

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy - Guidelines

Issues concerning Student Information

Douglas College abides by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act of British Columbia in its handling of student information provided for the purposes of admission and registration. All students are made aware of the confidentiality of their information at the time of registration. Further provision for ensuring confidentiality is provided at the Departmental level where the student may or may not give other permissions through the **Consent for Release of Information Form**.

Preamble

The cornerstone of the Act concerning the disclosure of personal information is:

The consent of an individual to a public body disclosing any of the individual's personal information under Section 33 (b) of the Act must

- a) be in writing
- b) specify to whom the personal information may be disclosed and how the personal information may be used.

What does this mean?

In practical terms this means that student personal information* is protected and that for example, there should be no public postings of any part of the personal information.

*Personal information includes name, address, telephone number... personal history regarding health, *education*, finances. (This definition of personal information is not exhaustive and there may be other types of information that, alone or in combination, would reveal the identity of a particular individual and therefore would fall under the realm of personal information.)

How can we ensure protection of personal privacy?

The College is the keeper of personal information and can only release information to the owner of that information when the person has been fully identified as the owner, not to parents, guardians, lawyers or other instructors. It should be noted that the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act is not restricted by age, thus a student under the age of 18 years still has control of their personal information. The Director of Learning Resources should be contacted if there is any concern about the release of information.

- a) Discussion of **personal educational information** of students can only take place within the formal setting of Instructional Team Meetings or Instructor/Co-ordinator meetings
- b) Checking of names of students for the purpose, e.g. marks for attendance, is allowable

Point a) and b) falls under the provision of Section 26 and 32 of the Act in the provision of educational course requirements

- Practicum arrangements should not be posted for general viewing where personal information is also recorded unless specific permission has been given through the **Consent for Release of Information Form**.
- Student names or photographs used in College promotional materials or research materials can be used only if specific permission has been given by the student through the **Consent for Release of Information Form** or the **Douglas College Communications and Marketing Office Photo Release Form**
- Anyone involved in Appeals procedures must ensure the protection of privacy of such materials
- When no longer required any documents containing lists of names or other identifying information must be disposed of by shredding.