

**Northwestern College**  
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Orange, City Iowa 51041

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Guide for  
Letters of Recommendation

**Section: 5.17 Letters of Recommendation**

Statements made by a person making a letter of recommendation that are made from that person's personal observation or knowledge *do not* require a written release from the student who is the subject of the recommendation. However, if personally identifiable information obtained from the student's education record is included in a letter of recommendation (grades, gpa, etc.), the writer is required to obtain a signed release from the student which (1) specifies the records that may be disclosed, (2) states the purpose of the disclosure, and (3) identifies the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure can be made.

If kept on file by the person writing the recommendation, it would be a part of the student's education record and the student has the right to read it unless he or she has waived that right of access

**Section 3.2.2 Student's Waiver of Right to Review Confidential Letters of Recommendation**

Students may waive any or all of their rights to review confidential letters and statements of recommendation under the Act. The right of waiver is subject to the following conditions:

- that institutions do not require waivers.
- that no institutional service or benefit be denied students who fail to supply waivers.
- that the documents to which the students have waived the right to access are used only for the purposes for which they were collected. If used for other purposes, the waivers are void and the documents may be inspected by students.
- that the waivers are in writing and signed by the students. Students may waive their rights to inspect and review either individual documents or classes of documents (e.g., part or all of an admission or job placement file). They may revoke the waiver in writing; however, by revoking it, they do not have the right to inspect and review documents collected while the waiver was in force.