Eastern Michigan University Saves Time, Money with eTranscripts

Founded in 1849, EMU is the second oldest public university in Michigan. It currently serves nearly 18,000 students pursuing undergraduate, graduate, specialist, doctoral and certificate degrees in the arts, sciences and professions. In all, more than 300 majors, minors and concentrations are delivered through the University's Colleges of Arts and Sciences; Business; Education; Engineering and Technology; Health and Human Services; and, its graduate school. EMU is regularly recognized by national publications for its excellence, diversity, and commitment to applied education.

EMU has partnered with the National Student Clearinghouse for years. In addition to participating in the Clearinghouse's enrollment verification and degree verification services, the university has used the Clearinghouse's Transcript Ordering service since 2005.

Before eTranscripts: bogged down in paper

The registrar's office at EMU has 21 full-time professionals who handle student registration, graduation clearance and conferral, transcripts equivalencies, athletic certifications, and, of course, transcripts.

Before using the Clearinghouse's Transcript Ordering service, the EMU registrar's office's staff would receive all transcript requests on paper and would process each request manually. Although Clearinghouse Transcript Ordering streamlined the ordering process, staff still needed to download and input each transcript request manually and fulfill each order's printing and mailing by hand. Before implementing eTranscripts, processing transcripts was the full-time job of two staff members.

Implementing eTranscripts: working with a trusted partner

In 2016, EMU began using Ellucian eTranscripts through the Clearinghouse, incorporating both outgoing eTranscripts and downloading the data directly into Ellucian Banner, the university's student information system (SIS). eTranscripts is a secure interface that enables real-time automation of electronic transcript processing and delivery. Because eTranscripts is about 90% hands-off, electronic transcripts are processed and sent automatically, with updates to the school's SIS. If a student requests a paper transcript, it is processed and printed automatically as well, so it's ready to be packaged and mailed right away.

Christina Shell, a 22-year veteran of EMU, has been the university's registrar for more than 15 years. For Shell, choosing to implement eTranscripts was a common-sense way to serve EMU's students more effectively. Because the Clearinghouse was already a trusted partner, taking the next step was an easy decision.

"We work with the Clearinghouse on everything else – Transcript Ordering, degree verification, enrollment verification, StudentTracker – so we already had a trusted relationship. It made perfect sense to take that next step and implement eTranscripts, together with the download of the data into our student information system."

The implementation process was straightforward, and EMU's team appreciated the Clearinghouse's step-by-step approach. "It was very easy, with clear and concise instructions, both for our IT department and for the registrar's office. The Clearinghouse helped us work through the implementation in a very efficient way," Shell said.

After eTranscripts: dramatic savings

Thanks to eTranscripts, the registrar's office was able to cut the staff resource allocation for transcript processing in half – when one of the transcript processors retired, the office did not need to replace that staff member. One staff member can now handle all transcript-related tasks.

In addition to the significant savings created by eliminating one staff position, EMU continues to save more and more on paper and printing costs with eTranscripts:
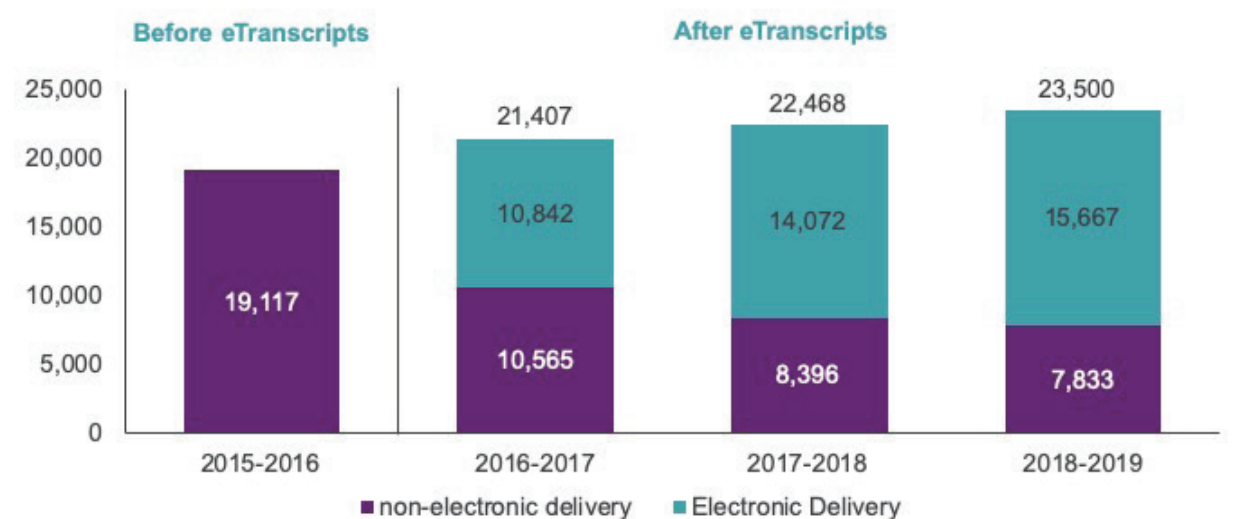
- In the 2015-16 academic year, which was the year before EMU switched to eTranscripts, EMU processed 19,000 transcript orders – all of which went out on paper.

- During 2016-17, EMU handled 21,000 transcript orders – and 50% chose to receive their transcripts electronically. That saved printing and mailing costs for 10,500 transcripts.

- The eTranscripts option continued to grow in popularity during the 2017-18 academic year. EMU had 22,000 transcript orders, and 60% of them were electronic.

- In 2018-2019, EMU had over 23,500 transcript orders and two-thirds were sent out electronically.

eTranscripts has also enabled EMU's registrar's office to provide better customer service to students thanks to its fast turnaround. "Students had been asking for us to provide online transcripts for a while. Now that we can provide this service, it's very well received. Students love the ability to order and send transcripts electronically," Shell said. It is especially helpful, she noted, for students who have an interview or job offer and need a transcript right away. "We can now offer almost instantaneous service," Shell said.

EMU students enjoy not having to worry about timing, mail delays, or street address errors. The university's secure email processes help keep students' transcript information safe.

The impact on the efficiency of the registrar's office has been significant, as over 70% of the university's transcripts are ordered and fulfilled automatically. The office has been able to redeploy those resources – staff, paper, mailing – and reenvision its processes to meet student customer service needs more effectively. "You can save those dollars or reallocate them to other things in your office," Shell said.

"At first it was strange, not touching the transcripts, but because we have a trusted partner in the Clearinghouse, it quickly became a lot easier," Shell said. "We've been very pleased with the relationship."

Before eTranscripts / After eTranscripts

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Electronic Delivery		10,842	14,072	15,667
Total		21,407	22,468	23,500
non-electronic delivery	19,117	10,565	8,396	7,833

■ non-electronic delivery ■ Electronic Delivery

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