

Access to Student Records at Washington University under The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records.

(1) Students have the right to inspect and review their education records within 45 days of the day the University receives an appropriate request for access to those records. Students who wish to inspect educational records should submit a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect to the appropriate custodian of the record (the registrar, dean, department chair or head, or other appropriate University official). The University official will make arrangements for the student to inspect the records within 45 days of the request. If the records are not maintained by the University official to whom the request was submitted, that official shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed (if known).

(2) Students have the right to request amendment of their educational record if they believe that they are inaccurate or misleading. To question the accuracy of education records, students should first confer informally with the custodian or originator of the document in question. If the results of this consultation are unsatisfactory, students should write to the University Registrar or other University official responsible for the record, clearly identifying the portion of the record they want changed, and specifying why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the University decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the University will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. If necessary, the Office of the University Registrar shall arrange a hearing with an official of the University who has no direct interest in the disputed item. The decisions of this official shall be final. Additional information regarding the hearing process will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) Students have a right to restrict the release of personally identifiable information contained in their education records except to the extent that FERPA permits disclosure without consent. Among the circumstances in which disclosure is permitted without consent are these:

(a) Education records and personally identifiable information obtained from those records may be disclosed without the student's consent **to school officials with legitimate educational interests**. A school official is a person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the University has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her institutional duties.

(b) **"Directory information"** may be disclosed without prior consent. Washington University has designated the following categories of information as "directory information" and will release this information without prior consent by the student: the student's name, addresses (including e-mail addresses), telephone numbers, school, class, major field of study, photographic, video or electronic images, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height (of members of athletic teams), dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous school attended. Students have the right to block disclosure of their directory information. Any student wishing to do so should submit a written request to the Office of the University Registrar, Campus Box 1143, St. Louis, Missouri 63130 or use the "information restriction" screen of the on-line student access system ("WebSTAC"). Such a request may be made at any time. However, the University cannot alter printed materials which have already been prepared (such as Ternion, the Washington University Telephone Directory) and students are therefore advised to submit such requests no later than September 1 of the relevant academic year.

(c) Education records and personally identifiable information obtained from those records may, upon request, be disclosed without the student's consent to **officials of another school** in which the student is enrolled or seeks or intends to enroll.

(d) In exceptional circumstances, education records may be provided to the **parents** of financially dependent undergraduates. Washington University assumes that undergraduate students are financial dependents of their parents (as defined by the Internal Revenue Service) and, may, under appropriate circumstances, provide education

records to those parents without the student's consent. Undergraduate students who are not financially dependent and do not wish to permit their parents access to their education records should advise the Office of the University Registrar and the Registrars of their Schools in writing and provide evidence of financial independence. Graduate and professional students are not assumed to be financially dependent upon their parents for these purposes and the University requires such student's consent for the disclosure of education records to their parents.

(e) In rare cases, Washington University may need to disclose personally identifiable information where necessary to address **health or safety emergencies** involving the student or any other individual.

(f) The University is required to provide information about certain foreign nationals to the Department of Justice.

(4) Students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the University to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The office that administers FERPA is the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC, 20202-4605.

For further information regarding Washington University policies regarding the confidentiality of student records, contact the Office of the University Registrar, One Brookings Drive, Campus Box 1143, St. Louis, Missouri 63130.

