What is FERPA?

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, known as "FERPA," governs access to student education records maintained by educational institutions, including those of Washington Adventist University. FERPA's purpose is to protect the privacy of students' education records and to ensure that students have access to their own records. Under FERPA, the presumption is that a student's records are private and not available to the public without the consent of the student. Exceptions to FERPA apply in situations where the release of "information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals."

To Whom Does FERPA Apply?

FERPA gives students who reach the age of 18, OR who attend a postsecondary institution (regardless of age), the right to inspect and review their own records. Under FERPA students are given some primary rights:

- Right to Inspect and review their education records
- Right to request the amendment of their education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, or misleading.
- Right to request that the institution not disclose directory information about them
- Right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education.

What Records are Covered by FERPA?

FERPA protects from disclosure "education records," broadly defined to include all records directly related to a student *and* maintained by an educational institution or someone acting on its behalf (*e.g.*, contractors). Records can be in any format, including email messages, other computer records, videos, etc.

However, the definition excludes, among other records:

- Campus law enforcement records (if certain criteria are met);
- Certain notes made by employees for their own personal use;
- Certain employment records;
- Certain medical treatment records; and
- Alumni records containing information obtained after a student's graduation.
- Information obtained through personal observation, which is not considered to be an "education record"

What is Considered Directory Information at WAU?

Directory information may be given to a third party without the written consent of the student. WAU considers the following to be directory information:

- Student name
- Address
- Telephone number
- E-mail address
- Marital Status
- Fields of study
- Month and day of birth
- Dates of attendance
- Degrees and awards received
- Previous educational institution attended
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports