

AUTOMATING THE TRANSCRIPT PROCESS TO ENROLL TRANSFER STUDENTS FASTER

How timely answers to students' top questions can simplify the transfer pathway

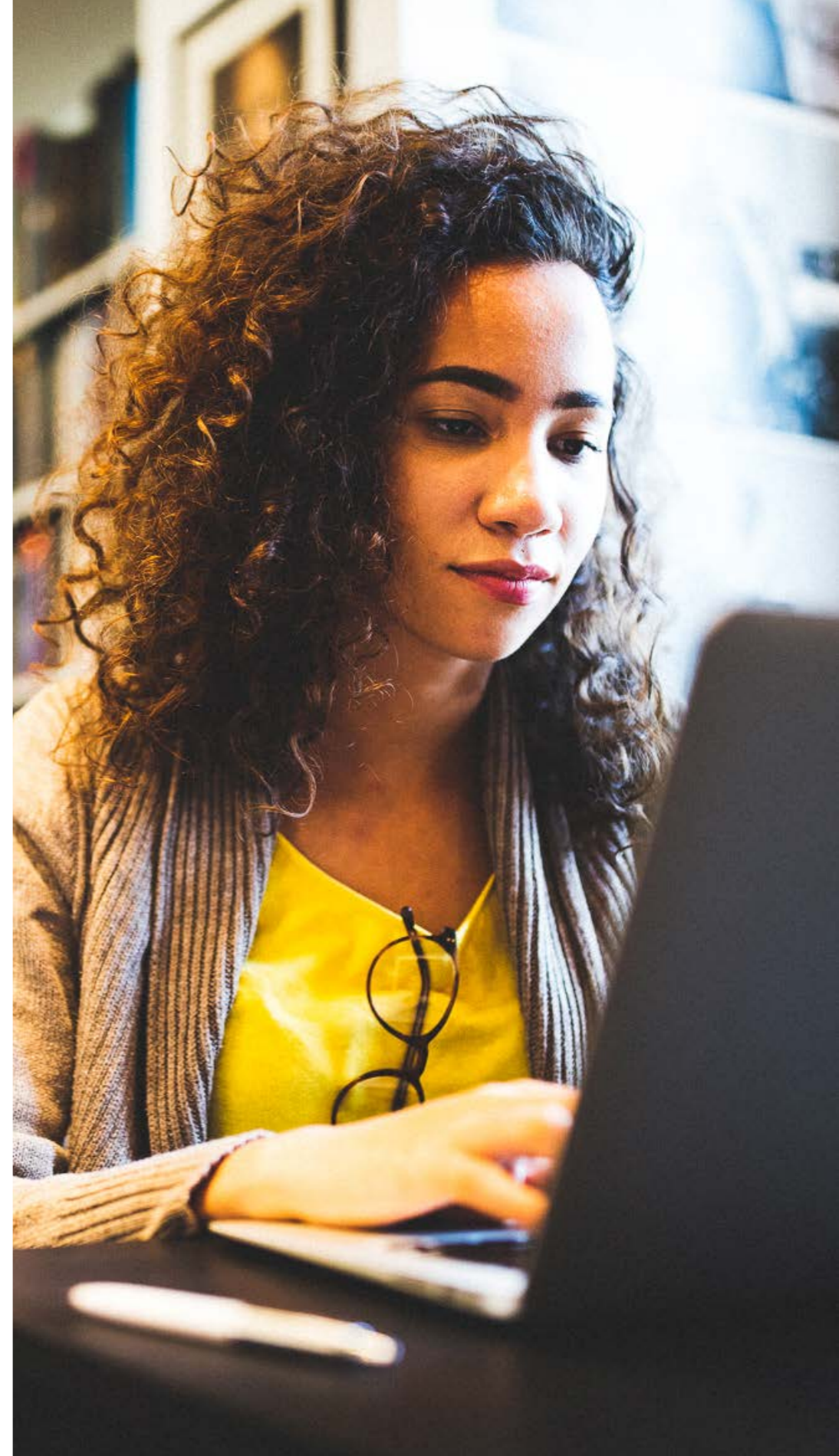


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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically affected enrollment in higher education, including the number of students who transfer institutions. The National Student Clearinghouse reports that nearly 200,000 fewer students transferred in 2021 compared with 2020 — an 8.4% decline.ⁱ But transfer students are a significant asset to the campus community, demonstrating commitment to academic success as well as helping institutions grow tuition revenue and meet enrollment objectives.ⁱⁱ For this reason, recruiting and enrolling transfer students is more important now than ever before.

One challenge during the transfer pathway can be determining credit and course equivalencies. Often working in an outdated, paper-based process, staff need to manually review and enter data from multi-page, multi-format transcripts. This method is highly prone to human error, leading to frustrating rework and lost productivity for staff. And while the decision period stretches to weeks or months, students are left lacking actionable information.

Clear answers on transferable credits and course equivalency can be the deciding factor on whether a student enrolls at your institution or one of your competitors'. This ebook explores four questions transfer students ask before making their decision — and how automating transcript capture and evaluation helps deliver the answers.



Taking a hard look at how institutions can best serve the sizable population of students who move in and out of higher education in a nonlinear fashion and shedding unnecessary barriers to their success can help strengthen public trust in higher education and reaffirm its value as an engine of economic and social mobility.
But most importantly, it is simply the right thing to do.”

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

Reimagining Transfer for Student Success, 2021



QUESTION

1

Do I qualify for
your institution?



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HIGH RATIO OF APPLICANTS TO ADMISSIONS STAFF

Delayed admissions decisions can cause qualified applicants to look at other schools. But considering that the ratio of applicants to admissions staff is 461:1 for private institutions and 1,035:1 for public, employees are often overwhelmed with manual data entry and review.ⁱⁱⁱ

Automating transcript capture and evaluation frees up staff to focus their time on value-adding activities like making the actual decisions. Automation speeds the transcript evaluation process and slashes the decision period from weeks to days, giving your institution an edge in recruiting students.



Question 1: Do I qualify for your institution?

First and foremost, students want to know if they meet the standards to be accepted into your institution. But if your admissions staff is burdened by paper-based processes, they're spending time on manual data entry and reviewing transcripts for GPA, class rank and other factors — time that could be used in better ways.

Extracting information manually from even a simple document can take up to 20 minutes per transcript. Multiply that by thousands of students, and it's easy to see how paper-based processing leads to bottlenecks that stretch out the decision period.

Automating transcript capture and evaluation lets your staff focus on faster admission decisions, not data input. Whether transcripts come in electronically or on paper, the right solution should be able to automatically identify and capture necessary information without human intervention. Then, the information is routed to the right person for review and action.

Besides allowing your admissions department to respond to students faster, automated transcript processing also enables employees to process higher volumes without additional staff.



QUESTION
2

Will my existing credits transfer for equivalent courses?



Question 2: Will my existing credits transfer for equivalent courses?

Course equivalency decisions are a key factor in a student’s academic career, and providing answers on how their courses will fit into their chosen academic programs is critical. Manual evaluations take up unnecessary time, and worse, approaching the process on a case-by-case or ad-hoc basis runs the risk of creating errors.

An automated transcript process can accurately read and evaluate data so students are awarded the proper credit the first time. Leveraging intelligent capture, the software scans and verifies transcripts based on articulation rules for each external institution, which expedites the transfer credit evaluation process.

If a course comes through that doesn’t have a pre-determined equivalency, it’s flagged for review. Your staff can then define the new equivalency and add it to the database. As a result, your institution can efficiently answer students’ course equivalency questions and provide faster decisions.



CASE STUDY: CAL STATE EAST BAY CUTS PROCESSING TIME BY 75%

Manual, time-consuming transcript data entry and reviews burdened California State University, East Bay — especially during peak admissions periods. The university leveraged intelligent capture to automate the capture and evaluation of transcripts — a change that slashed processing time by 75 percent.

“Getting this information and our decisions back to students quickly is definitely a competitive advantage in securing and enrolling applicants faster,” said Angela Schneider, registrar at California University, East Bay.

[READ THE CASE STUDY](#)



QUESTION
3

Do I qualify for one of your institution's financial aid packages?



DELAYS IN FINANCIAL AID DECISIONS CAUSE STUDENT DISSATISFACTION AND POTENTIAL WITHDRAWAL

With six out of 10 students unsure of their application status according to the Institute for College Access & Success, it is important to facilitate faster award decisions and reduce inefficiencies.^{iv} The same study found that colleges spend over \$100,000 a year verifying student information.

An automated transcript process routes relevant information to the right people at the right time. This not only saves costs but also drives faster decision making because staff are empowered with the most up-to-date information instead of bogged down searching for and verifying documents.

Question 3: Do I qualify for one of your institution's financial aid packages?

Finances will always be a large determining factor in whether a student chooses your institution over another. That's why any potential financial aid information should be provided to students as quickly as possible.

However, this is easier said than done; financial aid staff rarely have the information necessary to efficiently make award decisions. When records reside in multiple systems and formats, staff have a difficult time locating and verifying the documentation — which delays decisions and causes students to potentially withdraw.

With automated transcript and evaluation, all the relevant information (such as proof of high school completion) is automatically sent to your financial aid system. Financial aid staff have a complete view of the application with the click of a button.

This helps to remove the risk of losing best-fit applicants because staff can't keep up. You also improve the speed and quality of customer service, as your staff can answer questions quickly on the first call.



QUESTION
4

Can my existing credits be used to determine a clear path to graduation?



Question 4: Can my existing credits be used to determine a clear path to graduation?

Students' satisfaction — and likelihood of completion — at your institution drastically increases if they have a clear path to graduation. It is vital that your institution provides accurate advice on the most efficient and cost-effective way to graduate. Equivalency decisions are crucial here because external courses taken by enrolled students shape their degree journey.

The right solution will provide your staff with immediate answers to questions about equivalency. Equipped with evergreen information, course advisors can guide students to register for the correct courses upon enrollment as well as keep students on the right path that doesn't waste their time or money.



DELIVER TIMELY, ACCURATE TRANSFER CREDIT REPORTS BY VALIDATING COURSEWORK AGAINST YOUR ARTICULATION DATABASE

Automated processing accurately reads data from transcripts, validates the extracted data and fills in missing information before passing it to your institution's student information system. It eliminates the need to manually sort and key data from even the most complex, diverse document types, delivering accurate reports in a fraction of time compared to paper-based processes. Now, you can inform students of how their previous courses will fit into their chosen academic programs sooner, eliminating the waiting game.

A win-win for students and institutions

Automated transcript capture and evaluation provides benefits to both your school and students:



Armed with the most current information, advisors are able to guide and encourage students to register for the correct courses from the beginning.



Applicants can receive faster answers on admission status, credit transfer and course equivalency — which can be the deciding factor a student uses to choose your institution over another.



Staff can focus more on higher-value work like student outreach and counseling instead of data input and verification.

As a result, your institution gives students the insight they need to make better-informed transfer decisions — and benefits from increased tuition revenue and academic success.

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Learn more at [Hyland.com/Transcripts](https://www.hyland.com/transcripts)

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