Records Policies

Please read the information below carefully. The FERPA - Privacy and Records Policies Northwest Christian University Education Records Policy Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 may affect your records.

I. Education Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (P.L. 93-380), effective November 19, 1974 (as amended by P.L. 93-568, the Buckley Amendment), is intended to afford students the right to inspect and review their educational records, seek to have their records amended, and have some control over the disclosure of information from their records maintained by an educational institution.

The Northwest Christian University Education Records Policy is intended to comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Students are annually notified of their FERPA rights through the Class Schedule, Student Handbook and the Northwest Christian University handbook.

All school officials, as defined below, are expected to manage student records in their custody in accordance with FERPA regulations. To receive access to student records, school officials (including work study student personnel) must receive a copy of this Policy, sign the appropriate "statement of understanding", and remain current regarding and FERPA modifications.

A. Definitions

Student
• Refers to any person currently enrolled at Northwest Christian University or
• Refers to any person who has previously earned academic credit at Northwest Christian University, not to include those who have deceased.
• Applicants for admission are not classified as students

Education Records
• Refers to any record (in handwriting, print, tapes, film, computer, or other medium) maintained by the University or an agent of the University which is directly related to the student, except:
  • A personal record kept by a staff member if it is kept in the sole possession of the maker of the record and is not accessible or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the maker of the record.
  • Records created and maintained by the University's law enforcement unit for law enforcement purposes.
  • An employment record of an individual whose employment is not contingent on the fact that he or she is a student, provided the record is used only in relation to the individual's employment.
  • Records made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional if the records are used only for treatment of a student and made available only to those persons providing the treatment.
  • Alumni records which contain information about a student after he or she is no longer in attendance at the University and which do not relate to the person as a student.
  • Records maintained by Northwest Christian University legal counsel.

Institution
This policy covers students in the Master of Arts in School Counseling program, Master of Arts Clinical Mental Health Counseling program, Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, Master of Education programs, Adult Degree Program (ADP), traditional undergraduate programs and post baccalaureate programs.

B. Contents of Record

Directory Information
Northwest Christian University has defined Directory Information as the information listed below.
This information may be released for any purpose at the discretion of the respective Program unless notified in writing to the contrary. Students have the right to restrict disclosure of Directory Information. This restriction is honored when the Restriction of Directory Information form is signed, dated, and returned to the Office of the Registrar. The restriction will be honored until the beginning of the following fall term. At this point, the student must resubmit a new request to restrict his/her directory information.

- Name
- Local and Permanent Addresses
- Telephone Numbers
- E-mail Address
- Current Enrollment Status
- Dates of Attendance
- Class Level
- Number of Credit Hours
- Degree(s) Conferred
- Honors and Awards
- Major Field of Study
- Past and Present Participation in Officially Recognized Sports and Activities
- Heights and Weights of Members of Athletic Teams
- Photographs
- Previous Institutions Attended
- Date and Place of Birth

Confidential Information (including but not limited to the following)
- All Information (except for Directory Information) contained in the application for admission or readmission.
- All records of test scores and/or results.
- All transcripts of previous academic work.
- Transcripts at Northwest Christian University, including course grades, grade point average, and advancement information.
- All petitions requesting variance in established academic policy.
- Graduation petition and evaluation.
- Notices and/or reprimands for failure to meet academic policy and/or requirements of the Statement of Intent.
- All correspondence relevant to the academic records, including letters of acceptance, receipts, academic performance, leave of absence, and withdrawal.
- Records of all authorizations to access or release information contained in the student education record.
- Career Services Records, Education Placement Records, and/or Career Planning Records.

Challenge of Contents The student has the right to challenge the content of the education record. See the section on Correction of Education Records.

II. Access to Education Records

A. Student Access

Limitation on Right of Access
- The University will not permit a student to inspect the following records:
  - The financial statement of the student's parents.
  - Letters and statements of recommendations for which the student has waived his or her right of access, or which were maintained before January 1, 1975.
  - Records connected with an application to attend the institution or a component unit of the institution if that application was denied.
  - Those records which are excluded from the FERPA definition of education records.
Provision of Copies

The University reserves the right to deny copies of records, including transcripts, not required to be made available by FERPA in any of the following situations:

• The student lives within commuting distance of the institution.
• The student has an unpaid financial obligation to the institution.
• There is an unresolved disciplinary action against the student.
• The education record requested is an exam or set of standardized test questions.

Fees for Copies of Records

Official transcripts cost $5 per copy. Unofficial copies are free of charge. Copies of other documents are subject to a $0.50 per page charge.

B. Third Party Access

Third party access to the education record without the student's written permission is limited to individuals designated as School Officials, those persons and/or agencies specifically authorized in FERPA as amended, or to any other person to whom disclosure may be required by law.

III. Authorization for Release of Education Record

A. Student Authorization

A student may authorize the release of his or her education record to a third party providing the request is made in writing, signed, and dated. At the time of matriculation, the University will give undergraduate students an opportunity to sign a Consent for Release of Information form to authorize parental access to grades, course schedule, and academic status information. This authorization can be relinquished with a written request from the student. Parents will be provided information about the University's Educational Records Policy and the procedures for release of information. The University will encourage students and their parents to discuss the issue of access to grades, course schedule, and academic status and to reach an understanding about the sharing of information about academic progress. If a student's signed, current authorization form is on file in the Office of the Registrar, a parent may either send a letter requesting a copy of grades, course schedule, or academic status or may complete and sign a Request to Review Education Records form, which is available from the Office of the Registrar. When parents request information, the Office of the Registrar will notify the student as a matter of courtesy.

B. Without Student Authorization

The University will disclose information from a student's education record only with the written consent of the student, except that records may be disclosed without consent when the disclosure is:

1. To school officials who have a legitimate education interest in the records.

A school official is any one of the following:

• A person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position, including health or medical staff.
• A person elected to the Board of Trustees.
• A person employed by or under contract to perform a special task, such as the attorney or auditor.
• A person employed by the law enforcement unit of the University.
• A student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or who is assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate education interest if the official is acting on behalf of the student and is doing any of the following:

• Performing a task that is specified in his or her position description or contract agreement.
• Performing a task related to a student's education.
• Performing a task related to the discipline of the student.
• Providing a service or benefit relating to the student or student's family, such as health care, counseling, job placement, or financial aid.
• Maintaining the safety and security of the campus.
2. To officials of another school, upon request, in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
3. To certain officials of the U.S. Department of Education, the Controller General, and state and local education authorities, in connection with audit or evaluation of certain state or federally supported education programs.
4. In connection with a student’s request for or receipt of financial aid to determine the eligibility, amount, or conditions of the financial aid, or to enforce the terms and conditions of the aid.
5. To state and local officials or authorities if specifically required by a state law that was adopted before November 19, 1974.
6. To organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the University.
7. To accrediting organizations to carry out their functions.
8. To parents of an eligible student who is claimed as a dependent for income tax purposes. The University will evaluate individual circumstances before doing so, and will require a copy of the first page of the parent’s federal income tax return to establish the student’s status as a dependent. The parent(s) will also be required to fill out a Request to Review Education Records form. If education information is properly released to a custodial parent of whom the student is a dependent, a duplicate of the released information may also be released upon request to a natural, non-custodial parent of whom the student is not a dependent.
9. To comply with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena. An attempt to notify the student is required by law before the University can honor such an order or subpoena.
10. To appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency.
11. To individuals requesting directory information so designated by the University.
12. The results of any disciplinary proceeding conducted by the University against an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence to the alleged victim of that crime with respect to that crime.
13. To the National Student Loan Clearinghouse.
14. To the student.

IV. Procedure for Release of Education Records

A. Procedure to Inspect Education Records
Students may inspect and review their education records upon request to the appropriate records custodian. Students should submit to the records custodian or an appropriate institution staff person a completed Request to Review Education Records form from which identifies as precisely as possible the record or records he or she wishes to inspect. Students may be asked to provide identification in order to ensure proper release of information.

The records custodian or an appropriate institution staff person will make the needed arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. Access must be given in 45 days or less from the date of receipt of the request. When a record contains information about more than one student, the student may inspect and review only the records which relate to him or her.

B. Types, Locations, and Custodians of Education Records
• Admissions - Office of the Registrar (Registrar)
• Cumulative Academic Records - Office of the Registrar (Registrar)
• Health Records - Office of Student Life (Director of Residence Life)
• Financial Records - Business Office (VP for Finances)
• Placement Records - Office of the Registrar (Registrar)
• Progress Records - Office of the Registrar (Registrar). Also from the Appropriate Graduate or Professional Studies department (Dean of said department)
• Disciplinary Records - Office of Student Life (Director of Residence Life)
• Occasional Records - The appropriate official will collect such records, direct the student to their location, or otherwise make them available for inspection and review.
C. Procedure to Request the Release of Education Records to Third Parties

Transcript of Record

As required by FERPA, all students are required to submit signed and dated requests for copies of their transcript of record. All requests for copies of the transcript of record are handled by the Office of the Registrar. Official transcripts cost $5 per copy. Unofficial copies are free of charge.

Records in Other Offices

Students should contact the records custodian in the appropriate office and submit a written request as indicated in the above procedures.

D. Record of Requests for Disclosure of Education Records

The University maintains a record of all requests for and/or disclosure of information from a student's education records. The record indicates the name of the party making the request or obtaining the information. The record may be reviewed by the eligible student. Every transcript of record released contains the admonition that the transcript is subject to FERPA and it cannot be released to a third party without the written consent of the student.

E. Correction of Education Records

Students have the right to ask to have records corrected that they believe are inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of their privacy rights. The following are the procedures for the correction of records:

1. A student must submit a written request to the appropriate official of the University to amend a record. In so doing, the student should identify the part of the record to be amended and specify why the student believes it is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of his or her privacy rights.

2. The University may comply with the request or it may decide not to comply. If it decides not to comply, the University will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing to challenge the information believed to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights.

3. Upon request, the University will arrange a hearing and notify the student reasonably in advance of the date, place, and time of the hearing.

4. The hearing will be conducted by a hearing officer who is a disinterested party; however, the hearing officer may be an official of the University. The student shall be afforded a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issues raised in the original request to amend the student's education records. The student may be assisted by one or more individuals, including an attorney.

5. The University will prepare a written decision based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing. The decision will include a summary of the evidence presented and the reasons for the decision.

6. If the University decides that the information is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's right of privacy, it will amend the record and notify the student, in writing, that the report has been amended.

7. If the University decides that the challenged information is not inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's right of privacy, it will notify the student that he or she has a right to place in the record a statement commenting on the challenged information and/or a statement setting forth reasons for disagreeing with the decision.

8. The statement will be maintained as part of the student's education records as long as the contested portion is maintained. If the University discloses the contested portion of the record, it must also disclose the statement. Students who believe that the adjudications of their challenges were unfair, or not in keeping with the provisions of FERPA, may request in writing, assistance from the Vice President for Academic Affairs of the University. Further, students who believe that their rights have been abridged, may file complaints with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act office, Department of Health and Welfare, Washington, D.C. 20201, concerning the alleged failures of Northwest Christian University to comply with FERPA.