

Procedures for Handling Official Transcripts

“Official Transcripts” are a special class of documents the Registrar’s office uses when adding credit information from other institutions to a student’s academic record.

An “Official Transcript” is received directly from the issuing institution. A paper official transcript should include the college seal or its facsimile, date of issue, and an appropriate signature or facsimile. We consider most hand carried transcripts “official” as long as they are received sealed in their original tamper evident envelope with all security marks intact.

Special attention to procedures for handling official transcripts is required since “official” transcripts exposed outside of our chain of custody (e.g. the envelope is inadvertently opened by the student, or the document is hand carried in an exposed fashion by a student worker), are considered spoiled and cannot be used to update a student’s record.

To avoid problems with spoiled documents, we strongly recommend that **all transcripts for continuing students received by any Academic Department be forwarded to Degree Progress with the original envelope seals intact.** We will open the envelope and authenticate the document. Images of the document will be scanned into the Visiflow database. The images can be accessed with the Imageviewer software.

If you, the academic advisor, must open an official transcript, please take the following precautions, as your signature on the document indicates that the following points have been inspected (if a document doesn’t check out, please contact our office (x07070) for instructions):

- Inspect the envelope. The name of the institution should be printed, not handwritten. Original flap seals, and envelope security marks should all be intact. Postage should be applied with an institutional postage meter (rather than postage stamp.)

If the envelope appears authentic, open it (save the envelope) and inspect the document:

- Each page’s security features should be present and intact (often a description of features can be found in the legend.) It must have an appropriate signature, institutional seal, and recent date of issue.

If the document checks out, please stamp and/or write the following on the front of each page, being careful not to obscure any important information:

OFFICIAL
Opened by: (Sign your name legibly)
Date

Forward the document (and the original envelope) to Degree Progress for processing. Photocopies cannot be used to add academic information to a student's record.

Preserve the "Official" status of the document by following the forwarding procedures:

- Seal the original document(s), including the original envelope, in another envelope (preferably one with your department letterhead).
- Sign your name and extension across the flap.
- Place this envelope in a campus mail envelope and send it to Degree Progress, JHH-010, mc-0912
- Alternately, documents prepared in this manner, may be hand carried by a regular staff member directly to Degree Progress. Student workers should not be utilized for this task. Be sure the staff member brings their USC photo identification with them.

Transcripts submitted in open envelopes, or exposed to unsupervised student handling should be collected and clearly marked "Unofficial" to prevent them from being resubmitted. Note that this includes a transcript hand carried by a student worker in an unsecured envelope.

A Reminder About Scanned Images

The USC Catalogue clearly states that documents submitted to USC **cannot be returned to the student or duplicated for any purpose.** Documents scanned into the image database may contain notes or marks which could be misconstrued by others outside of the university. **Copies of images are not to be distributed to students.**

Thank you for your help ensuring the security of our academic records. If you have any questions, please contact our office at x07070.