

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (or FERPA) is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's educational, financial and health records. Without the appropriate student information releases, student account and academic records cannot be discussed with a parent, guardian, spouse, or other parties. Under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), student education records and information cannot be released without the expressed written consent of the student. The written consent needs to contain specifically what is to be released, the reasons for release and to whom (for example, a transcript).

The exception to this information is classified as “**Directory (Public) Information**” and may be released without the student’s consent. Ashland University has determined the following as directory information:

- a. Name, local address, home address, local telephone number, home telephone number, date and place of birth, parent names and address, email address, major, class, center attended, dates of attendance, full-time, half- time, or part-time status (not specific credit hours), degrees and awards received (including Dean’s List), previous institutions attended, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, photographs, weight and height of members of athletic teams.
- b. Directory information cannot include student identification numbers or social security numbers. Ashland University sends names and social security numbers of enrolled students to the National Student Loan Clearinghouse each semester. In addition, the University is required by law to release enrolled student social security numbers and addresses to agencies connected with The U.S. Department of Education when mandated to do so.
- c. Students have the right to withhold the release of the above by presenting a written request to the Registrar. A small number of students have requested this and when the name is “accessed in the computer” the statement “Do Not Release Information” will appear.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 as amended, outlines the requirements regarding the privacy of student records. FERPA governs release of records maintained by an educational institution and access to those records. The following explains the rights of students to the student education records and outlines the University's procedures to comply with FERPA.

The meaning of "**education records**" is, with certain exemptions as listed below, those records, files, documents, and other materials which contain information directly related to a student, and are maintained by any employee or agent of the university. The following categories of information are exempted and are not considered to be "education records:"

- a. Records made by university personnel which are in the sole possession of the maker and are not accessible or revealed to any other person.
- b. Records maintained by the Safety Services Office for law enforcement purposes.
- c. Medical and counseling records used solely for treatment. (Medical records may be personally reviewed by a physician of the student's choice.)
- d. Records only related to a former student (alumni records). Records of that individual while a student continue to be considered education records.

All records pertaining to students which are maintained by university offices are official university records, and as such, remain the property of the University.

A student has the right to:

A. Inspect and review education records pertaining to the student.

- a. Students have the right to view their education records wherever these records are maintained on campus.
- b. Once a student has submitted a request to inspect his or her records, an institution must comply within 45 days.
- c. Information contained in education records will be fully explained and interpreted to students by university personnel assigned to, and designated by, the appropriate office.
- d. Students have the right to review only their own records. When a record contains information about more than one student, disclosure cannot include information regarding the other student(s).
- e. The University allows inspection and review of the specified requested education records, but does not permit a copy of said records. No photographic, electronic or audio devices are permitted during the inspection and review meeting.
- f. When the student has an outstanding financial or other hold on records, the student still maintains the right to review his or her education records. He or she does not have the right to obtain any copies of those records unless failure to do so would effectively deny the student the right to inspect and review records. Also, that student does not have the right to have a transcript sent to a third party until the obligation is fulfilled.
- g. In cases where a student is not within commuting distance (50 miles) of campus and therefore is physically unable to be present to view the record on campus, the institution must make arrangements for the student to obtain access for review of these records.

B. Challenge Information in Records

- a. Students have a right to challenge the content of their education records if they consider the information contained therein to be inaccurate, misleading, or inappropriate.
- b. This process includes an opportunity for amendment of the records or insertion of written explanations by the student into such records.
- c. The right to challenge grades does not apply under the Act unless the grade assigned was inaccurately recorded, under which condition the record will be corrected.

C. Procedures for Hearing to Challenge Records

- a. Students challenging information in their records must submit, in writing, a request for a hearing to the appropriate office maintaining the record, listing the specific information in question and the reasons for the challenge.
- b. Hearings will be conducted by a university official who does not have a direct interest in the outcome of the hearing.
- c. Students shall be afforded a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the reasons for the challenge.
- d. The hearing officer will render a decision, in writing, noting the reason and summarizing all evidence presented within a reasonable period of time after the challenge is filed.

- e. Should the hearing be in favor of the student, the record shall be amended accordingly. Should the request be denied, an appeal may be made, in writing, and submitted to the University Registrar within 10 days of the student's notification of the decision of the hearing officer. The appeal shall be heard by an Appeals Board of three disinterested senior university officials and a decision rendered, in writing, within a reasonable period of time.
 - f. Should the appeal be in favor of the student, the record shall be amended, accordingly. Should the request be denied, the student may choose to place a statement with the record commenting on the accuracy of the information in the record and/or setting forth any basis for inaccuracy. When disclosed to an authorized party, the record will always include the student's statement and notice of the Board's decision, as long as the student's record is maintained by the university.
- D. Limit disclosure of some “personally identifiable information”** (information that would directly identify the student or make the student’s identity easily traceable) known as directory information.
- a. Any student who does not want directory information to be released must submit their request in writing and meet with the campus FERPA Coordinator located in the Registrar’s Office.
- E. The right to file a complaint** with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Ashland University to comply with the requirements of FERPA by contacting the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education.