

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)?

A. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also known as the “Buckley Amendment,” is a federal law that gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. These rights include the ability to: 1. Inspect and review their education records. 2. Request an amendment to their record due to what they believe is inaccurate or misleading information; 3. Block disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in their education record; and 4. File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Hellenic College Holy Cross to comply with the requirements of the law. FERPA also authorizes the release of “Directory Information” without a student’s prior consent, under certain conditions that are set forth in the Act. Hellenic College Holy Cross strives to fully comply with FERPA by protecting the privacy of student records and judiciously evaluating requests for release of information from those records. Furthermore, in accordance with the Act, HCHC has specifically defined “Directory Information” and provides notification to students of their rights on the on-line Registrar’s page and in hard-copy format at registration.

Q. What are Education Records?

A. An education record is any record from which a student can be personally identified and which is maintained by HCHC. An HCHC student has the right of access to those records.

Q. What is personally identifiable information?

A. Personally identifiable information includes but is not limited to: the student’s name; the address of the student; a personal identifier, such as the student’s social security number or HCHC I.D. number; or other information that would make the student’s identity easily traceable.

Q. What is Directory Information?

A. “Directory Information” is information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. At HCHC “Directory Information” includes the following: name; address; telephone listing; electronic mail address; enrollment status; degree; dates of enrollment; degrees and awards received; date and place of birth; spouse’s name (no information about children); jurisdiction and metropolis; home parish; seminarian status (no disclosure of probationary standing). *Note: “Directory Information” is information that the school may disclose, but it is not required to do so. All other (non-directory) information contained in a student’s record (e.g., grades, social security numbers, academic actions, etc.) is strictly confidential and is not disclosed without the student’s consent in writing.*

Q. Can students control disclosure of “Directory Information”?

A. Yes, students are notified of their right to control the disclosure of “Directory Information” in the *HCHC Student Handbook* and at registration. Students may request that a FERPA block be applied in order to prevent the disclosure of their directory information. To request a FERPA block, students must go to the Registrar’s Office to fill out and sign a form for that purpose. A FERPA block may be removed in the same way. Completed request forms will be kept on record by the Registrar.

Q. To whose records does FERPA apply?

A. FERPA applies to the education records of persons who are or have been in attendance at HCHC

Note: FERPA applies to ALL persons who have been in attendance at HCHC, including, but not limited to degree candidates, non-degree students, and persons who have enrolled in any of the HCHC institutes and programs, even if no course credit has been awarded.

Q. To what records does FERPA apply?

A. FERPA applies to all educational records, in whatever medium, which are maintained by HCHC or by a party acting for the school.

Note: Educational records are not limited to those records and data stored or maintained by The Registrar's Office; information that is directly related to a student and maintained by a particular office, faculty advisor, an instructor, or any other academic or administrative unit at the School is considered part of the student's educational record.

Q. Is prior consent always necessary before releasing information from a student's education record?

A. Prior consent is not necessary to release or confirm "Directory Information" from a student's education record unless the student has placed a FERPA block on such information. In addition, prior consent is not necessary under certain other conditions stated in FERPA, such as by court order or subpoena. However, it is the school's policy that information from a student's education record be released only by the Registrar's Office and within constraints.

Q. Where can I get a copy of the law?

A. A full text of the law is available at the following website:

<https://ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

Q. How is compliance monitored?

A. The Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) of the U.S. Department of Education monitors schools for compliance. Students have the right to file complaints with the FPCO alleging failure by HCHC to comply with the requirements of the Act. Failure to comply may result in a loss of federal funding for financial aid and educational grants and/or civil litigation.

Q. Whom should I contact at HCHC if I have questions about FERPA?

A. You should contact the Registrar's Office at 617-850-1261 or jostrosky@hchc.edu or Fr. Philip Halikias, Chief Equity and Compliance Officer, at 617-582-3216 or phalikias@hchc.edu.
