

ALGONQUIN COLLEGE DIRECTIVE	NO. OF PAGES 5	DIRECTIVE NO. E19
	ORIGINATOR Registrar	
	APPROVED BY President's Executive Committee	
TITLE CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS	EFFECTIVE DATE 2005.06.01	REPLACES 2003.12.08

PREAMBLE

The College has a legal obligation to protect the individual's right to privacy regarding the personal and academic information in its possession.

The policy as it relates to confidentiality applied in this directive is based on both the students' right to privacy and the College's responsibility for the judicious use of student data. This policy complies with the requirements of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1987, Province of Ontario.

POLICY

The College will regard each student record as a unique and private document, maintained in a secure, controlled environment.

Access to student information held in any medium (hard copy, computerized database, microfiche) must observe the principles of confidentiality according to guidelines provided by the Registrar.

Data is used by the College for record keeping, reporting and analysis purposes only. It is updated, corrected, or amended, as appropriate, upon notification and/or documented request from student, faculty member, Vice President, Executive Dean, Dean, Director, Chair or Manager as appropriate. Student record data is maintained live for a minimum of one year following the student's last academic activity, after which time it is purged and archived.

Data on the student's record is available for his/her perusal, under supervision of the Registrar's Office staff, and is protected by security measures, including the regulation of access to the Student Information System.

PROCEDURES, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The term "student record" refers to the data submitted in support of a student's admission to the College to which is added the student's academic history while

a student at the College. For further description of the content of the current and permanent records, please see the Appendix A following this Directive.

Data held in student records, established and held by the Registrar's Office and academic departments, is subject to the principles of confidentiality applied in this directive.

2. The Registrar's Office is accountable for providing the policy and procedures by which accurate data, gathered from students, agencies, institutions and faculty, is maintained and disseminated appropriately to the student, to third parties designated by the student, or to other legitimate users as described in this document.
3. All requests for information regarding students will be handled in the context of this policy. Formal requests for information filed under Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation will be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator.

Access to Student Records

4. When a student requests access to his/her own record, a validation process takes place. If the student has contacted the Registrar's Office by telephone, he/she must provide key information for verification against the information on file. If the student has contacted the Registrar's Office in person, he/she must present valid photo identification (ID).

4.1 General Guidelines

- 4.1.1 The basic guideline governing the release of information is based on the belief that the Registrar acts with discretion upon authorization from the student. It is understood that in providing information in support of an application and in registering at Algonquin, students have consented to the release of information held on their student record which is required for the educational, administrative, institutional planning, or research activities carried out by Algonquin College (see 4.3). Students are informed of this understanding and authorize the release of this information by means of a Freedom of Information statement present on every form which they complete. This statement is attached as Appendix B.
- 4.1.2 Normally, no information will be released to external third parties without written student authorization. This includes requests from parents, prospective employers, police forces, credit bureaus, finance and loan companies, private investigation agencies, banks and similar organizations. The Registrar may exercise discretion in the release of information to external third parties without written authorization from the student only under circumstances as outlined in section 4.4.

External requests for mass listings of directory information will be denied. Where such listings have in-house legitimacy, such as the facilitation of student elections, they may be released with discretion, and with disposition guidelines provided to the user by the Registrar's Office.

- 4.1.3 The original documents on a student file will not leave the master file, but appropriate copies may be released to College officials when requested in support of administrative or academic service on behalf of the student.
- 4.1.4 Documents from other institutions such as high school or university transcripts which are submitted to support a student's application for admission and/or transfer of academic credit may not be certified and released as part of the College record. If, however, the College, by not doing so, may cause excessive hardship to the student, it may, at the discretion of the Registrar and notification to the student, forward a copy of such a transcript to the receiver, marked "for your exclusive use only".
- 4.1.5 In all programs, records of attendance as a separate item do not form part of the official student record, and requests for such will be denied.
- 4.1.6 At Woodroffe Campus, anyone who is requesting access to student(s) due to an emergency is to be referred to Security, who will follow established procedures regarding the request. At the Perth and Pembroke Campuses, in similar circumstances, individuals should be referred to the Dean's Office.

4.2 Access by the Student

- 4.2.1 Each student may, upon written request, access his/her own file, release it to a third party, or request it be held with no release allowed. Students with debts outstanding to the College are entitled to access their file and may receive an unofficial copy of their grades. However, the College will not produce an official transcript, certificate or diploma, or release information to third parties as requested by the student in writing, until the obligation to the College is cleared.
- 4.2.2 Students accessing their own file may view the file but may not alter or remove any of its contents.
- 4.2.3 Unless unusual circumstances prevail, no grades or certification shall be released to an individual student prior to the official release of grades and certification to all students.

4.3 Access by College Personnel

- 4.3.1 Faculty, counsellors, special needs staff, and administrative officers of the College who request information from a student's record for educational counselling and/or administrative services to the student will be permitted access to the appropriate file(s) with the approval of the Registrar or designate.

4.4 Access by Third Parties Outside the College

4.4.1 Parents

Since the basis of all transactions with students assumes adult levels of responsibility, information from the student's record will not be released to parents or guardians without the student's written consent.

If parents/spouses contact the College to pay fees for students, the College will accept and process the payments, and issue a receipt for payment if in-person. Otherwise, the receipt/timetable will be released via ACSIS and/or mailed to the student.

4.4.2 Sponsoring Agencies

A transcript will be released on request to those approved sponsoring agencies who provide full financial support to the student registered at the College and who supply written authorization from the student to do so. Typically, students will complete a standard authorization form provided by the agency.

4.4.3 Government Agencies

Properly identified representatives of federal, provincial or local government agencies, including regional police, Ontario Provincial Police, and R.C.M.P. will be treated as any third party; that is, written student authorization must accompany their request for information, unless such release is sanctioned by Section 42 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1987, Province of Ontario.

However, if in the opinion of the Registrar, denial of the information could involve hardship to the student, appropriate details may be released.

Further, if denial of access to the student's information could affect the safety of the College community, appropriate details may be released.

4.4.4 The Courts

In the event that a student record is subpoenaed by the Court, on behalf of the student, a certified copy of the full student record will be offered. Should the record be subpoenaed by the party other than that representing the student, a certified copy of the record will be offered to the Judge alone, with an explanation of the College's reluctance to release a private document without written student authorization. The decision will then rest with the Judge, as to the required response by the College.

4.4.5 Researchers

Requests from researchers conducting statistical studies must be reviewed by the Freedom of Information Coordinator. These will then be recommended for approval by the President or his designate with stipulated conditions that protect the students' privacy.

4.4.6 Enhanced Student Information System (ESIS)

It is essential to be able to follow students across time and institutions to understand, for example, the factors affecting enrolment demand at post-secondary institutions. In order to carry out such studies, Statistics Canada asks all colleges and universities to provide data on students and graduates. Institutions collect and provide to Statistics Canada student identification information (student's name, student ID number, Social Insurance Number), student contact information (address and telephone number), student demographic characteristics, enrolment information, previous education, and labour force activity.

Statistics Canada is the national statistical agency.

The Federal *Statistics Act* provides the legal authority for Statistics Canada to obtain access to personal information held by educational institutions. The information may be used only for statistical purposes, and the confidentiality provisions of the *Statistics Act* prevent the information from being released in any way that would identify a student.

Students who do not wish to have their information used are able to ask Statistics Canada to remove their identification and contact information from the national database.

(original signed by)
Vice President, Finance and
Administration

(original signed by)
Registrar

APPENDIX A**A. CONTENT OF THE STUDENT RECORD****A.1 The Current Record****A.1.1 Pre-registration Record**

When students apply to the College and prior to registration, the following documentation/information comprises their official record held in print and/or electronic media by the Registrar's Office:

- application form, supporting documentation and admissions correspondence
- record of changes to program choice(s)
- record of changes to personal information
- action sheet to record admission milestones
- fee payment receipts
- Test Centre and program admission assessments
- written authorizations by student for release of specific information to specified third parties
- letters from sponsors
- records of visa status, if applicable.

After registration, the paper and/or electronic files become the current record.

Paper records of applicants who do not register are held in storage for a period of one year, after which they are destroyed.

A.1.2 Registered Students

While students are currently registered at the College, the following documentation/information comprises their official records (in electronic and paper media, various elements of which are held by the Registrar):

- application form, supporting documentation and admissions correspondence
- record of changes to personal information
- record of registration and changes to registration
- record of grades received and status assigned
- record of final grade reviews and academic appeals, and outcome
- record of official withdrawal
- documentation concerning student status (letters from sponsors, record of disciplinary action, correspondence, etc.)

- record of assessment and payment of fees and penalties
- record of academic and/or financial encumbrance(s)
- record of graduation, certification awarded, date of completion and Convocation date
- written authorizations by student for release of specific information to specified third parties
- records of information released to third parties, as requested in writing by the student.

Typically, transcripts and records from other institutions are held on the student record to support admission, document exemptions, assist faculty advisors, etc. These are part of the current record only and are destroyed when the current record is purged and the permanent record is archived.

Any counselling records, record of health or health-related condition of a confidential nature will be maintained in Counselling, the Centre for Students with Disabilities, or the Health Services Centre respectively, and not in the official student record held in the Registrar's Office.

A.2 The Permanent Record

The permanent record, created a minimum of one year following the student's graduation or last academic activity, is held on the Student Information System or microfiche, and includes:

(NOTE: please refer to section B below for descriptions of retention schedules)

- student's full legal name (including previous name if on file)
- student's I.D. number as assigned by the College
- the Social Insurance Number if on College record
- date of birth, if available
- last permanent address
- the cumulative academic record, which will consist minimally of the following information found on the application form and final transcript:
 - date of admission, if applicable
 - course number, hours and title of course(s) in which the student registered, and program where applicable
 - the final grade/status assigned in each course
 - the date of the academic term in which the grade/ status was assigned
 - the term Grade Point Average (G.P.A.) and the cumulative G.P.A. where applicable
 - graduation status and date, or where applicable, leaving status and date
 - final permanent record summary for certain Health Sciences programs

A.2.1 Health Sciences Student Records

Clinical evaluations may be retained for an extended period - see B.2.4.

B. RETENTION OF RECORDS**B.1 Rationale**

Unlike the elementary and secondary school systems, there is no legislation governing the long-term retention of records in Ontario's (or Canada's) tertiary institutions. Under Freedom of Information legislation, personal records must be retained as active files for a minimum of one year following last academic activity.

A retention schedule of seventy (70) years is consistent with legislation in Ontario governing pupil records in elementary and secondary schools.

B.2 Retention Schedules

B.2.1 Current student records of full-time students are held intact for one year following the student's last academic activity, after which time a permanent record will be created and held in permanent storage medium.

B.2.2 Current records of part-time students enrolled in courses where evaluation takes place are held intact as long as student status is active. If a student has been inactive for six consecutive terms, the permanent student record will be created and held in permanent storage medium.

B.2.3 Records which are held in permanent storage will be retrieved upon a student's return to the College.

B.2.4 Retention for Health Sciences Programs

Because of the detailed clinical evaluation of students in certain Health Sciences programs, especially where they impact on fulfilment of licensing regulations, an extended retention schedule will be maintained.

- Students who graduate from Health Sciences Programs

In addition to the permanent record, the following documents will be held on active file by the Registrar:

- correspondence related to evaluation and promotion decisions (maximum one year)
- clinical evaluation forms (minimum one year).
- Students who withdraw from Health Sciences Programs before graduation
 - The current student record is kept intact by the Registrar for two (2) years (rather than one), after which time it is converted to permanent record.

APPENDIX B

To formalize compliance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Algonquin College requires that you read the statement below. The information gathered through this document is collected under the legal authorization of the Colleges and University Act, R.S.O. 1980, Chapter 272, S.5, R.R.O. 1980, Regulation 640. The information is used for educational, administrative and statistical purposes of the College and/or ministries and agencies of the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada. Administrative purposes may include the disclosure to or on behalf of the Students' Association of Algonquin College for the purposes of the activities of the Association or to establish qualifications for benefits such as drug plan cards or OC Transpo passes, or to the Alumni Association. The College publishes the names of students who graduate and/or achieve academic excellence. Under the Privacy Act, individuals can request access to their own, individual information held on federal banks, including those held by Statistics Canada. Students who do not wish to have their information used may ask Statistics Canada to remove their identification and contact information from the national database. Further information on the use of this information can be obtained from Statistics Canada's website: <http://www.statcan.ca> or by writing to the Postsecondary Section of Statistics Canada, Centre for Education Statistics, 17th Floor, R.H. Coates Building, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, K1A 0T6.