

# Privacy Act and Student Records

## Records Policy

At the postsecondary level, FERPA rights have transferred to the student. Education information may be released to parents without a signed consent from the student under the following conditions: (1) Health or safety emergency, (2) where the student has been found in violation of the institution's code of conduct relating to the use of alcohol or a controlled substance if the student is under the age of 21, or (3) by submission of evidence that the parents declare the student as a dependent student on their most recent Federal Income Tax form.

If these conditions are not in place, then the student must consent to release educational information to his or her parents in writing by completing the Release of Student Information form available through the Registrar's Office.

Official student records are established and maintained in a number of administrative offices for a variety of legitimate educational purposes. All records kept concerning students, including those records originating at other colleges or universities, those records required for admission or transfer credit evaluation or those documents supporting student course waivers, are the property of Pennsylvania Highlands Community College.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act provides students with certain rights with respect to their education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the College receives a written request for access. Students should submit to the Registrar's Office written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Registrar will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. Proper identification must be presented by the student prior to the inspection of records. The Registrar will remain present while the student reviews his or her education record. If the Registrar's Office does not maintain the records that are requested, the Registrar shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Students may ask the College to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the College official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part(s) of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the College decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the College will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to an appeal process regarding the request for amendment.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the College in an administrative, supervisory, academic, support staff position or Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as 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 professional responsibilities.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Pennsylvania Highlands Community College to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is: **Family Policy Compliance Office** *U.S. Department of Education* 400 Maryland Ave SW Washington, DC 20202-4605

## Public Information Regarding Students

The College has designated the following student information as public or "Directory Information". Such information may be disclosed by the College at its discretion to individuals, agencies, and institutions for purposes relating to activities approved by and associated with Pennsylvania Highlands Community College. This information may be released without the prior consent of a student.

- Name
- Address
- Phone Number
- Email Address
- Program of Study
- Dates of Attendance
- Degree and awards received
- Participation in officially recognized sports and activities

Currently enrolled students have the right to withhold disclosure of all (not partial) categories of public information. To withhold disclosure, written notification must be received in the Registrar's Office prior to the end of the second week for the semester or summer session in which the withholding of Directory Information is to take effect. Students are cautioned that withholding information can have adverse consequences when we are unable to verify attendance or degrees to agencies, insurance companies, or prospective employers. Former students and alumni are not covered under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Therefore, the College is not obligated to honor.