

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

What Is FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 is a federal law that protects your privacy by restricting access to your educational records. College employees only have access to a student's records on a need-to-know basis. If you select the FERPA restriction option on your Connect2 privacy settings, the College shares information from your educational records even more rarely in the circumstances described in the following paragraphs. If you believe that your FERPA rights have been violated, you should immediately contact the provost/ dean of the College. If you have questions about Illinois College's FERPA policies, contact the Office of the Registrar.

How Does Illinois College Follow FERPA?

Illinois College accords its students all rights under FERPA and will annually notify students and their parents of their rights according to FERPA through notifications in the Illinois College Catalog, Blue Book, Connect2 and Employee Handbook. The College will not disclose personally identifiable information from students' education records without the written consent of students (delivered in paper form or through the FERPA waiver in his or her Connect2 privacy settings during a registration period) except in the following situations. The College shares your educational information with College staff with a legitimate educational interest. We will share information, for example, with your academic advisor, because we believe this can help you succeed in college. We share information with officials of other institutions in which students seek to enroll; for example, we send a transcript to a graduate program when you request it. We share information with persons or organizations providing students financial aid. We share information with other groups when required by law, for example, accrediting agencies carrying out their accreditation function, persons in compliance with a judicial order, and persons in an emergency in order to protect the health or safety of students or other persons. We will also release student recruiting information to the military in compliance with the Solomon Amendment.

At Illinois College only those persons acting in the student's educational interest are allowed access to student education records. These include personnel in the academic affairs offices, registrar, admission, academic advising, student financial services and faculty members within the limitations of their need to know. Need to know, or legitimate educational interest, is defined as "needing access to an educational record to fulfill his or her professional responsibility."

Can Parents Learn about Students' Educational Information?

Illinois College can disclose student information to parents, legal guardians or spouses if one or more of the following circumstances exist:

1. Parent(s) declare student as a federal tax dependent.
2. Student is under 21 years of age and involved in a violation of the Alcohol or Drug Policy.
3. Student is involved in a health or safety emergency.
4. Student has granted permission using the Parent Access section on Connect2 or by notifying the College in writing, that the College may share information with the student's parents or persons of the student's choice.

What Is Directory Information?

The College may provide directory information in accordance with the provisions of the Act. For example, the College provides directory information to hometown newspapers about student awards and the names of students playing on varsity teams. Directory information may include: student name, name pronunciation,

address, telephone number, major field of study, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, and photographs.

Students may withhold directory information by clicking the FERPA restriction boxes in the Connect2 privacy settings or providing written notification to the registrar within two weeks after the first day of classes for the fall semester. Request for nondisclosure will be honored by the institution for one semester at a time; each semester that a student wants the College to withhold directory information, the student should tell the College, using Connect2 or by written notification.

Where Are Educational Records?

Student education records at Illinois College are maintained in the offices of the provost, dean of the College, registrar and student financial services.

Students may inspect their education records, challenge any contents, have a hearing if the outcome of the challenge is unsatisfactory and submit explanatory statements for inclusion in their files if they feel the decisions of the hearing panel are unsatisfactory.

Students may examine their education records by making written requests to the appropriate office listing the item or items of interest. Only records covered by the Act will be made available, within 30 days of the requests. Students may have copies made of their records, except for an academic record for which a financial "hold" exists or a transcript of an original or source document. Copies will be made at the student's expense at prevailing rates.

Education records do not include the security unit's records or records of instructional, administrative and educational personnel which are the sole possession of the maker and are not accessible or revealed to any individual, except a temporary substitute. Students may not inspect the following as outlined by the Act: financial information submitted by their parents; confidential letters and recommendations associated with admission, employment, job placement or honors to which they have waived their rights of inspection; or education records containing information about more than one student, in which case the College will permit access only to that part of the record which pertains to the inquiring student.

The College is not required to permit students to inspect and review confidential letters and recommendations placed in their files prior to January 1, 1975.

What To Do If You Believe Your Educational Record Is Incorrect?

Students who believe that their education records contain information that is inaccurate or misleading may discuss the matter with the chief administrator of the office involved. If that person is in agreement with the students' requests, the appropriate record will be amended. If not, the students will be notified within a reasonable period of time that the records will not be amended and be informed of their rights to a formal hearing.

Requests for a formal hearing must be made in writing to the provost/dean of the College who, within a reasonable period, will inform students of the date, place and the time of the hearing. Students may present evidence relevant to the issues raised and may have present one or more persons of their choice, including attorneys, at the student's expense. The hearing panel will be comprised of the student's faculty advisor, a representative of the dean of students and the provost/dean of the College.

Decisions of the hearing panel will be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing, will consist of written statements summarizing the evidence and stating the reasons for the decisions and will be delivered to all parties concerned. The education records will be corrected or amended in accordance with the decisions of the hearing panel, if the decisions are in favor of the students. If the decisions are unsatisfactory to the

students, the students may place with the education records statements commenting on the information in the records or statements setting forth any reasons for disagreeing with decisions of the hearing panels. The statements will be released whenever the records in question are disclosed.

Students who believe that the adjudications of their challenges were not in keeping with the provisions of the Act may request, in writing, assistance from the president of the College. Further, students who believe that their rights have been abridged, may file complaints with The Family Educational Rights Privacy Act Office (FERPA), Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D.C. 20201, concerning the alleged failures of Illinois College to comply with the Act.