

Family Education Rights and Privacy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 is a federal law that states: (a) that a written institutional policy must be established; and (b) that a statement of adopted processes covering the privacy rights of students must be made available. The law provides that the institution will preserve the confidentiality of student education records.

The University accords all the rights under this law to students who are declared independent. No one outside of the institution shall be permitted access to - nor will the institution disclose any information from - a student's educational records without his/her written consent. Exceptions include disclosure of necessary information to other personnel within the University; to officials of other institutions in which students seek to enroll; to persons or organizations affording students scholarships; to persons in amenability with a judicial order and persons in an emergency in order to guard the health or safety of the student or other persons; and, to accrediting agencies carrying out their accreditation function. All these exceptions are permitted under FERPA.

Within the Leighton University community, only those members (individually or collectively) acting in the student's educational interest(s) are allowed access to student education records. These members include personnel in offices defined by the institution, e.g., Admissions offices, Bursar's Office and Office of the Registrar and specific academic personnel within their need-to-know limitations.

At its discretion, the University may issue a directory of information per the FERPA provisions, including student name, hometown, address, date of birth, university address and telephone number, dates of attendance, class standing, major field of study, previous institution(s) attended, awards, honors (includes honor roll), degree(s) conferred (including dates) and participation in officially recognize institutional activities. Students may stipulate withholding their directory information by filing a notification to the Office of the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs. Authorization to withhold the directory information must be filed annually in the Office of the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs and Enrollment Management.

The law affords students with the right to inspect and review the information contained in their educational records, to challenge the content and accuracy of those records, to have a hearing if the outcome of the challenge is unsatisfactory and if they believe the decisions of the hearing panel are unacceptable, to submit explanatory statements for inclusion in their files. The institution has designated the University's Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs and enrollment management to coordinate inspection and review procedures for student educational records, including admission, personal, academic, and placement records. Students wanting to review their educational records must make written requests to the Office of the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs listing the item or items of interest. Only records covered by FERPA will be made available to the student on a date no later than forty-five (45) days after the appeal. Students may request to obtain copies of their records with specific exclusions (e.g., a copy of their academic record for which a financial hold exists or a transcript of an original or source document exists elsewhere). These copies can be made at the student's expense, at the prevailing rates listed by the Office of Registrar.

Students may not scrutinize or review the resulting as outlined by the Act: financial information submitted by their parents, confidential letters and employment or job appointment, recommendations associated with admission, honors to which they have waived their rights of examination and review, or education records encompassing information on more than one student. In that case, the University will permit admittance only to the part of the record which pertains to the inquiring student.

A student who believes that his/her education records contain inaccurate or misleading information or otherwise violate their privacy or other rights may discuss that concern unofficially with the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs (or the vice president's designee). If the decisions are in settlement with the student's requests, the appropriate records will be amended. If not, the student will be notified that the records will not be amended within a reasonable period. The vice president will then inform them of student affairs and enrollment management (or the vice president's designee) of their right to a formal hearing. Student appeal for a formal hearing must be made in writing to the Office of the Vice President for Enrollment and Student Affairs. Within a reasonable period after receiving such requests, the student will inform the date, location/link, and time of the hearing. Students

may submit evidence relevant to the issues raised and may be assisted or represented at the hearings by one or more persons of their choice, including attorneys, at the student's expense. The Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs will appoint the panel, adjudicating such challenges.

The decision reached by the hearing panel will be final. It will be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing. It will consist of written statements summarizing the evidence, stating the reasons for the decision, and shall be delivered to all parties concerned. The educational records at the University will be corrected or amended per the hearing panel's decision to favor the student. Suppose the decision is unsatisfactory for the student. In that case, the student may place comments on the information in the records or statements within his or her educational records, setting forth any reasons for disagreement with the hearing panel's decision(s). The statement will be placed in the educational records and maintained as part of the student's records. It will be released whenever the records in question are disclosed.

A student who believes the adjudications of his or her challenge was unfair or not keeping with FERPA provisions may request writing assistance from the University's president (or designee). Further, students who believe that their rights have been abridged may file complaints with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Office (FERPA), Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D.C. 20201, concerning the alleged failure of Leighton University to comply with FERPA.