

ELECTRONIC STUDENT RECORDS STANDARD

Category: Data
Effective Date: September 2004
Review Date: January 2007

Summary:

Common file formats, record formats, and exchange methods shall be used for all student data files sent between school authorities or public post-secondary institutions and Alberta Learning. The formats described in this standard apply to existing transfers of student data. Future 'new' types of student information, such as confirmation of enrolment information, may be required to use other formats and exchange methods to allow the introduction of newer technologies over time

Specification:

K-12 and Post-secondary

The following standards apply to Student Information System (SIS) registration data, high school course and mark data, and Alberta Student Number (ASN) data transferred from school authorities or public post-secondary institutions to Alberta Learning.

Format	Details
File Format	Files must be ASCII files with a fixed record length.
Record Format	<p>The record length is dependent upon the transaction set contained within a file. Each transaction set has a specification that is defined in the SIS User Guide, the Course/Mark User Guide and the ASN Initiative communication documents.</p> <p>Records contain no delimiters other than a carriage return and line feed between the records in the file. All code values are alphanumeric and must be provided in upper case. All other alphanumeric data is to be left justified and blank filled. All numeric data is to be right justified and zero filled. All date fields are alphanumeric and must contain the date in the format of YYYYMMDD.</p> <p>Each file contains a header record, which defines the contents of the file.</p>
Exchange Method	SIS data, course and mark data, and ASN data must be transmitted between schools, central offices, and Alberta Learning using Edulink third-party software.

Public Post-secondary and Qualified Private Post-secondary

The following standards apply to the Learner and Enrolment Reporting System (LERS) student registration data as submitted by public post-secondary and qualified private post-secondary institutions.

Format	Details
File Format	Files must be ASCII files with a fixed record length.

Record Format	The record length is dependent upon the transaction set contained within a file. For public colleges and technical institutes the record length is 138 characters and for universities and private university colleges the record length is 208 characters. Records contain no delimiters other than a carriage return and line feed between the records in the file. All code values are alphanumeric and must be provided in upper case. All other alphanumeric data is to be left justified and blank filled. All numeric data is to be right justified and zero filled. All complete date fields are alphanumeric and must contain the date in the format of YYYYMMDD.
Exchange Method	LERS data is submitted as a .dbf file that is extracted from the institutions' LERS data and sent to Alberta Learning via an FTP connection upload.

Rationale:

This standard supports the exchange and use of student information data between Alberta Learning and the learning system to achieve the following:

- Exchange data without errors and identify errors if they occur.
- Offer a consistent interpretation of data so that provincial reports and analyses are meaningful to everyone.
- Use student data for calculating grant entitlements.
- Ensure that student records systems in school authorities and post-secondary institutions can create the student information files required and can make use of student information confirmation files provided by Alberta Learning.
- Ensure consistency and security of data.
- Facilitate effective management of incoming and outgoing electronic student information files

Timeline:

This standard is based upon the file standards for student registration and high school course/mark data exchange that were implemented in September 1997.

The standards were extended to the public post-secondary institutions in January 2000 to support the Alberta Student Number (ASN) Initiative for verifying or creating Alberta Student Numbers.

Notes:

The data formats have remained the same for several years because changes would require third-party vendors to make changes to the software they provide. As a result of these changes, school authorities and public post-secondary institutions would be required to install updates to their student records systems and Edulink, which is used to validate and submit electronic data. Therefore, the review date for this standard will be revisited when a provincial Student Information System (SIS) opportunity assessment is initiated.

Contact:

Technology Standards Office (TSO)
 Stakeholder Technology Branch
 E-mail: tso@learning.gov.ab.ca

See also: SIS User Guide, Course/Mark User Guide at <http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/technology/lies/>