



Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Overview

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA applies to educational institutions that receive funding through programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education. Once a student reaches 18 years of age or attends a postsecondary institution, FERPA rights transfer from the parent to the student. These students are referred to as "eligible students."

Notification of Rights Under FERPA

FERPA offers eligible students the following rights regarding their education records:

Right to Inspect and Review Education Records

Students have the right to inspect and review their education records within 45 days of submitting a request. Requests should be submitted in writing to the appropriate College official responsible for student records and should identify the records the student wishes to review. The College will notify the student of the time and manner in which the records may be inspected.

Right to Request Amendment of Education Records

Students have the right to request the amendment of education records they believe are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of their privacy rights under FERPA. Requests should clearly identify the portion of the record to be amended and explain why the information should be changed. If the College declines to amend the record, the student will be informed of the decision and of the right to request a hearing.

Right to Consent to Disclosure

Students have the right to provide written consent before personally identifiable information from their education records is disclosed, except when FERPA permits disclosure without consent.

Right to File a Complaint

Students who believe their FERPA rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Student Privacy Policy Office

U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Disclosure of Education Records Without Student Consent

FERPA permits Valley College to disclose information from education records without a student's prior written consent under certain circumstances permitted by law, including:

- To school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the information*.
- To officials of another institution in which the student seeks or intends to enroll.
- To authorize representatives of federal, state, or local educational authorities.
- In connection with financial aid programs.

- To organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the institution.
- To accrediting organizations carrying out accrediting functions.
- To parents of a dependent student, as permitted by FERPA.
- To comply with a lawfully issued subpoena or judicial order.
- In connection with health or safety emergency.
- As directory information, unless the student has restricted its release.

*A school official is an employee, contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other party performing an institutional service or function for which the College would otherwise use its own employees. A school official has a legitimate educational interest when the official needs to review an education record to fulfill his or her assigned professional responsibilities.

Directory Information Notice

FERPA permits institutions to designate certain information as "directory information." Directory information may be disclosed without a student's written consent unless the student has requested that the information not be released.

Valley College has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student name
- Program of study
- Academic honors
- Degree or certificate awarded
- Dates of attendance
- Enrollment status
- Address
- Telephone number
- Email address
- Photograph
- Participation in officially recognized activities
- Honors received
- Most recent educational institution attended

Restricting Directory Information

Students who do not want directory information disclosed must submit a written request to the appropriate College official responsible for student records. Requests will apply from the date received and remain in effect until revoked by the student in writing.

During the enrollment process, students are provided with information regarding their FERPA rights, including the option to restrict the disclosure of directory information. Valley College will honor any restriction request from the date the request is received and processed.

If, after enrollment, a student does not wish Valley College to disclose directory information without prior written consent, the student must submit a written request to the Campus Director. Any restriction on the disclosure of directory information will apply prospectively from the date the request is received and processed.

Questions About FERPA

Students who have questions regarding FERPA rights, education records, or directory information should contact the Campus Director or other designated campus administrator responsible for student record requests.