree at the end of the term in which he (she) completes degree requirements (650)	195 (30%)	455 (70%)
If you note on the transcript the date degree completed, does this include the day of the month? (606)	449 (74.1%)	157 (25.9%)
Courses in progress at issuance of transcript (653)	522 (79.9%)	131 (20.1%)
Whether student is currently enrolled (518)	387 (74.7%)	131 (25.3%)

\*When asked what other honors or honors programs were listed on transcript, some of the most common listed were:

- Graduation honors
- Latin honors (Cum Laude, etc.)

Respondents also listed others they believe should be listed on the transcript, including the following:

- Departmental honors
- Valedictorian
- Honors societies

## Section IA: Transcript for Graduate and Professional Schools

For professional and graduate schools, and for institutions that have a professional or a graduate school, respondents were asked several additional questions, as listed below.

*Whether professional school's transcript notes **professional certification for any program(s)**:*

Yes	No
98 (27%)	265 (73%)

*Of those that list professional certification, the following are **required to do so by state law and/or professional licensing**:*

	Yes	Uncertain	No
State law	24 (25.3%)	41 (43.2%)	30 (31.6%)
Professional licensing	39 (40.2%)	39 (40.2%)	19 (19.6%)

*Institutions whose transcripts for graduate and professional students note **satisfactory completion of institutional qualifying examinations**:*

Yes	No
70 (16.7%)	349 (83.3%)

*Institutions whose transcripts for graduate or professional students note **advancement and/or admission to candidacy**:*

Yes	No
61 (14.4%)	362 (85.6%)

*Institutions whose transcripts for graduate or professional school students include the **title of the thesis or dissertation**:*

Yes	No
122 (28.6%)	305 (71.4%)

## Section II: Student Identification Numbers

The following percentages indicate institutions' *use of different types of student identification numbers on their transcripts*:

	Yes	No
The entire Social Security number	165 (25.9%)	473 (74.1%)
A truncated version of the SSN	176 (28.9%)	434 (71.1%)
Another student ID number	493 (78.5%)	135 (21.5%)
No numerical student ID	35 (7.7%)	421 (92.3%)
Other	31 (9.2%)	307 (90.8%)

***IN THE ACADEMIC DATABASE*** (not in the transcript), respondents indicated that they use the following for student identification:

	Yes	No
The entire Social Security number	392 (59.8%)	263 (40.2%)
Allow students option of using entire SSN	55 (8.4%)	600 (91.6%)
Truncated version of SSN	48 (7.3%)	607 (92.7%)
Another student ID number	616 (94%)	39 (6%)
No numerical student ID	5 (0.8%)	650 (99.2%)
Allow students another option	21 (3.2%)	634 (96.9%)
Other	45 (6.9%)	610 (93.1%)

The following are a few of the comments about the use of student identification numbers, including issues respondents might be grappling with.

- As students transfer nationwide, SSN remains the only viable unique identifier.
- Assigned student ID number is connected to the student's social security number so that a record can be located regardless of which piece of information the student provides. It is very, very useful to be able to do this.
- Because of the truncated SSN, other schools/employers can't always match up the transcript to the student, especially those with common names.
- It is difficult to match applicant records to official transcripts that do not include SSN. Official Transcript requires signed release so SSN should be included along with the rest of the PI information in the document.

- We are in process of removing the social security number as an identifier for our students, and replacing it with another random student ID number.
- We store the social security number for purposes of financial aid, etc. We attempt to not use it for identifying students on a day-to-day basis and have removed the SSN from all institutions general reports.

### Section III: Name Changes

The survey included questions about the documentation that institutions require to honor a request for a name change.

***Documentation that institutions require to make a name change:***

Legal proof, such as a marriage license or court order	420 (64.4%)
Either a valid driver's license or valid Social Security card	142 (21.8%)
Both a valid driver's license and a valid Social Security card	44 (6.7%)
No documentation beyond a written request is required in order to make the name change	46 (7.1%)

Comments made on the survey about institutions' requirements to honor a request for a name change:

- Depending on the circumstances on how the name change is handled, all ways have been used at one time or another.
- If the name is changed at the time of readmission, the name is automatically changed, however, if the student is currently enrolled, documentation is required.
- Not requiring proof has been our current practice, however, we are looking at drafting a policy that would require legal documentation.

Once they've made the name change, respondents were asked how they handle the name change in the database.

***How a name change is handled in the database:***

Keep the new name only	30 (4.6%)
Maintain the former name as well as the new	587 (89.9%)
Depends on the circumstances	36 (5.5%)

These are a few of the comments regarding how respondents handle the name change in the database:

- "Name history" is kept in the database. Able to use prior name for transcripts and new name for the rest.
- Alumni-the name does not change, but the new name is recorded elsewhere in database and on transcript. Present student-the name changes in database, but old name is kept elsewhere in database.
- Former name is stored in database but not visible on printed documents

*In the event of a gender change, respondents handle the name change IN THE DATABASE in the following ways:*

Keep the new name only	57 (9.4%)
Maintain the former name as well as the new	433 (71.1%)
Depends on the circumstances	119 (19.5%)

A few of the comments regarding the handling of a name change in the database in the event of a gender change:

- Former name is stored as an alternative name but does not display on any forms or documents.
- We have not encountered this issue yet.
- Our administrative system doesn't track changes in gender.

## **Section IV: Communication Issues**

The survey included questions about the modes of communication considered acceptable as official documentation of academic decisions.

***Communications accepted as official documentation of academic decisions between academic/administrative offices:***

	Yes	No
In-person (655)	254 (38.8%)	401 (61.2%)
Signed, hard-copy document (655)	636 (97.1%)	19 (2.9%)
Communication with a secure portal (655)	318 (48.5%)	337 (51.5%)
E-mail (655)	535 (81.7%)	120 (18.3%)

Comments included:

- In-person communication followed up with something in writing.
- Signed, hard-copy document is the preferred method.
- Communication with a secure portal: we don't yet have this option.
- E-mail is accepted only as a last resort.
- E-mail must come from the university e-mail account.

***Modes of communication accepted as official documentation of academic decisions between academic administrative offices and students:***

	Yes	No
In-person (655)	260 (39.7%)	395 (60.3%)
Signed, hard-copy document (655)	633 (96.7%)	22 (3.4%)
Communication with a secure portal (655)	313 (47.8%)	342 (52.2%)
E-mail (655)	470 (71.8%)	185 (28.2%)

Comments include:

- In-person communication followed up with something in writing and/or photo ID.
- Signed, hard-copy document is the preferred method.
- Communication with a secure portal will be an option in the near future.
- E-mail is accepted for less sensitive matters.
- E-mail must come from the university e-mail account.