



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

**Student Academic Records: Guidelines Concerning Access to
Official Student Academic Records**
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To request an official copy of this, contact:

The Office of the Governing
Room 106, Simcoe Hall
27 King's College Circle
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1A1

Phone: 416-978-6576

Fax: 416-978-8182

E-mail: governing.council@utoronto.ca

Website: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca>

Draft

Guidelines Concerning Access to Official Student Academic Records

Issued By: Karel Swift
University Registrar

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Purpose: The University supports appropriate access to, and privacy of, official student academic records consistent with its commitment to the requirements of Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). These guidelines are intended to outline university-wide procedures and criteria for access, privacy, custody, and retention of the academic records of students of academic divisions of the University in order to ensure clarity and consistency of practice.

1. For the purposes of these Guidelines:

- **student** means any person registered at the University for full-time or part-time study in a program that leads to a degree or post-secondary diploma or certificate of the University or in a program designated as a program of post-secondary study at the University by the Governing Council or other University body having delegated authority. On the date of an enquiry or request relevant to this policy, persons who have been registered within a period of two calendar years shall be included in the provisions which relate to "students".
- **alumnus or alumna** means any person who has received a degree or post-secondary diploma or certificate from the University, or any person who has completed one year of full-time studies or the equivalent thereof as determined by the Governing Council, towards such a degree, diploma or certificate, and is no longer registered at the University.
- **former student** means any person who has been registered at the University in a program as defined in Section 2(a), has not been registered at the University within a period of two calendar years, and who is not an alumna.
- **Student Society** means a recognized student group as defined by the Policy for Compulsory Non-Academic Ancillary Fees.

2. Definition of the official student academic record

These guidelines pertain to student personal and academic information regardless of where, and in what medium, it resides. The official student academic record consists of the following information relating to a student's admission to and academic performance at this University:

(a) Permanent information

- 1) Personal information which is required in the administration of official student academic records such as name, student number, citizenship, social insurance number.
- 2) Registration and enrolment information.
- 3) Results for each course and academic period.

(b) Information used during the period of enrolment

- 4) Narrative evaluations of a student's academic performance subsequent to his or her admission, used to judge his or her progress through an academic program.
- 5) Basis for a student's admission such as the application for admission and supporting documents.
- 6) Results of petitions and appeals filed by a student.
- 7) Medical information relevant to a student's academic performance which has been furnished at the request or with the consent of the student concerned.
- 8) Letters of reference which may or may not have been provided on the understanding that they shall be maintained in confidence.
- 9) Personal and biographical information such as postal address, email address and telephone number.

3. Access to official student academic records

(a) Access by a student

- 1) A student may examine and have copies made, at his or her expense, of his or her official student academic record defined in Section 1 above, with the exception of those portions of the record which comprise letters of reference (Section 2(b) (8)) which have been provided or obtained on the expressed or implied understanding that they shall be maintained in confidence. A student may, however, be advised of the identity of the authors of any confidential letters contained in his or her official academic record.
- 2) A student's request to examine a part of his or her official student academic record shall be made in writing and shall be complied with by the responsible authorities within a division. Such compliance shall normally occur within 30 days of receipt of the request, or within such lesser period as a division may determine.
- 3) A student has the right to challenge the accuracy of his or her official student academic record and to have his or her official student academic record supplemented with comments so long as the sources of such comments are identified and the official student academic record remains securely within the custody of the academic division. Reference to such comments does not appear on reports such as transcripts or statements of results.

(b) Access by alumni and former students

- 1) An alumnus or alumna or a former student may examine and have copies made of the portion of his or her official student academic record as defined in Section 2(a) above.
- 2) A request from an alumnus or alumna or a former student to examine the portion of the official student academic record as defined in Section 2(a) shall be made in writing and shall be complied with by the responsible authorities within a division. Such compliance shall normally occur within 30 days of receipt of the request, or within such lesser period as a division may determine.
- 3) An alumnus or alumna or a former student shall have the right to challenge the accuracy of his or her official student academic record only under such terms and conditions as the academic division may determine and publish in the divisional calendar.

(c) Access by University Staff and members of official University and divisional councils and standing committees

- 1) Members of the teaching and administrative staff of the University and members of official University and divisional councils and committees shall have access to portions of an official student academic record only as they need it for purposes related to the performance of their duties, and where their access to it is necessary and proper in the discharge of the University's functions.
- 2) Access to medical information as defined in Section 2(b) (7) shall be granted to members of the teaching and administrative staff only with the prior express consent of the student.
- 3) The Division of University Advancement shall have access to such personal information of students and alumni as is required for its own fundraising activities, such as maintaining contact with alumni. This information includes program(s) of study, years of attendance, and degree(s) obtained, but does not include academic performance.

(d) Access by University campus organizations

- 1) University of Toronto Student Societies shall have access to the following information for the legitimate internal use of that organization: the name, sessional address, and telephone number of students who have been charged a compulsory non-academic incidental fee on behalf of the society. For purposes where an individual student's identity must be verified, additional information may be provided. The nature of the information, and the terms and conditions under which it will be provided, must be satisfactory to the Vice-President and Provost or designate and shall be reflected in formal confidentiality agreements which provide that the information is adequately safeguarded and used only for the purpose for which it is provided.
- 2) Names and addresses of students will also be provided to Student Societies for the purpose of distributing materials when all of the following conditions are met:
 - The name and address information is not released to a third party (except as noted below).
 - The name and address information is not used for commercial purposes.
 - The organization proposes to distribute materials which, in the opinion of the University Registrar, the University would be willing to distribute if reimbursed by the organization. The materials to be distributed support or are related to the University or University activities and are not advertisements for non-University organizations.
 - The campus organization enters into a confidentiality agreement which includes agreeing to use the name and address information only for the specific purpose for which it was provided. In the event that the distribution of the materials is being conducted by a third party (e.g., a mailing house) on behalf of the student society, the confidentiality agreement shall be between the University and the third party.
- 3) Notwithstanding other provisions of these guidelines, for the sole purpose of administering drug, health and dental insurance plans organized those Student Societies which are also Representative Student Committees as designated by the Governing Council, a list of the names, addresses, student numbers, faculty codes, birth dates, and gender of students charged the compulsory non-academic incidental fee for the relevant plan may be provided to the insurance company designated by the student organization. The information included in the lists, and the terms and conditions under which they will

be provided, must be satisfactory to the Vice-President and Provost or designate and shall be reflected in formal agreements which ensure that the information is adequately safeguarded and used only for the purpose for which it is provided. If it is demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Vice-President and Provost or designate that the information is required for the administration of the plan and there is no practicable means for the information to be provided directly by the University to the insurance company, a similar list may be provided directly to the student organization under the same terms and conditions.

(e) Access by others

- 1) The public conferral of degrees, diplomas and certificates is a core activity of the University and the information on the face of these records, together with the dates on which they were conferred, is personal information that is maintained for the purpose of creating a record that is available to the general public.
- 2) Any other information contained in the official student academic record, shall be released to other persons and agencies only with the student's prior express written consent, or on the presentation of a court order, or in accordance with the requirements of professional licensing or certification bodies, of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for an annual enrolment audit, or otherwise as required by law. Requests granted to any persons or agencies outside the University for access to a student's academic record shall be kept on file within a division. The release of the information concerning alumni and former students contained in the portions of the academic record as defined in Section 2(a) shall also be governed by the above provisions.
- 3) In the event that a student, alumnus or alumna or a former student is deceased, his or her personal representative shall be granted access to information in the individual's official student academic record to the extent that such access relates to the administration of the estate of the deceased.

(f) Refusal of access

The University reserves the right to withhold the official transcripts, diplomas and/or degree certifications of students, alumni and former students who have outstanding debts or obligations to the University in accordance with the Policy on Academic Sanctions for Students Who Have Outstanding University Obligations.

4. Custody and retention of official student academic records

- (a) Academic records of students are normally under the custodial responsibility of the academic division. Every academic division maintaining official student academic records shall draw up plans for the eventual disposition of their records in consultation with the University Archivist and in accordance with an approved records schedule which is in compliance with this policy.
- (b) Those portions of the official student academic record as defined in Section 2(a) shall be maintained permanently. Each academic division's records schedule shall specify the document, form or medium in which these records will be maintained.
- (c) Official student academic records preserved in the University Archives because of their archival value shall become open to researchers authorized by the University thirty years after a student has died.
- (d) Academic records shall be kept at all times under appropriate security.

RELATED DOCUMENTS (added for reference by the Secretariat, January 14, 2020)

[Freedom of Information and Privacy Act](#)