

FERPA Identity Authentication

FERPA requires institutions to use reasonable methods to identify and authenticate the identity of students, parents, and other parties before disclosing educational records. (34 CFR §99.30-31)

In order to ensure that only appropriate individuals have access to a student’s information, it is best practice to use, at a minimum, two types of personal identifiable information (PII) to authenticate the identity of a student or an approved individual before releasing student information. Social Security numbers are not to be used as PII.

Best Practices for Identity Authentication

In Person	
<p><u>Student Self-Request</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide full name or WCU student ID number 2. Verify student valid photo ID 	<p><u>Third Party Request</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide student’s full name or WCU student ID number 2. Verify third party is listed on student’s FERPA Release Form 3. Verify third party valid photo ID
By Phone	
<p><u>Student Self-Request with WCU Student ID Number</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide full name and WCU student ID number 2. Provide one PII answer (see below) 	<p><u>Third Party Request with WCU Student ID Number</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide student’s full name and WCU Student ID number 2. Provide third party’s full name 3. Verify third party is listed on student’s FERPA Release Form 4. Provide one PII answer (see below)
<p><u>Student Self-Request without WCU Student ID Number</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide full name 2. Provide two PII answers (see below) 	<p><u>Third Party Request without WCU Student ID Number</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide student’s full name 2. Provide third party’s full name 3. Verify third party is listed on student’s FERPA Release Form 4. Provide two PII answers (see below)
By Email	
<p><u>Student Self-Request with WCU Email</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WCU email address serves as first PII 2. Provide WCU student ID number 	<p><u>Third Party Request with Personal Email</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide student’s full name or WCU student ID number 2. Provide third party’s full name 3. Verify third party is listed on student’s FERPA Release Form 4. Provide two PII answers (see below) 5. Email response to student’s WCU email account with the least amount of confidential information as possible
<p><u>Student Self-Request with Personal Email</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide WCU student ID number 2. Provide full name 3. Provide two PII answers (see below) 	
<u>Personal Identifiable Information (PII) Examples</u>	
<p>Identify a course the student took last term.</p> <p>Who is the student’s advisor?</p> <p>Who is the instructor of one of this term’s courses?</p> <p>Identify a course the student is taking this term.</p>	<p>What term did the student enter WCU?</p> <p>What is the student’s academic major?</p> <p>When was the last exam in my course?</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold; text-align: center;">If in doubt, don’t give it out!</p>
<p>A student can consent to allow a third-party access to certain educational records by completing the FERPA Authorization document located in the WCU Student Indigo Portal under administrative services and forms. Third parties cannot receive information without the student’s consent.</p>	
<p>The FERPA Authorization document form must be completed by the student. The document requires the student to upload a picture of their driver’s license or their WCU ID card to confirm their identity and to provide their electronic signature. Other signatures will void the consent.</p>	