



FERPA Release for Faculty/Staff Letter of Recommendation or Reference

Instructions: Students, please read and fill out the appropriate sections of this form before delivering it to the CWU faculty or staff member(s) whom you are asking to write a letter of recommendation or serve as a reference for you.

Non-directory information from student education records may not be included in a letter of recommendation without the student's written consent. Examples of non-directory information include GPA, grades/academic performance, performance in work/study positions or internships, etc.

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), I, the undersigned student, hereby authorize _____ (faculty/staff name) to write a letter of recommendation or otherwise serve as a reference in which the faculty/staff member may discuss information contained in my student education records (such as performance in classrooms, student activities, work/study employment, and internships).

The purpose of the information to be released (select all that apply):

- Employment
- Admission to an educational institution
- Other (please specify) _____

The information should be released directly to: (name and address of receiving party provided by student):

To: _____ Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

I understand further that (1) I have the right not to consent to the release of information from my student education records; (2) I have a right to receive a copy of the faculty/staff member's letter of recommendation upon request unless I waive that right; (3) and this consent shall remain in effect until revoked by me, in writing, and delivered to the faculty/staff member, but any such revocation shall not affect disclosures made by the faculty/staff member prior to the receipt of any such written revocation.

- I waive my right to review a copy of the letter of recommendation at any time in the future.
- I do not waive my right to review a copy of the letter of recommendation at any time in the future.

Student ID Student name (please print) Student's signature Date

Upon completion of this form, the student should submit it to the faculty/staff member.

Faculty/staff members must retain this form attached to a copy of the letter of recommendation for a period of five years or forward both the letter and this signed form to Registrar Services. This information is released subject to the confidentiality provisions of FERPA and other applicable laws. Any further disclosure of this information is prohibited without the specific written consent of the person to whom it pertains, or as otherwise permitted by such laws.

FERPA Release for Recommendation Letters

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is a federal law protecting the confidentiality of student education records. Generally, CWU faculty and staff may not disclose personally identifiable information from student education records without the student's written consent. An exception to this is "directory information" as defined below, which can be disclosed without the student's consent, *unless the student has directed that such information not be disclosed by having a FERPA restriction placed on their student account.*

Directory Information: "Directory information" means the student's name, university and permanent home address and telephone number, email address, a photograph, dates of attendance, class, major field(s) of study, previous institutions attended, awards and honors (including honor roll), degrees conferred (including dates), and participation in officially recognized sports and activities, and height and weight of members of athletic teams. See WAC 106-172-711.

Any requests for letters of recommendation to include information beyond what is defined as directory information must be requested in writing by the student.

Recommendation Letter Frequently Asked Questions

What may I release in a letter of recommendation?

If you do not have a signed FERPA Release form, then you may only release directory information for the student, and even then you must verify that the student has not requested a FERPA restriction to be placed on the student's account.

Do I need to have a signed release?

If you are going to release any information beyond what is included in directory information, yes. Please have the student complete the FERPA Release form.

Can the student request a letter of recommendation electronically?

Yes, per legal counsel, the student may submit a signed FERPA Release form as an attachment to an email message as long as you are reasonably sure that the message was sent by the student. If in doubt, you should contact the student by phone to verify.

Can I send the letter of recommendation directly to a graduate school or employer?

Yes, if the student has completed the FERPA Release form indicating that information from student education records can be released directly to the graduate school/employer.

Why can the student see my letter of recommendation?

Students have the right under FERPA to inspect their own records. Students may waive that right for letters of recommendation and should indicate any such waiver on the FERPA Release form.

What if the student declines to waive the right to review my letter of recommendation?

You have the right to inform the student that it is not your practice to provide letters of recommendation unless the letters are confidential and you are able candidly to assess the student's strengths as well as weaknesses.

What if the student declines to submit a FERPA Release form? Must I still provide a recommendation or reference?

No, you may share with the student that you cannot provide a meaningful recommendation, or serve as a reference, if directory information is the only information you are permitted to disclose.

What if I am asked for a reference and the student has not signed a FERPA Release form?

If the student has not signed a FERPA Release form, any requests for information about the student, even directory information, should be referred to Registrar Services.