

# Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

## 1. Introduction

City University (the "University") is committed to protecting the privacy and educational rights of its students in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other relevant federal and state laws. This policy outlines the University's practices for handling educational records and respecting students' rights under FERPA.

## 2. Definitions

- **FERPA:** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a federal law governing student records' privacy.
- **Educational Records:** Records directly related to students and maintained by the University.
- **Directory Information:** Information that may be disclosed without prior consent unless a student requests otherwise.
- **Consent:** Voluntary agreement for the release of non-directory information.

## 3. Student Education Record Access According to FERPA

Under the provisions of the U.S. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, City University of Seattle is required to notify all students annually of their FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) rights.

This notification is delivered through the University catalog and web site. Primary rights currently afforded students under FERPA:

- The right to review and inspect their education record with some restrictions.
- The right to seek to amend their education record.
- The right to have some control over disclosures of their education record.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education

FERPA allows schools to release "Directory Information" as established by the institution without the student's written permission. City University of Seattle adheres to all U.S. and Canadian immigration regulations concerning the release of student information to government agencies. City University of Seattle defines "Directory Information" as follows:

- Student name
- Degree and major program of study
- Dates of enrollment (commencement of studies, termination of studies and reason, gaps in study, if known)
- Current enrollment status (undergraduate or graduate; full-time or part-time)
- Degrees earned and dates of conferral.
- Number of credits completed each term.

- Honors and awards received.
- Photographs
- City University of Seattle email addresses

City University of Seattle may disclose additional student information to staff and entities outside the University who have a proven legitimate educational interest such as government, accrediting organizations and demographic research studies that extract the necessary data then destroy the record. The University is required to release information for students receiving financial aid and tuition deferment, veterans receiving Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits, and for enrollment and degree verification purposes.

Upon receipt of a signed, written request, the Office of the Registrar will release to students copies of any or all documents in their student files.

The Campus Security Act takes precedence over FERPA's requirements against the release of personally identifiable information from a student's education record. Institutions may make a timely warning report to the campus community on criminal activity, and even if the school discloses the identity of an individual, the school has not violated the requirements of FERPA.

In response to terrorist attacks on the United States that took place on September 11, 2001, Congress made changes to the FERPA requirements. In Section 507 of the USA Patriot Act an amendment was made to FERPA so that it now contains 16 exceptions. The FERPA amendment permits educational institutions to disclose, without the consent or knowledge of the student or parent, personally identifiable information from the student's education records to the following officials or organizations.

- Federal and State Department of Education representatives
- U.S. Comptroller General, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, the Internal Revenue Service and the Attorney General
- The Department of Veterans Affairs
- School officials who have a legitimate educational interest
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school.
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- Ex Parte orders in connection with an investigation or prosecution of acts of terrorism
- Others (relating to crime, discipline and health and safety emergency measures)

#### **4. Prevention of "Directory Information" Disclosure at Students' Request**

FERPA gives students the right to prevent the University from disclosing their directory information. A signed form requesting such blockage must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar. Likewise, the same process is necessary to remove the blockage. Regardless, the University is legally required to release enrollment and related information to certain organizations, e.g. the U.S. Department of Education for students receiving federal aid, the F.B.I., the U.S.I.S., Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security, and others.

The University cannot assume either the responsibility to contact students for subsequent permission to release information, or the liability for any negative outcome due to withholding the release of information. Therefore, students should be aware that if they sign a form to block the release of directory information, it will apply to any and every external party, including financial institutions, employers or others who may contact the University. Requests will be honored within one week of the date received by the Office of the Registrar and will remain in effect unless revoked in writing by students.

***(Policy #2300.03 and #2300.03.01)***

## **5. Record Maintenance and Security**

City University of Seattle maintains education records with reasonable safeguards to prevent unauthorized access or disclosure.

## **6. Complaints**

Students who believe that City University of Seattle has violated their FERPA rights may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education.

## **7. Contact Information**

For questions or concerns regarding FERPA compliance at City University of Seattle, please contact: the **CityU Registrar**

## **8. Resources**

- [U.S. Department of Education: Protecting Student Privacy](#)
- [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)