
Student Confidentiality Policy

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Policy Contact:	Registrar
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Procedures:	Student Confidentiality Procedures

Purpose

This policy sets out the terms and conditions for use of all student records controlled and maintained by Athabasca University (AU).

Definitions

Authorized User	An authorized user is an individual who has formal approval by the Registrar (or designate) to access all or part of a student record and/or the Student Record System to carry out the duties of his/her position at AU.
Personal Information	Personal information is the information that identifies an individual. It may include, but is not limited to, unique identification numbers, date of birth, names (first, middle, surname, former, etc.), address, phone numbers, email addresses, disability status, and citizenship.
Education History	This is the academic history of a student. It may include, but is not limited to, course names, course numbers, grades, grade point values, number of credits awarded, credit hours. Transfer



credit awards, prior learning assessment awards and grade point averages.

Financial History

This information is the student's financial interactions with the university. The student's financial information may include tuition fees assessed, various service fees assessed, financial standing, student's budget, assets, debts and income, information on provincial and federal government financial assistance programs, records of and supporting documentation for bursaries, scholarships, and awards.

FOIP

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter F-25. Current as of October 30, 2009.

Official Student Record

An official document issued by AU that confirms courses completed and the grades achieved in those courses. Also called the transcript.

Student Record System

The Student Record System (SRS) is the official system used for the collection and maintenance of student personal information, education history and some aspects of a student's financial history. This system is also known as the Student Information System (SIS).

Policy Statements

1.0 Collection

AU will only collect and maintain personal information about a student for the purposes of admission, registration, provision of services, and other fundamental activities relating to being a student of AU, including its student associations and alumni, to attending a post-secondary institution in the Province of Alberta, and as provided for by the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* and under Sections 33 and 34 of the *Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

2.0 Use of Student Personal Information

AU will use personal information only:

- for the purpose for which the information was collected or compiled or for a use consistent with that purpose
- with the written consent of the individual
- for a purpose for which that information may be disclosed to the University under Sections 40, 42, or 43 of the *Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*



3.0 Access to and Disclosure of Student Personal Information

The Office of the Registrar is the only agency of AU authorized to release a student's official student record or any other information from the SRS, unless otherwise specifically covered by policies contained herein and the Student Confidentiality Procedures (090a).

All documentation received by AU in support of an application for admission becomes the property of AU and will not be photocopied or released to the student or a third party. AU will only disclose a student's personal information as provided for under Sections 40, 41, 42, or 43 of *Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

3.1 Students

A student has the right to request access to his/her own personal information and records, subject to limited and specific exceptions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and on submission of acceptable identification, as maintained by the Office of the Registrar.

3.2 AU Employees

Members of AU faculty and administrative staff of AU shall have access to portions of official student records and student personal information 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 AU functions.

3.3 Student and Alumni Associations

Certain student personal information will be disclosed for the purposes of membership, fee collection, and contacting students. This information is disclosed under the authority of the *Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act* that mandates the programs and services offered by Athabasca University and Section 33(c) of the *Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

3.4 Relatives

Information is only disclosed upon authorization of the student, or in the case of a deceased individual, as provided for by *Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

3.5 Educational Institutions

Information will only be disclosed upon authorization of the student.

3.6 Provincial Government

Information may be disclosed to Alberta Advanced Education to meet reporting requirements and for statistical, funding, planning, or research purposes as collected



under the authority of the *Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act* and Section 33(c) of the *Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

3.7 Federal Government

Information may be disclosed to Statistics Canada as required by *the Statistics Act* (Canada) and for the purposes of complying with any other *Canada Act* or Regulation.

3.8 Provincial, Territorial and Federal Student Financial Aid Agencies

The University, in specific identifiable situations (e.g. support of application for financial assistance, default of repayment, failure to complete full time status obligations, etc.) has the responsibility to release information about a student who receives or has received funding under the authority of a provincial, territorial or federal student financial aid agency and/or banks to:

- federal, provincial or territorial student financial aid agencies
- student loan processing agencies authorized by federal, provincial, or territorial governments to administer student loans
- collection agencies authorized by the federal, provincial or territorial governments to recover outstanding student loans and grants

3.9 Law Enforcement Agencies

Information may be disclosed to a law enforcement agency in Canada under the authority of the *Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, Section 40(1) (q) when investigating a particular incident or the possibility that a criminal offense has been committed.

3.10 Researchers

Information from the SRS may be provided for research for evaluation purposes given that:

- a. the research has been approved by the Athabasca University's Research Ethics Committee,
- b. external researchers provide a signed research agreement as provided for by Section 42 of *Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and
- c. the Registrar (or designate) authorizes release of the data.

4.0 Accuracy of Student Personal Information

AU will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the personal information it uses when making a decision that directly affects an individual is accurate and complete.



It is the responsibility of the student, to whom the information is related, to provide accurate information upon admission to AU and to notify AU of any changes or corrections to that information.

5.0 Retention and Disposal of Student Personal Information

AU will retain student personal information in accordance with [AU's Record Management Policy](#). Any student personal information that is disposed of will follow the best practices for confidential shredding and/or electronic data deletion.

6.0 Security of Student Personal Information

AU will protect student personal information by making reasonable security arrangements to prevent the risk of unauthorized access, use, disclosure, or destruction.

Applicable Legislation and Regulations

[Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
[Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulation](#)
[Canada Privacy Act](#)
[Canada Access to Information Act](#)
[Alberta Post-Secondary Learning Act](#)
[Athabasca University Regulation](#)

Related References, Policies, Procedures and Forms

[Student Confidentiality Procedures](#)
[Access to Information Policy](#)
[Protection of Privacy Policy](#)
[Records Management Policy](#)
[Academic Records: Record Retention Schedule](#)
[Security of Digital Information and Assets Policy and related Procedures](#)

History

Athabasca University Academic Council, April 19, 2011, Motion 229-6 (revised)
July 2006 (Reformatted)
Academic Council, June 7, 2000, Motion # 157-6
Deans/Registrar Group, March 2, 1993, Motion # 5.6.1
Academic Council, September 19, 1989, Motion # 75.3.1