

College and University Registrars



Occupational Brief Title Codes:

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Work Classification Based Related

D.O.T. Occupations:

- Academic Deans
- Directors of Student Affairs
- Field Services Directors

Interests Based Related

G.O.E. Occupations:

- Day Care Center Directors
- Education Consultants
- Financial-Aids Officers

Skills Based Related

O*NET Occupations:

- Education Administrators, Elementary and Secondary School
- Government Service Executives

Noteworthy Quote:

"The registrar's role comprises so much more than simply record keeping or number crunching, though our work necessarily involves both of those activities. Indeed, a registrar's day is varied, and may include activities ranging from attending committee and faculty meetings to one on one meetings with students, to preparing transfer credit evaluations and working on statistical reports for the state or federal governments. The pace can get very hectic for a registrar, but the risk of boredom is low and, generally, job satisfaction is high."

**Karla Leybold-Taylor, Registrar
Wells College, Aurora, New York**

College and university registrars (col-lege and uni-ver-si-ty `reg-is-trars) prepare college catalogs and class schedules; register students; certify enrollment; maintain registration and other institutional statistics and student records; prepare student transcripts; implement academic policy; certify students for graduation; prepare diplomas and transfer credit evaluations; and conduct institutional research.

Colleges and universities come in all sizes, from the small community college to the large university. They may be private or public and grant degrees ranging from an associate's to a Ph.D. Some colleges and universities have an extremely small number of students. Others have tens of thousands of students on campus. Keeping academic records, grades, transcripts, class schedules, and graduation information organized is not an easy task. Nevertheless, it is a vital responsibility at all colleges and universities.

Registrars are the academic record keepers of colleges and universities. They gather and keep records on the enrollment and academic progress of the students. With a record of enrollments, registrars can set up class schedules and assign classrooms for faculty and courses. Registrars offer data and give advice on academic standards, curricula development, and on the short-range and long-range plans for using campus buildings and equipment. They keep in mind the standards and policies of the school, and at the same time consider the school budget. Registrars are often members of the faculty, and in any case, have much contact with faculty members and serve on many of the same committees.

Work Performed

The title *registrar* is not standard in all colleges and universities. Some colleges call the registrar the *records officer*. Others assign further duties to the



Registrars prepare college catalogs, class schedules, register students, maintain student records and transcripts, and also prepare diplomas. Photo by Chuck Haupt

registrar to whom they give a fitting title. Titles such as *directors of records and registration*, *directors of institutional research and records*, *deans of admissions and registrar*, *deans of students-registrar*, *vice presidents for admissions and records*, *academic deans-registrar*, *deans of admissions and records*, or *deans of enrollment management* convey the scope of the registrar's work.

The staff of a registrar's office may keep admissions records, evaluate transfer credits, analyze student records, issue transcripts, and direct registration. They may develop and prepare catalogs and class schedules, review and certify degree candidates, and offer statistical services.

Registrars and their staffs keep academic records and store them in electronic (computer), microfilm, or hard copy form. Records contain data on admissions and transfers, credits and degrees awarded, course enrollments and credits, grades, honors, probations, suspensions, standard test grades, and related information. Staff in a registrar's office are involved in complying with various federal regulations. They also furnish federal, state, and private agencies with statistics on the college and the makeup of the student body.

As keepers of college records, registrars receive requests from students for many services. Graduating seniors and alumni especially need transcripts, an appraisal of credits and grades, and other information.

Registrars and their staffs organize and conduct student registrations and assignments to classes. They set rules for eligibility, late registrations, and class and section changes. Registrars may determine whether students are eligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics. They may be involved in advising foreign students and/or comply with Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) regulations, such as Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

Most colleges and universities have either a distributed registration system or an arena process. Many use a touchtone telephone system to register students. Most use computers to assist with data collection and registration processing, and some offer registration via the Internet.

At most colleges and universities degree candidates apply to the registrar for permission to graduate. Registrars and their personnel evaluate the academic records of candidates for graduation, certify the degrees awarded, and print the diplomas. In some schools these officers keep records of the academic plans and the progress of the students after they graduate.

When students become seniors, or after they register for the last term of study, registrars examine the students' records. They check courses and majors completed, grade point averages, residence requirements, and other requirements for graduation. Thorough checks well ahead of time help avoid last-minute crises such as finding that the student lacks one or two required courses. Registrars

notify students whether they need to complete further work to meet degree requirements.

The staff in a registrar's department often collect, analyze, and report statistics. They interpret figures on grade averages and class averages, course offerings, and degrees awarded. They compile data on enrollment figures for the schools and the colleges of the university, the costs of instruction, classroom use, and faculty characteristics. These statistics affect the amount of money the school will receive from federal and state sources. These figures are useful in anticipating enrollments and in planning curricula. These figures may determine if college administrators can make plans for new buildings or buy new equipment.

Registrars keep up with federal and state rulings on student rights. Laws such as the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) deal with the disclosure of information on students. For example, every student has the right to see his or her educational file and appeal the information in it. Students may stipulate that the information may not be released. Federal and state laws also cover civil rights, affirmative action, and the rights of persons with disabilities. Laws may dictate how registrars keep student records, issue transcripts, hand out student record information within the college or university, and report to federal and state agencies.

Working Conditions

Most registrars have a private office which may be part of a large suite of offices or a department where staff have desks. Some registrars have a small office with a small staff.

Registrars have a great deal of responsibility. They interact with faculty, students, and parents. Registrars may suffer stress from heavy or pressing duties, or the need to complete multiple tasks. At times the pace is hectic.

Like many officers of colleges and universities, registrars have deadlines on major duties and tasks. Mixed-up registration procedures, for instance, can delay scheduling of classes. Grades or transcripts not released on time may prevent or put off student enrollment, financial aid, graduation, admissions to graduate school, and employment.

Hours and Earnings

Registrars generally work full-time. Overtime is common during registration sessions, final examination weeks, graduation, and in the time during which staff process end-of-term grades. Most registrars work year-round.

Earnings for registrars vary with education, experience, responsibilities, and the size and budget of the employing university or college. Most registrars earn

salaries similar to other college and university administrators. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2000, postsecondary education administrators earned anywhere from \$32,650 a year to over \$100,000 a year. Midrange earnings fell between \$43,000 and \$83,000 a year. The average was \$64,770 a year. According to the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources, during 2000-01 academic year, the median salary for admissions and registrar directors was \$58,241 a year.

Most registrars have paid holidays, vacations, and sick leave. They receive the same benefits as those of other college or university administrators.

Education and Training

Registrars must have at least a bachelor's degree. Most college and university registrars have a master's degree in education, student personnel, or a related area. Some have a doctoral degree.

There is no direct program of study for this profession. Many in the field have varied backgrounds in business administration, computer and information science, social science, public relations, or the humanities. Courses important for education administration include finance and budgeting, personnel and office management, research design and data analysis, school law, communication, curriculum development and evaluation, community relations, politics in education, and leadership. A knowledge of computers, as well as management principles and practices, acquired in work experience and formal education, is important. English and public speaking courses are also helpful because registrars must be able to write well and communicate effectively.

Many persons become registrars after working in other jobs. Teaching, personnel work, or work in public and private education are good preparation for those who want to become registrars.

Professional Societies

Several organizations promote the interests of university administrators. Among them are national organizations such as the American Association of University Administrators, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, and the American Conference of Academic Deans. The National Association of College Deans, Registrars, and Admissions Officers consists of these personnel from colleges with predominantly black enrollments. In addition to these there are also many state and regional organizations for registrars and admissions officers.

Personal Qualifications

Registrars must have determination, self-confidence, and motivation. They should be service-oriented. They

should have attributes such as sound judgement (the ability to make good decisions), the ability to organize and coordinate work, and to establish good relationships with co-workers, students, and parents. Registrars should have patience to deal with the unusual and the unexpected. They should have a sense of humor and a desire to help others. The ability to work under stress, to think critically, and to analyze information are also important.

Occupations can be adapted for workers with disabilities. Persons should contact their school or employment counselors, their state office of vocational rehabilitation, or their state department of labor to explore fully their individual requirements as well as the requirements of the occupation.

Where Employed

Whatever their title, registrars work for almost all colleges and universities in the United States. More than 3,500 two-year and four-year colleges and universities are in operation throughout the country. Schools in California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin employ the greatest number of registrars.

Large universities may have several registrars for different areas, as well as associate and assistant registrars. Small colleges may have one registrar and a small staff who serve in several jobs. For instance, they may be placement and counseling officers, or directors of institutional research, as well as registrars.

Employment Outlook

College enrollments will increase through the year 2010. Through the same period, the employment of registrars is expected to grow as fast as the average for all occupations.

However, competition will remain keen for jobs in college administration. Most openings will occur each year as registrars transfer to other academic or administrative work, retire, or leave the field for other reasons. Two-year colleges will probably be the source of most jobs for registrars.

Budget constraints also affect employment of registrars. Some postsecondary schools may reduce administrative staffs to contain costs. Others may consolidate administrative positions, or contract for administrators. Prospects will be best for those with a graduate degree and experience.

Entry Methods

This is not an entry position. Most registrars begin their career in related positions. They often begin with a bachelor's degree as assistants in the registrar's office of the college or university they attended. Job seekers may apply to the registrar's or human resources office of a

college or university for an entry job. Many universities offer graduate students an assistantship in the registrar's office. To qualify for a position as registrar, candidates usually must have an advanced degree, often in higher education administration. A Ph.D. or Ed.D. is usually necessary for a top position as registrar in a large research university.

Journals for those in higher education, such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, often list faculty and administrative posts. Candidates with a record of experience and a good reputation known to the people at the employing institution have a distinct advantage. Ties to these people through professional associations are also helpful.

In preliminary screening of candidates, review boards look at credentials, resumes, and the results of telephone inquiries. Finalists go to the campus for extensive interviews. The final decision may be up to a search committee, a review board, a chancellor, or a governing board.

Advancement

Staff in the registrar's office can advance by taking on additional duties or by accepting posts for specific tasks. Those with advanced degrees and experience in college administration have the best chance of becoming registrars.

Registrars may transfer to other posts. They may, for instance, become directors of institutional research. In this work they investigate the policies and practices of a college or university to find problems such as inequitable admission patterns and poor money management. They may conduct research to find sources of financial support for the college or the students. Registrars with years of experience and a broad background in college affairs may become academic deans. Top administrative positions are scarce, and competition is very keen.

Advancement for registrars in small colleges is limited. Mostly it takes the form of pay raises.

For Further Research

American Association of University Administrators, P.O. Box 261363, Plano, TX 75026-1363. Web Site: <http://aaua.org>

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 520, Washington, DC 20036-1135. Web Site: www.aacrao.org

VGM Career Horizons, NTC Publishing Group, 4255 West Touhy Avenue, Lincolnwood, IL 60646.

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