

Designing sound rules for documenting foreign study

Large and diverse as it is, the U.S. educational system employs fairly standard practices in compiling and maintaining student records.

Those responsible for academic transcripts at high schools and universities usually keep detailed records for decades, and students can request that official transcripts be issued to third parties with little difficulty.

Since 1974 when Congress enacted the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, students have a legal right of access to their records while academic institutions are restricted from disclosing most student information without written consent.

Thanks to the system's uniformity, admission officers expect applicants to submit official transcripts from their high schools and previous colleges as a matter of routine.

They prefer the same kind of documentation from applicants educated outside the United States. But in many countries, student records are subject to different practices and laws.

In the interest of fairness to all applicants in a given admission cycle, colleges seeking proper documentation should take into account what foreign applicants (and

their schools) can reasonably be expected to provide within set deadlines.

Among the more important considerations that should inform application policies for foreign-educated students are the following:

■ **Deadlines:** Unlike their U.S.-educated counterparts who can get transcripts virtually on demand, applicants who must obtain transcripts or other documents from abroad often face delays lasting from several weeks to several months or more.

Once an admission office receives documents, there may be a need for additional materials or verification from the foreign institution, entailing further delays.

By setting earlier application deadlines for international students, colleges can be in better position to have complete application packages assembled by the time decisions are made.

■ **Official sources/external validation:** Owing in part to long traditions of local control over education, teaching institutions in the United States are usually the official source of all student records.

In other countries, however, official records for such things as nationally administered secondary school examinations and degree program exams are kept not by

schools and teaching colleges, but by larger, centralized administrative bodies (e.g., national or regional examination boards, university registrars).

To avoid receiving the wrong documents and the attendant follow-up requests for additional material, admission officers should acquaint themselves with the basic sources of official documentation at both the secondary and post-secondary levels and direct students to the proper authorities.

■ **Terminology:** When requesting documents from foreign applicants, it's helpful to be as specific as possible.

In many cases, the applicant will simply forward the request to his or her teaching institution. Your use of home-country conventions can help avoid unnecessary delays and work against the possibility of receiving the wrong papers.

For example, a post-secondary transcript is called a "transcript" in many countries, but in others, the relevant document is: a university-issued "mark-sheet" (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan); an "indeks" (Poland); a prilozhenie k dyploamu [addendum to the diploma] (Russia and other former Soviet Republics); a "releve de notes" (France); or a "Statement of Academic Record" (United Kingdom and other Commonwealth countries).

■ **Translations:** In several European and Asian countries, colleges and universities can often provide official transcripts in English when students inform the registrar that the documents are intended for U.S. admission officers.

In other cases, foreign language departments will (for a fee) prepare a translation to accompany official transcripts being sent to the United States.

When such "official" translations cannot be provided, howev-

How-to

GUJARAT UNIVERSITY STATEMENT OF MARKS		SECOND B.Sc. NOTES + 200 INDICATES EXEMPTION AT A PREVIOUS EXAMINATION		GUJARAT UNIVERSITY Second B.Sc. Examination	
Sr. No. 96 0000845		Sr. No. 96 0000845		Sr. No. 96 0000845	
Obtained in each subject at the Second B.Sc. Examination held in April 1976					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
Obtained in each subject at the Second B.Sc. Examination held in April 1976		Obtained in each subject at the Second B.Sc. Examination held in April 1976		Obtained in each subject at the Second B.Sc. Examination held in April 1976	
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455			12	31	0032300 JJ
MARKS OBTAINED					
Roll No.	Name	College	Credits	Contribution	College
4455					

er, admission officers must decide how to deal with the foreign-language documents they do receive.

Most often it is advisable to obtain translations "in-house" or to use local translation agencies while seeking to preserve the confidential nature of the original documents.

Sometimes applicants will submit third-party translations in lieu of foreign-language transcripts.

It should be understood, however, that such documents are no substitute for official academic records.

■ **Provisional documents:** Admission decisions are often made before applicants have graduated from secondary school or degree programs.

Even when a student has completed a program or passed a final exam, however, there can be a long lapse before official certificates are issued by the relevant awarding authorities.

In countries where the delay is several months or more, teaching institutions can issue provisional documents certifying graduation or success in final examinations.

Such documents are accepted in the home countries for limited purposes, and U.S. admission officers can also use them to make provisional admission decisions.

Continued registration in the United States can then be made conditional on a student submitting the final official document within a reasonable period of time.

■ **Verification:** Most U.S. academic institutions define official transcripts as documents sent directly from one institution to another, without passing through the hands of students or other third parties.

Often, however, there are good reasons why students may be in possession of certain important documents including graduation or examination certificates and other records.

In some cases, documents are issued to students only once, and they are advised by their home institutions to obtain copies notarized by state officials for use by other parties.

In other instances, a U.S. institution may release a foreign transcript in its files to a student seeking admission elsewhere because of time considerations. The transcript in question may have taken several months to arrive in the United States after the initial request.

If, however, the document's authenticity is questionable, then written verification should be sought from the issuing institution. Except in cases where document-tampering is obvious, the decision to seek verification should follow a detailed review of the transcript, including fact-checking against reference sources (e.g., published directories, your own collection of authentic sample documents) and consultation with experienced colleagues.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE LOCAL EXAMINATIONS SYNDICATE (1968-1978)
 JOINT EXAMINATION FOR THE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE AND GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION
 EAST AFRICAN ADVANCED CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION AND GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION
 (Omanas Centre)
 Statement of Results

23 APR 1998

NAME OF CANDIDATE: [REDACTED] Candidate's Number: [REDACTED]
 SCHOOL: Federal Government College, Sovoto Date of Examination: 1970

SUBJECTS	RESULT PRIN = H.S.C. Principal (O.C.E. Advanced) SUBS = H.S.C. Subsidiary (O.C.E. Ordinary)	SUBJECT GRADE	Paper Grades						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	
GENERAL PAPER									
KERTAS' AM (General Paper MM)	Sub Pass	B							
ENGLISH USAGE									
ENGLISH									
LITERATURE IN ENGLISH									
DIVINITY									
HISTORY									
SEJARAH (History MM)									
GEOGRAPHY									
ILMU ALAM (Geography MM)									
ECONOMIC & PUBLIC AFFAIRS									
ECONOMICS									
EKONOMI (Economics MM)									
ISLAMIC STUDIES									
PENGAJIAN ISLAM (Islamic Studies MM)									
LATIN									
GREEK									
FRENCH									
SPANISH									
TAMIL									
BAHASA MALAYSIA (MALAY MM)									
CHINESE									
MATHEMATICS	Prin Pass	A	1	1					
PURE MATHEMATICS									
APPLIED MATHEMATICS									
ILMU HISAB (Mathematics MM)									
PHYSICS	Prin Pass	C	2	4	8				
CHEMISTRY	Prin Pass	D	5	4	6				
BIOLOGY									
BOTANY									
ZOOLOGY									
ART									
LUKISAN (Art MM)									
MUSIC									
World Affairs since 1989									
Structure and Working of British Government									
GOVERNMENT		Fail							

OVERALL RESULT

4 - Awarded a Higher School Certificate. (Candidates from East Africa are not awarded Higher School Certificates but are awarded General Certificates of Education).

5 - Did not qualify for a Higher School Certificate but awarded the General Certificate of Education.

9 - Failed to qualify for the General Certificate of Education.

See over for explanation of grades and symbols.
 Note: MM = subject taken in the medium of Malay language.
 R. P. H. Head
 Secretary to the Syndicate

Result sheet issued by date 24/ 23.4.70 Ref. No. 978

This is an official "Statement of Results" for a Higher School Certificate examination taken in 1970. The original certificate may have been lost or destroyed, but the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate in the United Kingdom keeps examination results on record and can issue them to colleges and universities.

It's helpful to keep track of the average correspondence turnaround time for different countries, so you can give applicants reasonable estimates of when the verification process will be completed.

Thanks to recent improvements in communication technology, verification is less time-consuming than ever. Policies designed in light of the above considerations will help you serve the majority of your foreign-educated applicants while providing a context in which you can gain useful experience and become more knowledgeable about the documentation practices of different educational systems. The best-informed policies will take account of cultural and administrative variations between systems.

— Richard Kearney