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INTRODUCTION

Brock University recognizes that students have the right to personal privacy and a right to information held by the University concerning them as outlined under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). While acknowledging that for many years the University has had a range of policies and procedures which set out specific provisions concerning access to and release of student records, and the security of student records, this document sets out how these objectives are to be achieved.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is:

- To outline the rights of students with respect to access to their own information;
- To outline the responsibilities of employees regarding access, release, retention, disposal and the security of student records.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the University community, including, but not limited to students, employees, former employees, third parties, and members of committees who have access to records under the custody and control of Brock University. This policy is intended to complement, not detract from Provincial or Federal legislation or any collective agreements in place at the University adopted under the authority of the Board of Trustees.

Where this policy conflicts with legislation, collective or other existing agreements, the legislation and agreements will take precedence over this policy.

DEFINITIONS

In this policy;

Student Record

Any document or record of information that pertains to a student collected and stored by the University as part of the application or registration processes or as part of keeping a formal record of academic achievement and non-academic conduct. For the purposes of this policy, all student records are presumed to include personal information.

Personal Information

Personal information means recorded information about an identifiable student and includes, but is not limited to:

- information relating to the national origin, age, sex, or marital or family status of the student;
- academic or other information relating to the education, medical, criminal or employment history of the student;
- information relating to financial transactions in which the student has been involved;
- any identifying number, symbol, or other identifier assigned to the student (i.e. student number, social insurance number);
- address or telephone number of the student;
- correspondence or other communications received from the individual that is implicitly or explicitly confidential, and replies that would reveal the contents of the original communications;
- name, address and telephone number of student's parent, guardian, spouse or next of kin.

Current Student

For the purposes of access to student records, a "non-graduated" student means;

- a) registered and degree incomplete; or
- b) not registered and degree incomplete; or
- c) degree complete and currently registered.

For the purposes of statistical analysis, only those students registered in the present year and session.

Alumnus/a

For the purposes of this policy, a graduated but not currently registered student.

Employee

Employee includes an officer, employee, consultant or agent (as defined by FIPPA) of the University.

POLICY

Responsibility

The Office of the Registrar has the primary responsibility for the collection, storage, utilization, and dissemination of student records, and for ensuring that student records contain accurate information, that information in student records is not used inappropriately for a purpose other than which it was collected, and that the privacy of students and former students is not invaded through disclosure of information in student records to third parties without the necessary authorization. The Registrar will manage the collection, storage, utilization and dissemination of student records using the following guidelines. Primary responsibility for graduate student records resides in the Office of Graduate Studies.

University Access to Student Records

Employees of the University are permitted access to information contained in student records if they need to know the information to perform their official duties. As a general rule, only employees involved in some aspect of academic administration, alumni relations, development and donor relations, or student affairs are given access to the contents of student records.

The following information in student records may be accessed by offices within the University as needed, but should not be treated as public: student name, student identification number; address; telephone number; university e-mail address; faculty; program and years in which a student is registered and courses in which a student is registered.

The following information in the student records may only be accessed, as needed, by the Office of the Registrar, Office of Graduate Studies, Senate and its Committees and Boards, and to others advising students: birth date and location; information concerning citizenship and date of entry; marital status; Social Insurance Number; information about relatives; information about a student's place and nature of employment; information used during the application process; secondary school marks; university marks, standing and averages. Others advising students who may have access includes Deans, Associate Deans, departmental advisors and Graduate Program Directors provided a "need-to-know" has been established to the satisfaction of the Registrar/Director, Graduate Studies. As students graduate and are no longer registered in courses, viewing of student information will be accessible only to those noted above, as appropriate.

The following information in the student records may also be accessed, as needed, by the Office of Development and Donor Relations, the Office of Alumni Relations and the Office of the Faculty Dean: name, birth date, address, e-mail address, telephone number, student number, entry point for the purposes of maintaining relations with the University, and as students graduate the degree(s) obtained and the dates conferred by the University. This information may be used for student and alumni relations programs such as student/alumni mentoring, jobs mentoring and student send-offs, receiving the alumni magazine, invitations to Alumni weekend and Alumni branch events, the recruitment of alumni volunteers, information on Brock's "affinity" programs and for fundraising or charitable giving opportunities. The University complies with the requirements in FIPPA in undertaking its fundraising activities.

Circumstances may arise where restricted information may be required in the performance of University functions by other offices within the University. Requests for access should be made in writing to the Registrar or Director, Graduate Studies, who may approve the request as permitted by FIPPA and Brock University policy.

Employees with access to student and other records, which contain confidential information, will agree in writing to maintain the integrity and the confidentiality of those records.

Student Access to Information

Students may inspect all documents contained in their own student record, with the exception of evaluations and letters of reference supplied to the University, with the understanding that they be kept confidential.

Students may request that erroneous information contained in their student records be corrected and that recipients of any information found to be in error be advised of the correction.

Students wishing to inspect their student record must normally make an appointment with an authorized official of the Office of the Registrar or Graduate Studies Office.

All official transcripts will be complete and unabridged. Partial transcripts cannot be issued. Transcripts issued directly to students bear the notation "Issued to Student".

Documents pertaining to a student's achievement at another institution, which may have been received by the University, will not normally be released or redirected to another institution under this policy.

Release of Student Information

It is University policy to make a minimum of information freely available to all inquirers. The University will disclose information about students who have graduated, which is considered to be public information, as follows:

- a) degree(s) obtained and the dates conferred by the University, and in most circumstances,
- b) scholarships and the dates awarded.

Except as specified below, other information contained in student records (including current registration status and program of study) will be disclosed to persons other than employees only with the student's written consent or as permitted or required by FIPPA or as required by another law. This restriction applies to requests from parents, spouses, credit bureaus, police, CSIS and immigration and other government agencies.

The Registrar, or designate, shall determine whether student records are to be provided to persons or agencies pursuant to a court order, summons or subpoena, to Statistics Canada and the Ministry of Education/Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in connection with enrolment audits, to professional licensing and certification bodies pursuant to their lawful authority or to other persons or agencies as permitted or required by FIPPA or as required by another law.

In compelling circumstances affecting the health and safety of an individual and in certain compassionate situations relating to individuals who are injured, ill or deceased, the Registrar/Director, Graduate Studies or designate may authorize the release of information from student records as appropriate in the circumstances.

Use and Dissemination of Information

The Office of the Registrar, or Graduate Studies Office as applicable, shall be the only source of official information about individual students such as class lists, examinations lists, lists by major, student status and university standing.

Requests for access to personal information in student records for research will be adjudicated by the Registrar or Director, Graduate Studies, as applicable. Generally, information in student records may be released without individual student consent when the following criteria are met:

- the intended use of the data stated in the request is judged to be appropriate;
- the agency involved is judged to be an appropriate recipient of the data;
- the identity of individual students cannot be determined in any data released; and
- the research proposal has received the appropriate ethics review and approval.

The Registrar or Director, Graduate Studies has the right to review the results of any research or analysis based on the data provided and to comment on the use of the data prior to publication.

Retention and Disposal of Student Information

Original copies of the student record maintained by the Office of the Registrar/Graduate Studies Office will be destroyed five (5) years after a student has ceased to be registered and has not re-registered. Information stored on the Student Information System shall be retained indefinitely.

Proviso

Use of or access to student records not specifically addressed in the content of this document should be referred to the Registrar.

Where this policy conflicts with legislation, collective or other existing agreements, the legislation and agreements will take precedence over this policy.

REFERENCES

- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), R.S.O. 1990, c.F.31*
- *The Brock University Act, 1964*

RELATED POLICIES

- Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Policy
www.brocku.ca/hr/policies/freedom.html
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
<http://www.accessandprivacy.gov.on.ca>
- IPC – Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner/Ontario
<http://www.ipc.on.ca/>

AMENDMENTS (REVISION HISTORY)

Policy review: July 2011	Responsible: Barb Davis, Registrar
Revised: October 17, 2008	
Revised: October 24, 2011	