

Student Privacy Rights

Policy on Student Privacy Rights (<https://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/privacy-rights-students.html>)

Policy Statement

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), you have the right to:

- inspect and review your education records.
- request an amendment to your education records if you believe they are inaccurate or misleading.
- request a hearing if your request for an amendment is not resolved to your satisfaction.
- consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information from your education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without your consent.
- file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education Family Policy Compliance Office (<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint>) if you believe your rights under FERPA have been violated.

1. Inspection

What are education records?

Education records are records maintained by the university that are directly related to students. These include biographic and demographic data, application materials, course schedules, grades and work-study records. The term does not include:

- information contained in the private files of instructors and administrators, used only as a personal memory aid and not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the maker of the record;
- Campus Police records;
- employment records other than work-study records;
- medical and psychological records used solely for treatment purposes;
- records that only contain information about individuals after they have left the university;
- any other records that do not meet the above definition of education records.

How do I inspect my education records?

- Complete a Request to Review Student Record Form [pdf] (<https://www.cmu.edu/hub/docs/review-record.pdf>) and return it to the University Registrar's Office (CMURegistrar@andrew.cmu.edu).
- The custodian of the education record you wish to inspect will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time for inspection, not more than 45 days after your request. The custodian or designee will be present during your inspection.
- You will not be permitted to review financial information, including your parents' financial information; or confidential letters of recommendation, if you have waived your right to inspect such letters.
- You can get copies of your education records from the office where they are kept for 25 cents per page, prepaid.

2. Amendment

How do I amend my educational records?

- Send a written, signed request for amendment to the University Registrar, Carnegie Mellon University, A19 Warner Hall, Pittsburgh, PA 15213. Your request should specify the record you want to have amended and the reason for amendment.
- The university will reply to you no later than 45 days after your request. If the university does not agree to amend the record, you have a right to a hearing on the issue.

3. Hearing

How do I request a hearing?

- Send a written, signed request for a hearing to the University Registrar, Carnegie Mellon University, A19 Warner Hall, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

The university will schedule a hearing no later than 45 days after your request.

How will the hearing be conducted?

- A university officer appointed by the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Dean of Admission, who is not affiliated with your enrolled college will conduct the hearing.
- You can bring others, including an attorney, to the hearing to assist or represent you. If your attorney will be present, you must notify the university ten days in advance of the hearing so that the university can arrange to have an attorney present too, if desired.
- The university will inform you of its decision, in writing, including a summary of the evidence presented and the reasons for its decision, no later than 45 days after the hearing.
- If the university decides not to amend the record, you have a right to add a statement to the record that explains your side of the story.

4. Disclosure

Carnegie Mellon generally will not disclose personally identifiable information from your education records without your consent except for directory information and other exceptions specified by law.

What is directory information?

Directory information is personally identifiable information of a general nature that may be disclosed without your consent unless you specifically request the university not to do so. It is used for purposes like compiling campus directories.

If you do not want your directory information to be disclosed, you must notify the University Registrar's Office, in writing, within the first 15 days of the semester.

Notifying the University Registrar's Office covers only the disclosure of centralized records. Members of individual organizations such as fraternities, sororities, athletics, etc. must also notify those organizations to restrict the disclosure of directory information.

Carnegie Mellon has defined directory information as the following:

- official full name
- local/campus address and telephone number
- CMU email user id and address

(User ids cannot be completely suppressed from our electronic systems. While it may be possible to suppress the association of an individual's name with their user id, doing so may adversely impact the delivery of electronic mail or other electronic services.)

- major, additional major(s), minor(s), department, college
- primary academic advisor name
- class level (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, undergraduate, or graduate)
- dates of attendance (semester begin and end dates)
- enrollment status (e.g., full time, half time)
- expected or date(s) of graduation and degree(s) awarded
- sorority or fraternity affiliation

For students participating in intercollegiate athletics, directory information also includes:

- height, weight
- sport(s) of participation

What are the other exceptions?

Under FERPA, Carnegie Mellon may release personally identifiable information from your education records without your prior consent to:

- school officials with legitimate educational interests ("School officials" are Carnegie Mellon employees in administrative, supervisory, academic or support staff positions; Carnegie Mellon trustees; individuals and companies with whom the university has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using university employees such as attorneys, auditors, or collection agencies; and individuals assisting school officials in performing their tasks. School officials have a "legitimate educational interest" if they need to review an education record in order to fulfill their professional responsibilities.);

- certain federal officials in connection with federal program requirements;
- organizations involved in awarding financial aid;
- state and local officials who are legally entitled to the information;
- testing agencies such as the Educational Testing Service, for the purpose of developing, validating, researching and administering tests;
- accrediting agencies, in connection with their accrediting functions;
- parents of dependent students (as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Service Code);
- comply with a judicial order or subpoena (after making a reasonable effort to notify the student in advance of compliance so that the student can take protective action, except in cases where the university is legally required not to disclose the existence of the subpoena);
- appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency, if necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals;
- officials of another school in which the student seeks or intends to enroll;
- victims of violent crimes or non-forcible sexual offenses (the results of final student disciplinary proceedings);
- parents or legal guardians of students under 21 years of age (information regarding violations of university drug and alcohol policies);
- courts (records relevant to legal actions initiated by students, parents or the university);
- comply with federal laws concerning sex offenders and other individuals required to register under section 170101 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994.

5. Complaints

If you believe the university has not complied with FERPA, you can file a complaint with the:

Family Policy Compliance Office (<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint>)

U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-4605

Footnote: Your Carnegie Mellon GUID (global user identification) number is also designated as directory information under FERPA but does not contain personally identifiable information and therefore cannot be used by itself to determine your identity or to access your records.

Related Information

Directory Information Restriction [pdf] (<https://www.cmu.edu/hub/docs/directory-restrict.pdf>)