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## Student Confidentiality Procedures

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<b>Policy Sponsor:</b>	Office of the Registrar
<b>Name of Parent Policy:</b>	<a href="#">Student Confidentiality Policy</a>
<b>Policy Contact:</b>	Registrar
<b>Procedure Contact:</b>	Coordinator, Enrolment Services
<b>Effective Date of Procedures:</b>	September 1, 2011
<b>Review Date:</b>	These procedures will be reviewed annually.

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### Purpose

These procedures will set out the processes and procedures used in the collection, maintenance, access and disclosure of student personal information at Athabasca University (AU).

### Definitions

<b>Authorized User</b>	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.
<b>Personal Information</b>	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.
<b>Education History</b>	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.



<b>Financial History</b>	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.
<b>FOIP</b>	<i>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act</i> , Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter F-25. Current as of October 30, 2009.
<b>Official Student Record</b>	An official document issued by AU that confirms courses completed and the grades achieved in those courses. Also called the transcript.
<b>Student Record System</b>	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).

## **Procedure**

### **1.0 Collection of Student Personal Information**

- 1.1 AU will collect personal information directly from the student the information pertains to, unless another method of collection is authorized by that individual, another Act or regulation under another Act, or by the Alberta Information and Privacy Commissioner under Section 53 (1) (h) of the *Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- 1.2 AU will ensure that when personal information is collected directly from an individual, that they are appropriately informed of the purpose for which the information is collected, the specific legal authority for the collection, and the title, business address, and business telephone number of an officer or employee of AU who can answer the individual's questions about the collection. No one is permitted to use information for purposes other than those specified in the Student Confidentiality Policy and these procedures.
- 1.3 The Student Record System (SRS) will contain most of the information relating to students, consisting of personal information, educational history, and financial history. Some information such as transcripts from other institutions, disciplinary cases, and appeals will be summarized on the computer records while the supporting documentation is retained in paper and/or electronic format. No other system shall be used to collect and store information relating to students without the explicit permission of the Registrar.



- 1.4 All electronic systems used for the storage and retrieval of student information shall follow the established guidelines of the Information Technology Electronic Data Security Policy.
- 1.5 Students requesting changes to their basic personal information (addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, etc.) can do so by accessing the Change Your Personal Information Feature in the myAU student portal. Students requesting a change of name can do so by completing and submitting the [Student Change of Information form](#) (submission instructions are on the form).

See Section 4.0 – Accuracy of Student Personal Information on how to make changes to correct an AU error on a student record.

## **2.0 Use of Student Personal Information**

Student personal information will be used in accordance with Section 2.0 of the Student Confidentiality Policy only.

## **3.0 Access and Disclosure of Student Personal Information**

### **3.1 Students**

Students can access their personal information and official student record through the processes and systems available to them. This includes viewing and accessing a variety of services through the [myAU](#) student portal. Students who are unable to access the myAU student portal can complete and submit a [request for transcript form](#) to the Office of the Registrar (submission directions are on the form).

Students who are making a formal request under the [Access to Information Policy](#) must follow the procedures of that policy to make their request.

### **3.2 AU Employees**

The access to and disclosure of student personal information will be granted on a need to know basis only.

AU employees who require routine access to student personal information must complete the appropriate [system access request](#) process through AU's IT Helpdesk. All access requests to student personal information must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor and the designated university officer (or delegate) responsible for granting access to the requested system.



### 3.3 Student and Alumni Associations

A student can authorize the release of student personal information to a relative by completing and submitting a [Release of Information Waiver](#) to the Office of the Registrar (submission instructions are on the form).

Students may also authorize a relative to conduct business with AU on their behalf by completing and submitting a [Letter of Authorization form](#) to the Office of the Registrar (submission instructions are on the form).

AU strongly advises that a student limit the access to information and/or the authority to conduct business to specific details and/or transactions access to a grade in a specific course or the authority to discuss a specific matter with AU).

### 3.4 Relatives

A student can authorize the release of student personal information to a relative by completing and submitting a [Release of Information Waiver](#) to the Office of the Registrar (submission instructions are on the form).

Students may also authorize a relative to conduct business with AU on their behalf by completing and submitting a [Letter of Authorization form](#) to the Office of the Registrar (submission instructions are on the form).

AU strongly advises that a student limit the access to information and/or the authority to conduct business to specific details and/or transactions (e.g. - access to a grade in a specific course or the authority to discuss a specific matter with AU).

### 3.5 Educational Institutions

Students can request that their personal information and official student record be sent to an Educational Institution. The request can be made by completing the Transcript Request process in the [myAU](#) student portal. Students who are unable to access the myAU student portal can complete and submit a [request for transcript form](#) to the Office of the Registrar (submission directions are on the form).

Student personal information and official student records will not be released to an Educational Institution without the student's consent.

### 3.6 Provincial Government

Information that is disclosed to the Government of Alberta for institutional reporting purposes is prepared and released by Institutional Studies.



### 3.7 Federal Government

Information that is disclosed to the Government of Canada for statistical reporting purposes is prepared and released by Institutional Studies.

A copy of a student's T2202A or T4a may be forwarded to the Canada Revenue Agency to maintain compliance with the *Canada Income Tax Act*.

### 3.8 Canada Post/Courier Companies

AU may release a student name, address, phone number(s) and email address to Canada Post and/or a courier company in the course of shipping learning resources or in fulfilling other service requests.

### 3.9 Provincial, Territorial and/or Federal Student Financial Aid Agencies

The Office of the Registrar will routinely disclose various aspects of a student's personal information to a provincial, territorial and/or federal student financial aid agencies in relation to a student's eligibility for funding under a signed agreement with that agency. The right of AU to disclose this information normally forms a part of the contract the student has with the agency.

These disclosures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- full and/or part time status
- compliance with full and/or part time status funding requirements
- changes in full and/or part time status
- academic progress and academic standing
- changes in student personal information

### 3.10 Law Enforcement Agencies

A law enforcement agency that is conducting an investigation shall make their request for access and/or disclosure directly to the Registrar. The Registrar may delegate the request to an alternate university officer to complete.

### 3.11 Researchers

The Registrar shall receive a copy of all research approvals as detailed in Section 3.10 of the Student Confidentiality Policy.

Researchers who require information from the SRS shall complete the [Report Request Form](#). All requests for SRS data will be forwarded to the Registrar (or designate) for approval by the IT HelpDesk.



### 3.12 All Others

#### 3.12.1 Credential Awards

The credentials awarded to a student by AU and the date on which the credential was conferred are public records. This information will be disclosed to a third party upon request unless a student requests that this information be kept confidential. Students who wish to make a request to keep their credential award confidential can do so by contacting the Office of the Registrar.

#### 3.12.2 Other Third Parties

A student can authorize the release of student personal information to a third party by completing and submitting a [Release of Information Waiver](#) to the Office of the Registrar (submission instructions are on the form).

3.12.3 AU has created a comprehensive website for staff on [FOIP](#). Further information and [guidelines](#) for staff who deal with personal information can be found on this website.

## 4.0 Accuracy of Student Personal Information

While AU does strive for high levels of accuracy in the entry and maintenance of student personal information, mistakes can be made from time to time. Requests to make corrections to student personal information can be made by a student to the Office of the Registrar's Enrolment Services Unit.

## 5.0 Retention and Disposal of Student Personal Information

### 5.1 Retention of Marked Assignments, Examinations and Coursework

AU will retain marked assignments, examinations and other coursework that contributed to a student's final grade for a period of one year from the date of marking.

### 5.2 Retention of Student Personal Information Used to Make a Decision

AU will retain any student personal information (letters of reference, transcripts, academic and non-academic misconduct documentation etc.) that is used to make a decision about a student for a minimum period of one year from the date of the decision being made.

### 5.3 All Other

AU will retain all other student personal information in accordance with [Schedule A](#) of these procedures.



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

## **History**

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### **Student Confidentiality Policy: Office of the Registrar - Schedule A**

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Document Type	Retention Period
Coursework (assignments, exams, projects, etc.)	1 year
Final Grade	Permanent
Request for Service (Registration, Transcript Request, Extension Request, etc.)	1 year
Release of Information Waiver	Permanent
Transcript - incoming (official, unofficial, certified copy)	Permanent
General Application Form	Permanent
Documents that contribute to the academic history of a student other than coursework (transfer credit summaries, letters of credit, etc.)	Permanent
Student Awards	Permanent
Formal Appeal - incoming appeal and response	Permanent



Student Financial Aid Documents	Permanent
Letter of Authority	1 year
General Correspondence – Incoming	Up to 3 years*
General Correspondence – Outgoing	Up to 3 years*
Admission Decision Documents (letters of reference, resumes, etc.)	Up to 3 years after graduation from a program or 3 years of inactivity in a program.