

OFFICE OF REGISTRARIAL SERVICES
Departmental Policy on the
RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION

The University undertakes to protect the privacy of each student and the confidentiality of his or her record. To this end the University shall refuse to disclose personal information to any person other than the individual to whom the information relates where disclosure would constitute an unjustified invasion of the personal privacy of that person or of any other individual. All members of the faculty, administrative and clerical staff must respect the confidential nature of the student information which they acquire in the course of their work.

This policy conforms to the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) guidelines on freedom of information and privacy approved at the Council's meeting of May 17, 1993.

On June 10, 2006, amendments to the Ontario Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act brought universities under the Act. This document has been updated to reflect this amendment.

TYPES OF STUDENT INFORMATION

1.1 Public Information

The following is considered public information and **may be released to third parties** over the telephone or in writing without obtaining the consent of the student:

- degree(s), diploma(s) or certificate(s) conferred and graduation date.

The following information is no longer considered public information and must **not be released to third parties**:

- whether a student is currently registered,
- the degree program or diploma program in which a student is registered,
- the semesters in which a student has been registered

1.2 Address Information

Addresses and telephone numbers may be used by University personnel to contact students about university related matters. This information is considered confidential and is **not released to third parties** except in emergency situations.

In emergency situations requests for student addresses, telephone numbers, or inquiries about the immediate whereabouts of students should be referred to the Campus Police.

University student organizations may request lists using University of Guelph email addresses for selected groups of undergraduate students. These requests will only be approved if the addresses are to be used for a purpose that is consistent with the objectives of the University. Requests from student organizations should be submitted to the Associate Vice-President, Student Affairs for consideration. Students may declare their address and telephone number as confidential in which case their addresses will not appear on lists requested by university student organizations.

Organizations requesting graduate student departmental addresses may request labels from Graduate Program Services. These requests will only be approved if the addresses are to be used for a purpose that is consistent with the objectives of the University. Only departmental address are available for currently registered graduate students.

1.3 Personal Information

Student information that is not public information or address information as defined above is considered to be personal information. Personal information includes grades, academic standing, ID, SIN, and date of birth. Personal information must be kept confidential and private and **must not be released to third parties** without the written authorization of the student.

DISCLOSURE TO THE STUDENT

2.1 Transcripts

A student is entitled to an official transcript of his or her academic record upon payment of the current fee unless there is a sanction in effect (see 5.1 and 5.2 below). The student must request the transcript in writing. It will not be released to a third party without the student's signature. Signed requests will be accepted by FAX with appropriate arrangements for payment made in advance. Undergraduate transcripts are issued through Undergraduate Program Services and graduate transcripts are issued through Graduate Program Services. Other university departments must not release official transcripts.

Transcripts received from other institutions for admission or transfer credit evaluation are not to be issued to the student and are not to be sent elsewhere at their request as these documents are not current and could be misleading.

2.2 Unofficial Summaries

Academic progress reports include an unofficial summary and are issued to registered students each semester. Replacement progress reports or unofficial summaries may be obtained by students from Undergraduate Program Services or Graduate Program Services if necessary.

2.3 Hard Copy Files

Students do not necessarily have an official hard copy file. If an official hard copy file does not exist, the transcript represents the complete student record. If an official hard copy file exists, and a student wishes to see the hard copy file, three days notice must be given to allow the file to be severed and a photocopy produced for the student. A fee will be charged (in addition to the charge for an official transcript if ordered) to cover the cost of preparing the file. The original file is not to be released to the student.

Evaluative or opinion material must be severed (i.e. lines and/or pages removed) from the file before access is permitted to the student. This includes material compiled:

- a. for the purpose of determining eligibility or admission to an academic program of the University;
- b. for the purpose of determining eligibility or suitability for the awarding of a scholarship, bursary or other form of financial assistance; or
- c. that is medical information where the disclosure could reasonably be expected to prejudice the mental and physical health of the individual.

Hard copy files are shredded, or otherwise destroyed, upon the graduation of the student or seven years after the last registration of the student.

DISCLOSURE TO UNIVERSITY PERSONNEL

3.1 Administrative Officers

Administrative officers of the University who require access to student information in order to perform their duties are allowed access to the record. Staff from the Office of Registrarial Services have access to online student files and to hard copy files. The senate office, deans offices, departmental offices, program counsellors and departmental advisors have access to online student files.

3.2 Faculty

Faculty have access to class lists but **do not** normally have access to personal information such as grades and academic standing, or to address information. Faculty requests for student information must be approved by the department chair. The chair must establish that the faculty member requires access in order to perform his/her duties before giving approval. Faculty, with the approval of their department chair, are allowed access to online student files when it is essential to the successful performance of their duties.

3.3 Hard Copy Files

The contents of the official hard copy file of a student should not be removed from the Office of Registrarial Services except in circumstances specifically authorized by the Registrar or the Dean of Graduate Studies.

DISCLOSURE TO THIRD PARTIES

4.1 Conditions for Disclosure

Personal and/or address information may be released to:

- a. third parties with the student's written consent;
- b. a police officer or officer of the court on the presentation of a court order;
- c. a federal or provincial government authority in order to comply with a lawful requirement;
- d. parents or guardians of students under 18 years of age;
- e. collection agencies where a student has an outstanding University of Guelph account requiring assistance in collection.

4.2 Record of Disclosure

When personal information is released to third parties with the student's consent (4.1a above), the office releasing the information must keep a copy of the signed consent form for at least one semester. However the documentation for this type of a request will not be kept in the student's official file.

When personal information is released to third parties without the student's consent (4.1b, c, d, and e above) supporting documentation for the release of the record must be kept in the student's file.

Documentation for the release of information to collection agencies (4.1e above) is kept by Student Finance and Awards.

WITHHOLDING INFORMATION

5.1 Financial Sanction

The University will withhold grade reports, transcripts, degree parchment and other information about students who have not made payment, or suitable arrangements for payment of their University account.

5.2 Academic Programs Sanction

The University will withhold grade reports, transcripts, degree parchments and other information about students who have not responded to requests for proof of citizenship in order to meet MET reporting requirements.

NON DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

6.1 Ontario Student Assistance Program

OSAP information is considered personal information that can only be released by the Ministry of Education and Training. The University cannot release this information to the student or to third parties.