

# DATA PRIVACY (FERPA)

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## Data Privacy (FERPA) Policy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. Education records contain directory information (information that can legally be released without the student's consent) and non-directory information that cannot be released without the student's written (self-service) consent.

These rights include:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the College receives a request for access.
  - a. Students must submit a written request that identifying the record(s) the student wishes to inspect to the Registrar. The Registrar, is allowed 45 days to makes arrangements for access and notifies the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the Registrar's Office, the Registrar shall advises the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.
  - b. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

A student who requests to inspect their record must email the Registrar (or other College official who maintains the record in question, if the records are not maintained by the Registrar's Office), identifying the part of the record the student requests to be changed and specify why it should be changed.

If the Registrar/Other Official does not to amend the record as requested, the student is notified in writing of the decision and the student's right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures is provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.

2. The right to provide written consent before the College discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

WC discloses directory information (see below), without a student's prior written consent under the FERPA exception for disclosure to school officials with *legitimate educational interests*. A school official is a person employed by the College in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the College has contracted to provide a service instead of using College employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Visitors and Governors; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing their tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record to fulfill their professional responsibilities for the College.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the College to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Students are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the College's official custodian of records, the Registrar. Should the student decide to file a complaint against Washington College for a potential violation of their rights under FERPA, the name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-5901

As of January 3, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education's FERPA regulations expanded circumstances under which student education records and personally identifiable information (PII) contained in such records—including your Social Security number, grades, or other private information—may be accessed without your consent.

The U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or state and local education authorities ("Federal and State Authorities") may allow access to non-directory records and PII without student consent to any third party designated by a Federal or State Authority to evaluate a federal- or state-supported education program. The evaluation may relate to any program that is "principally engaged in the provision of education," such as early childhood education and job training, as well as any program that is administered by an education agency or institution.

Federal and State Authorities may allow access to student non-directory education records (PII) without student consent to researchers performing certain types of studies, in certain cases even when the College objects to or does not request such research. Federal and State Authorities must obtain certain use-restrictions and data security promises from the entities that they authorize to receive your PII, but the Authorities need not maintain direct control over such entities.

In addition, in connection with Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems, State Authorities may collect, compile, permanently retain, and share non-directory information from education records, and they may track participation in education and other programs by linking PII to other personal information about you they obtain from other Federal and State data sources, including workforce development, unemployment insurance, child welfare, juvenile justice, military service, and migrant student records systems.

## Directory Information and Privacy

Once a student begins postsecondary study, the College will only release students' non-directory records directly to the student upon their written request. WC may only provide non-directory information from a student's education records, when it is requested by a parent or guardian if the student consents to that release in writing or if the parent or guardian provides proof of the student's financial dependency (usually substantiated by a certified copy of the most recent Federal Income Tax Form). Students must use Self-Service to indicate who may access their non-directory information; this is recorded in the System so that College Officials know who they can provide non-directory information to. This is the student's responsibility to enter. Student requests to restrict the release of directory information remain in effect for the duration of the student's enrollment at Washington College, unless otherwise revoked via a written request to the Registrar's Office. The College honors each student's most recent privacy preference after they graduate or withdraw.

### Directory information is listed below.

WC may release the following directory information to parents, guardians, and/or third parties without student prior consent.

- Student name
- Graduation dates
- Awards
- Campus box number
- Expected graduation dates
- Honors
- Campus phone number
- Previous institutions attended
- Honor Societies
- Hometown and State
- Cell phone number
- Permanent address
- Home phone number
- Email address
- Major(s) and Minor(s)
- Class year
- Concentration(s)
- Full/part-time status
- Dates of attendance
- Degrees
- *For varsity athletes:* Participation in officially recognized sports, photograph, height, and weight

Release of directory information to third parties is usually a benefit to students. For example, the College can verify the current student status or graduation information to loan servicing organizations, potential employers or companies offering a student discount, or can share students' honors and accomplishments with their hometown newspapers and other media outlets. Nonetheless, FERPA provides an opportunity for students to restrict the dissemination of directory information. Students who decide to withhold directory information are protected, which means the student's name will not appear in any written material (such as Dean's List notices, Commencement Program, etc.).

In general, the College does not honor blanket requests from third parties for directory information about its current student population. However, the College does publish in the online student directory each student's name, email address, campus box number, and campus phone number. Access to this directory is restricted to members of the Washington College Faculty and Staff.

## Transcript Requests

In compliance with FERPA, all requests for academic transcripts must be made by the requesting student. Washington College provides transcripts using an electronic transcript delivery service through an approved vendor. There is a convenience fee charged by the delivery service. Students can visit [washcoll.edu/people\\_departments/offices/registrar/index.php](http://washcoll.edu/people_departments/offices/registrar/index.php) ([http://washcoll.edu/people\\_departments/offices/registrar/](http://washcoll.edu/people_departments/offices/registrar/)) and click on the "Transcripts" link in the navigation bar to order an official transcript. Transcripts can be delivered electronically or via USPS. This is the only way to order an official transcript and to have a transcript delivered electronically.

Transcripts of students who attended prior to 1987 are archived and only available via hard copy. Electronic copies are not available.

Transcripts are generally sent out within 24 to 48 hours. Additional time may be required during registration, grading periods, and holidays. Notifications appear on the ordering site if there is a delay in processing or the College is closed due to a holiday. Students who are in financial arrears with an office of the College (Business Office, Library, Bookstore, Central Services, or Public Safety for overdue parking tickets, etc.) may not request transcripts be sent until payment or until satisfactory arrangements have been made to clear debts.

Official transcripts are available by request. Unofficial transcripts can be accessed online in Self-Service.

## **Enrollment Verification Requests**

In compliance with FERPA, all enrollment verification requests must be made in writing by the student. Students can email the Registrar's Office from the washcoll.edu email requesting an Enrollment Verification Request Form. This form includes students' physical signature (pen to paper). Students can print, complete, and mail or email the Enrollment Verification Request for to the Registrar's Office. Alternately, students may submit the interactive form electronically by providing a digital signature and submitting the completed form from their washcoll.edu email account.

Upon request by a student or authorized person, the Registrar's Office writes a letter to any third party stating the student's academic status and verifying any other information contained on the student's education record, provided it is factually accurate. Washington College partners with the National Student Clearinghouse (a non-profit funded by the U.S. Department of Education) to assist with student enrollment and degree completion verification.