

Reference Letters

A task frequently asked of faculty who have advised students is writing reference letters for them. Often this occurs with the student requesting the reference letter orally or via e-mail, hence the student has in a sense given the faculty member consent to provide information in the student's education record to a third party. Also, the faculty member ordinarily is providing information from personal experience of the student's work, which even when it is part of the educational record falls outside of FERPA protection. However, a wise practice is making certain that one has clear consent to provide information from the student's educational record. To do so, one can use a form like the following:

Name: _____

Referee: _____

I have requested that _____ provide a reference to complete my application for employment. Accordingly, I waive my right to privacy under the Family and Education Right to Privacy Act and authorize the referee to provide information from my educational record relevant to my application for employment. Relevant information may include, but is not limited to, information about course(s) I took from the referee, the quality of my work, in the class(es), my participation in the class(es), and the grade(s) I received in the class(es).