

# Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY



To: All Students

The Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science is required to provide all students in attendance with a copy of the policy on the confidentiality of student records. This policy outlines the rights and responsibilities of the student's records and is distributed annually.

I have attached a copy of this policy for you to review. Please sign the last page acknowledging your receipt and understanding of the policy and return to Mr. Drobish. If you have any questions regarding this policy or would like to review records, please contact the Registrar's office.

Thank you

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## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (the Act) is a federal law (also known as the Buckley Amendment) which

states that students have the right to have their educational record maintained in a confidential manner and the right to review their educational records. The act states that: (1) a written institutional policy must be established and (2) that a statement of adopted procedures covering the privacy rights of students be made available.

## **POLICY**

Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science, Inc. (PIMS) accords all the rights under the law to students who are declared independent. No one outside the institution shall have access to nor will the institution disclose any information from the students' educational records without the written consent of the student except to personnel within the institution, to officials of other institutions in which students seek to enroll, to persons or organizations providing student financial aid, to accrediting agencies carrying out their accreditation functions, to persons in compliance with a judicial order, for use in connection with audits or other investigations and to persons in an emergency in order to protect the health or safety of students or other persons. All of these exceptions are permitted under the Act.

Within PIMS, only those members individually or collectively acting in a student's educational interest are permitted access to the student's educational records. These members include personnel in the records office, financial aid personnel, admissions personnel, business office personnel, and academic personnel with the limitations of their needs to know.

At its discretion the institution may provide Directory information in accordance with the provisions of the Act to include:

- student name
- date and place of birth
- telephone
- dates of attendance
- major field of study
- most recent previous educational agency
- degrees & awards received or institution attended by the student
- address

Students may withhold Directory information by selecting "DO NOT" below and request for non-disclosure will be honored by the institution.

The law provides students with the right to inspect and review information contained in their educational records, to challenge the contents of their educational records, to have a hearing if the outcome of the challenge is unsatisfactory, and to submit explanatory statements for inclusion in their files if they feel the decisions of the hearing panels to be unacceptable. The Registrar at PIMS has been designated by the institution to coordinate the inspection and review procedures for student educational records, which include admissions, personal, academic, and financial files, and academic and placement records. Students wishing to review their educational records must make written requests to the Registrar listing the item or items of interest. Access to disciplinary records must be made through the Office of the Dean of Faculty and Students in like manner.

Only records covered by the Act will be made available within forty-five days of request.

Students may have copies made of their records with certain exceptions, (e.g., a copy of the academic record for which a financial "hold" exists, or a copy of a transcript of an institution other than PIMS). Copies of any requested records are made at the student's expense at the rate of \$20.00 administrative fee + \$3.00 per page.

Educational records do not include records of instructional, administrative and educational personnel which are the sole possessions of the maker and are not accessible or revealed to any individual except a temporary substitute, records of the law enforcement officials, student health records, employment records or alumni records.

Students may not inspect and review the following as outlined in the Act:

1. financial information submitted by the student's parents;
2. confidential letters and recommendations associated with admissions, employment or job placement and review;
3. educational records containing information about more than one student, in which case the institution will permit access only to the part of the record which pertains to the inquiring student;
4. health records which are created by a health professional and are used only in connection with treatment of the student

Students who believe that their educational records contain information that is inaccurate or misleading or is otherwise in violation of their privacy or other rights may discuss their problems informally with the Registrar. If the decisions are in agreement with the students' requests, the appropriate records will be amended. If not, the student will be notified within a reasonable period of time that the records will not be amended. And they will be informed by the Registrar's Office of their right to a formal hearing. Student requests for a formal hearing must be made in writing to the President who, within a reasonable period of time after receiving such requests will inform the student of the date, time and place of the hearing. Students may present evidence relevant to the issues raised and may be assisted or represented at the hearings by one or more persons of their choice, including attorneys, at the

student's expense. The hearing panels which will adjudicate such challenges will be the Vice President of the Board of Directors, the Secretary of the Board of Directors and Dean of Faculty and Students.

Decisions of the hearing panels will be final, will be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing, and will consist of written statements summarizing the evidence and stating the reasons for the decisions, and will be delivered to all parties concerned. The educational records will be corrected or amended in accordance with the decisions of the hearing panel, if the decisions are in favor of the student. If the decisions are unsatisfactory to the student, the student may place with the educational records statements commenting on the information in the records, or statements setting forth any reasons for disagreeing with the decisions of the hearing panel. The statements will be placed in the educational records, maintained as part of the student's records and released whenever the records in question are disclosed.

Students who believe that the adjudication of their challenges were unfair, or not in keeping with the provisions of the Act may request in writing, assistance from the President of the Institute. Further, students who believe that their rights have been abridged, may file a complaint with The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Office (FERPA), Department of Education, Washington, DC, 20201 concerning the alleged failures of the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science, Inc. to comply with this act.

Revisions and clarifications will be published as experience with the law and institution's policy warrants.

Effective date: July 1994  
Reviewed: March 2020

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