EXTENDING THE TRANSCRIPT
EMPOWERING THE LEARNER
Overview

The academic transcript, almost unchanged for decades, is now rapidly evolving. Transformed from paper sent through the mail, transcripts are now routinely ordered and exchanged online as an electronic image or standards-based data. With students learning in a greater variety of ways than ever before, registrars are being asked to document more information on the official transcript to better communicate the learner’s comprehensive academic experience.

By extending the traditional academic transcript, institutions provide data-rich credentials similar to an ePortfolio, which documents a body of work curated by the learner. However, unlike ePortfolios, enhanced transcripts are certified and issued by the institution. These enhanced transcripts empower the learner by documenting more of what they know and how well they know it. So employers, graduate schools and other transcript recipients can use this critical information to better assess the learner’s experiences, expertise, and accomplishments.

The movement to augment the transcript is being led by pioneering academic institutions and innovative registrars across the country looking beyond courses and grades to provide more context and insight into learning experiences inside and outside the classroom. This evolution is primarily comprised of three distinct efforts:

» Co-curricular, or experiential, transcripts that document verified experiences and accomplishments occurring outside of the classroom

» Competency-based transcripts and competency reports that communicate not merely what was taught but what was learned

» Data-enabled transcripts that embed links in the electronic document that introduce more details about learners, their course-work, their instructors and the institution

Co-Curricular Transcripts

A growing number of colleges are providing their students with co-curricular, or experiential, transcripts. Co-curricular transcripts, along with their academic counterpart, offer a richer set of data around a student’s educational experiences, resulting in a more complete profile of the learner. Experiential learning recognizes learning that occurs outside of the classroom, with colleges defining what experiences a student may submit and have verified for inclusion on their transcript.

Perhaps the best description of the experiential transcript comes from Sam Houston State University: The co-curricular transcript enhances the marketability of students by encouraging their participation in leadership activities, student organizations, community service, and professional development through formal documentation of extra-curricular activities. Other institution benefits include better differentiating themselves from peer institutions as well as a documented correlation between increased student engagement and retention.
However, the biggest driver of the co-curricular transcript may be that it’s also helping students transition into the labor market. “To have the growth recorded and recognized by the University makes employers more willing to accept it, which is a boost to anyone searching for employment,” says Jim Hintz, interim dean of students at Purdue University. “It’s one thing to say you’ve had experiences, and it’s another to have learning outcomes to the experiences.”

The experiential transcript exists as an official record of a student’s campus and community involvement, and may include:

» Campus involvement: Participation in clubs and organizations, involvement in or volunteering for on-campus programs and events
» Career Development: Part-time university employment, internships and involvement in professional organizations
» Community Service/Service Learning: Campus-supervised volunteer service on and off-campus, either as part of a service learning course or coordinated through the Office of Service Learning
» Honors/Awards/Scholarships: Any type of formal recognition given by the college, including the dean’s list and outstanding student awards
» Leadership/Student Organizations: Any leadership role or membership position held for at least one semester in a campus club or organization
» Presentations/Travel: Written or oral presentations verified by a faculty or staff member but are not required for a course, student travel or participation/involvement in a conference sponsored through university channels
» Published Writing/Creative Activities/Other: Published scholarly or creative works, documentary productions, media publications or works, and computer projects
» Recreation/Athletics: Involvement in intramural activities or club sports
» Research Activities: Participation in independent research coordinated by faculty or staff
» Visual and Performing Arts: Participation in choirs, musical ensembles, and theatrical or dance productions beyond class sessions

With the growing interest in experiential transcripts, colleges face a number of challenges in implementing a program: lack of standards and best practices around how experiences are captured, managed, and verified; what data systems will be used; and which office will manage the program and issue experiential transcripts.

Elon University has offered its Elon Experiences Transcript since 1994. In 2013, it became the first college to tie together the electronically released co-curricular transcript with the academic transcript. “Students should not have to go multiple places to obtain 1. “The Co-Curricular Transcript,” Sam Houston State University http://www.shsu.edu/sacs/compliancereport/narratives/documents/Co-CurricularTranscript.pdf.
documents that paint a full picture of their academic experience, and the secondary transcript gives us the ability to record more detailed information regarding the signature experiences of studying at Elon,” Registrar Rodney Parks explains. “We ended up choosing a vendor that gave us the flexibility to think outside the box.”

Co-curricular transcripts are typically designed with the familiar multi-column format, appearing similar to an academic transcript. Following are several examples:

# OFFICIAL CO-CURRICULAR TRANSCRIPT

**Student Name:** Scott Harris  
**Student ID:** demouser

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

*** Continued on Page 2 ***
# John Doe

123 22nd Street #2A, New York, NY 10007 | 212-222-2222 | jdoe@stu.bmcc.cuny.edu

## Clubs, Organizations and Athletics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Accounting Club</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Fall 2010–Spring 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men’s Swimming Team</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Fall 2010–Spring 2011</td>
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## Community Service

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<th>Event</th>
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<th>Role</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence Walk</td>
<td>Women’s Resource Center</td>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Oct 21, 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Red Cross</td>
<td>BMCC Health Services</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>Dec 12, 2010</td>
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## Honors and Awards

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Fall 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study Abroad, Salzburg</td>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td>Participant</td>
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<td>Out in Two Scholar</td>
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## Leadership Training

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<td>Emerging Leaders Conference</td>
<td>CUNY</td>
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## Workshops and Seminars

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<td>Resume Writing Workshop</td>
<td>Center for Career Development</td>
<td>Participant</td>
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Signed by Chief Student Affairs Officer:

Date: 3/15/2011
COMPETENCY BASED REPORTS

Competency-based education (CBE) is an approach that shifts the emphasis from the credit hour to student outcomes. In this system, students earn their credential based on successfully attaining defined competencies demonstrated through assessment. Competency-based programs may be mapped from traditional credit-based courses or defined solely on the demonstration of specified competencies.

Robert Kelchen, an assistant professor of education at Seton Hall University, explains that competency-based education has the potential to streamline the path to a college degree for a significant number of students, both working adults who can apply their skills and experiences to earn credit for what they already know and other students who prefer self-paced learning over the traditional time-based model of earning credits. With 31 million Americans with some credits and no degree, adult learners are one of the factors behind the significant growth in CBE programs offered by more than 50 colleges today, with another 400 in development. By 2020, more than 500,000 students are projected to be enrolled in CBE programs.

According to the Huffington Post, 96 percent of academic officers believe that they’re preparing students for success in the workplace while only 11 percent of business leaders strongly agree that college graduates have the necessary skills and competencies to success in the workplace. CBE may be poised to help bridge that gap. Through its outcomes-based focus, the competency-based transcript (or competency supplement) provides the information that employers can use to determine what applicants know and whether they have the desired skills.

With CBE programs awarding credit and degrees through new measures of assessment, institutions are finding new ways to record and convey the results of learning. One challenge that colleges pioneering these programs face is that student information systems (SIS) are designed to accommodate a system of education based on the credit hour rather than demonstrated competencies. Another challenge is that there is no accepted standard for a competency-based transcript.

Because CBE programs are considered to be experimental and financial aid (and employer tuition reimbursement) is still based on the credit hour, students in competency-based programs will have transcripts, a competency-based transcript (or report) and one that is backwards compatible, all mapped to a credit-hour based equivalency. This credit-based transcript can sometimes be used when students transfer out of a CBE program or to another institution (though not all institutions award competencies in a way that can be transferred).


With the competency-based transcript or competency report focused not on course, grade and GPA but on competencies learned and mastered, there are not yet standard conventions for the format this credential takes. The colleges and universities pioneering CBE programs are experimenting with transcript formats to convey competencies, with some using icons and others documenting them as text in columns that mirror a traditional transcript. However, institutions are not yet integrating competencies and their credit-based equivalent into a single transcript.

Following is an example of how competencies can be conveyed:
Beyond CBE programs, there is interest in mapping inferred competencies from traditional programs into the transcript or as a supplemental competency report. Different from competency-based education, inferred competencies are not necessarily assessed as an expected outcome of a course.
DATA-ENABLED TRANSCRIPTS

Data-enabled transcripts allow the embedding of hyperlinks into eTranscripts (typically exchanged as PDF documents) that institutions can use to provide additional context and information for an academic, co-curricular or experiential transcript. This allows transcript recipients to extend the transcript far beyond the data included in the document itself.

Stanford University Registrar Thomas Black, who pioneered the use of embedded links, explains. “I’m a record keeper… I’m supposed to capture the academic record, your experience at Stanford,” he says. “That’s my job, to capture the whole breadth of that—not to get it distilled, but to capture it accurately… we can be more descriptive about these things and reference them as well.”

Linking course names to an online course catalogue is one example of how data-enabled transcripts can be used to provide a wealth of information that couldn’t otherwise be accommodated within the transcript.

When transcript recipients select a linked course name, the corresponding URL is loaded into their web browser, displaying the full course description or syllabus, which is typically hosted on the college’s website.

Virtually any text element within the transcript can be linked. Other fields likely to be transformed to bring a deeper level of detail may include the college name to provide institutional information, information about the degree awarded, instructor names and biographical information, select coursework and dissertations, detailed explanations or definitions of competencies or experiences related to a course, and a link to the learners ePortfolio from the transcript header. In addition, an embedded link can be inserted to access information found on a legend or a key to grading.

Mount Elbert University
Office of the Registrar
Denver, CO 80237

Record of: Indiana Jones
Current Name: Indiana Jones

Issued To: Indiana Jones
8055 E Tufts Ave
Suite 250
Denver, CO 80237

Document ID: 1976

Date Issued: 27-AUG-2007
Date of Birth: 06-AUG-1968
Student ID: 122000444
Level: Graduate

Course Level: Graduate
Student Type: Continuing
First Admit: Fall 1993
Last Admit: Fall 1993

Current Program:
Master of Business Admin
Program: MBA-Business Administration
Major: Business Administration

Degrees Awarded:
Master of Business Admin 06-06-2007
Primary Degree:
Major: Business Management

INSTITUTION CREDIT:

Fall 1993
College of Business
Business Administration
ACT 321 000FIN 1 N/A 3.5 A 12.00
ENG 612 000DBA C 3.3 A 12.00
Enrs: 6.00 GPA-Hrs: 0.00 QPAS: 0.00 GPA 0.00
Good Standing

Spring 1994
College of Business
Business Administration
DSCI 512 000Quantitative Analysis 3.0 A 12.00
FINA 614 000Financial Management I 3.0 A 12.00
Enrs: 6.00 GPA-Hrs: 0.00 QPAS: 0.00 GPA 0.00
Good Standing

Fall 1994
College of Business
Business Administration
MKT 692 000Marketing Strategy 3.0 A 12.00
Enrs: 3.00 GPA-Hrs: 0.00 QPAS: 0.00 GPA 0.00
Good Standing

Spring 1995
College of Business
Business Administration
ACT 651 000Statistical Methods 3.0 A 12.00
DSCI 563 000Statistical Analysis 3.0 A 12.00
ENGR 692 000Organizational Behavior 3.0 A 12.00
Enrs: 9.00 GPA-Hrs: 0.00 QPAS: 0.00 GPA 0.00
Good Standing

INSTITUTION CREDIT:

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College of Business
Business Administration
DSCI 613 000Mgmt Inf Systems I 3.0 A 12.00
DSCI 621 000Operations Mgmt 3.0 A 12.00
Enrs: 9.00 GPA-Hrs: 0.00 QPAS: 0.00 GPA 0.00
Good Standing

Fall 1996
College of Business
Business Administration
DSCI 620 000Mgmt Sys Environm 3.0 A 12.00
FINA 654 000Business & Fin Mgmt 3.0 A 12.00
MKT 672 000Business Policies 3.0 A 12.00
Enrs: 9.00 GPA-Hrs: 0.00 QPAS: 0.00 GPA 0.00
Good Standing

*************** TRANSCRIPT TOTALS ***************
TOTAL INSTITUTION 54.00 0.00 0.00 0.00
TOTAL TRANSFER 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00
OVERALL 51.00 0.00 0.00 0.00

John Hancock, University Registrar

MOUNT ELBERT UNIVERSITY
Extending Transcripts with Parchment

It is clear that there are several options for extending the transcript to be a richer documentation of student learning. The question is, once your institution has taken the steps to provide this documentation how do you empower your students to order and send it to employers or admissions offices? Parchment built a framework to support all of the credentials your institution wants to offer. Including a central place for students to order, track, and store. As additional credentials are earned or offered, student can collect them for a single, comprehensive place to document all of their academic achievements.

All Official Documents

Certificates, diplomas, licenses and transcripts -- of any ilk -- are all official documents offered by academic institutions. And they can all be ordered by students to be sent to official destinations. In four simple steps you can get started sending any official credential just as easily as you send eTranscripts today.

1. Send Parchment a PDF
Provide an original PDF of your experiential transcript or competency based report. Include any additional artwork and settings such as pricing you would like to apply.

2. Parchment Handles the Configuration
Parchment’s Member Consulting group will create the electronic version and place it in your ordering storefront for testing.

3. Review and Approve
We want everything to look perfect! Review the finished product, run some tests. Make sure everything works as you wish.

4. Make Available for Students to Order
Now your experiential transcript or competency based report are available for students to order along with the transcripts you already offer.

Determining how to produce these credentials is often the most challenging part of the project. But once you’ve decided, distribution using Parchment is extremely simple.

To get started, contact your Parchment Account Executive.