

Access to student academic records

Approval body: MD Program Curriculum Committee

Date of original adoption: 20 September 2011

Date of last review: 8 November 2016

Date of last amendment: 8 November 2016

Date of next scheduled review: 8 November 2020

This document includes the following five sections:

1. Notice of Collection of Personal Information
2. Definition of Student Academic Records
3. Access to Student Academic Records
4. Refusal of Access to Student Academic Records
5. Principles Regarding the Use of Student Information by MD Program Leaders

1. Notice of Collection of Personal Information

The University of Toronto respects your privacy. Personal information that you provide to the University is collected pursuant to section 2(14) of the University of Toronto Act, 1971. It is collected for the purpose of administering admissions, registration, academic programs, university-related student activities, activities of student societies, safety, financial assistance and awards, graduation and university advancement, and reporting to government agencies for statistical purposes. At all times it will be protected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA). If you have questions, please refer to www.utoronto.ca/privacy or contact the University Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Coordinator at 416-946-7303, McMurrich Building, room 104, 12 Queen's Park Crescent West, Toronto, ON, M5S 1A8.

2. Definition of Student Academic Records

Student academic records are defined as being information relating to a student's admission to and academic performance at this University. Student academic records include information contained in an original transcript, in electronically stored records, and in the "official student academic record" as maintained within the Office of Enrolment Services in the Faculty of Medicine. The official records contain information relating to a student's academic performance, including:

- Application for admission and supporting documentation
- Registration and fees information
- Copy of statement of results for each course and year
- Elective evaluations
- Record of failures and results of supplemental examinations and Boards of Examiners' decisions
- Narrative evaluations of a student's academic performance used to judge his/her progress through an academic program
- Results of any petitions and appeals filed by the student
- Medical information relative to a student's academic performance which has been furnished at the request of or with the consent of the student concerned
- Personal information which is required in the administration of academic records such as name, address, telephone number, citizenship, social insurance number

Not included in the student's official record are letters of reference to hospitals or other individuals or institutions written by faculty members and others at the request of the student.

3. Access to Student Academic Records

Overview

Access to MD Program student academic records is governed by and consistent with University of Toronto [*Guidelines Concerning Access to Official Student Academic Records*](#), which ensures that:

- Students are allowed as great a degree of access to their academic records as is academically justifiable and administratively feasible.
- A student's rights to privacy in relation to his/her academic records is safeguarded as far as both internal University access and external public access is concerned.
- Academic records of students are ultimately the property of the University and they are maintained under the custodial responsibility of the Faculty of Medicine.

By acting in accordance with the University of Toronto *Guidelines Concerning Access to Official Student Academic Records*, the MD Program supports appropriate access to, and privacy of, official student academic records consistent with its commitment to the requirements of Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).

Access by Faculty and Staff

Members of the MD Program leadership and teaching staff as well as Faculty of Medicine administrative staff shall have access to portions of student academic records, relevant to the performance of their duties. This includes access to portions of student academic records by official Faculty of Medicine and MD Program committees, as needed for purposes related to the performance of their duties.

To ensure that access to student academic records is granted on a need-to-know basis, in accordance with FIPPA and the University of Toronto *Guidelines Concerning Access to Official Student Academic Records*, the Vice Dean, MD Program and Director of Enrolment Services and Faculty Registrar are jointly responsible for approving access to student academic records.

Access to medical information in a student's academic record (i.e. relevant to their academic performance which has been furnished at the request or with the consent of the student concerned) shall be granted to members of the MD Program's teaching and administrative staff only with the prior express consent of the student.

Access by Students

Any current student wishing to see his/her academic record as defined above, with the exception of that portion of the record which deals with his/her application for admission to the MD Program, may do so by arranging an appointment with the Faculty Registrar.

A current student has the right to challenge the accuracy of those materials to which he/she has access in his/her academic records and to have his/her student academic record supplemented with comments as long as the sources of such comments are identified and the official student academic record remains within the custody of the Faculty of Medicine. Reference to such comments will not necessarily appear on official academic reports such as the transcript or the grade report.

Access by Others

Access to student academic records by recognized University of Toronto campus organizations and advancement offices is governed by the University of Toronto *Guidelines Concerning Access to Official Student Academic Records*.

By registration, a student gives implicit consent for the following information to be made freely available to all

enquiries: The academic division(s) and the session(s) in which a student is or has been registered, and the degree(s) received and date(s) of convocation.

Any other information contained in the academic record of a student may be released to other persons and agencies only with the student's prior expressed written consent, or on the presentation of a court order, or in accordance with the requirements of professional licensing or certification bodies, or the Ministry of Colleges and Universities for an annual enrolment audit, or otherwise under compulsion of law.

General statistical material drawn from academic records not disclosing the identities of students may be released for research and information purposes by the Faculty of Medicine.

4. Refusal of Access to Student Academic Records

The MD Program reserves the right to withhold access to statements of results, official transcripts, diplomas and/or degree certifications of students, alumni and former students who have outstanding debts or obligations to the University in accordance with the University of Toronto [Policy on Academic Sanctions for Students Who have Outstanding University Obligations](#).

5. Principles Regarding the Use of Student Information by MD Program Leaders

In fulfilling their responsibilities, members of the MD Program leadership and teaching staff as well as Faculty of Medicine administrative staff may have access to portions of student academic records, relevant to the performance of their duties. In order to safeguard information about students and teachers, and prevent it from being used for unauthorized purposes, the MD Program has established the following two principles, consistent with University of Toronto *Guidelines Concerning Access to Official Student Academic Records*.

i. Non-disclosure of personal information

Personal information about individual students must not be disclosed to individuals or groups who do not have the authority to access this data. The only exceptions are when the disclosure is required by official University business, by University policy, or by law. The sharing of individual student grades or assessment results by individuals with other institutions outside of the University of Toronto or with residency selection committees, both verbally or in writing, does *not* constitute official University business, and is therefore strictly prohibited. More specifically, letters of reference or external award nominations written by individual MD Program leaders or teachers for students must not contain grades or assessment results. Letters of reference for use in the CaRMS match must not report course grades or quote clinical assessments. It should be noted that the MD Program routinely issues to CaRMS both official transcripts, which indicate whether credit has been obtained in a particular course, and official Medical School Performance Records (MSPR), which indicate clinical competencies attained on clerkship rotations.

ii. Separation of MD Program leadership roles from other decision-making positions

The MD Program wishes to avoid conflict of roles that could lead to unintentional misuse of sensitive, personal student information. MD Program leaders maybe in a conflict of leadership roles if in addition to their role in the MD Program they also hold other decision-making or advisory positions vis-à-vis MD Program students within the MD Program or external to it.

Examples of conflicts include:

- A. A conflict would arise if a MD Program leader were also:
 - i. a member of a Resident Selection Committee ¹
 - ii. a member of the MD Program Board of Examiners (unless specified ex officio)
 - iii. a member of the Faculty of Medicine Board of Undergraduate Medical Assessors (unless specified

ex officio)

- iv. a member of the Faculty of Medicine Appeals Committee
- v. a member of the Governing Council Academic Appeals Committee

B. Because of the potential for conflict, a person should not be both:

- i. an Academy Director and a course director
- ii. an Associate Dean and a course director

(The preceding are examples only and not a complete list of possible conflicts.)

All potential conflicts must be declared as soon as known to the Vice Dean, MD Program, and also, if pertaining to resident selection, the Associate Dean, PGME², who will determine the appropriate course of action. Every attempt should be made to avoid assuming or continuing in a role that constitutes a conflict of interest as defined above, and the individual in conflict may be required to step down from one of the conflicting positions. In those instances where a conflict cannot be avoided (e.g. in very small residency programs), the individual must declare the conflict of interest to the participants in the relevant process and refrain from disclosing confidential information in contravention of the principles outlined in this document. Those responsible for overseeing resident selection processes (e.g., selection committee chairs) must ensure that potential conflicts are managed appropriately and that inappropriately disclosed information is not included in selection decisions.

¹. Conflicts may also arise if MD Program leaders participate in file review or interviews for resident selection. If in doubt, declare the potential conflict and seek advice from senior leaders in both the MD Program and PGME.

². If the Associate Dean is perceived to have a conflict of roles, this conflict should be discussed with the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, who will determine the course of action to follow.