

Acting as a Reference for Students & Alumni

A Resource for Faculty/Staff, Students & Alumni

Faculty and staff may act as a reference for students and alumni seeking employment, housing, volunteering, scholarship and related opportunities, within the following guidelines:

References that do not require a release

References contained to directory information (see Dunwoody's [Student Handbook](#) for detailed information) or personal observations in class or student groups where you can provide a specific example of a time you observed a student doing "X" do not require a release.

- Proficiency with tools, equipment, and technology
- Quality of class projects and/or observance of safety procedures
- Ability to work independently and in teams
- Level of organization and motivation
- Openness to new ideas and perspectives
- Degrees and awards earned (please verify with the Registrar's Office)
- Engagement or leadership in departmental student organizations or service projects

References that require a release

If a record includes information that is considered personal identifiable information (PII) including specific courses, course grades, GPA or specific attendance patterns, a student should complete the Request for a Letter of Recommendation or Verbal Reference.

- Faculty will refrain from providing a reference that includes information which if disclosed, could harm, defame, or cause a student to be viewed as unemployable in any way or be considered an invasion of privacy.
- *Faculty/Staff may not provide a reference for a Student Worker. These requests are completed by HR.*

Students should be aware of their rights of privacy under FERPA (see Dunwoody's [Student Handbook](#) for detailed information). To initiate a reference, a student should provide written permission to the faculty or staff member and list mutually agreed upon topics for conversation. There should be clear discussion between the student and the faculty/staff member about what will be said, how it will be said, and what will not be said. It may be beneficial for you to provide the person providing you with a reference the following:

- ✓ Your resume
- ✓ Specific details about the scholarship or the job description you are applying for
- ✓ A reasonable deadline to respond to your request

Request for a Letter of Recommendation or Verbal Reference

Student name: _____ Program: _____ Date: _____

I request _____ to serve as a reference for me for the following purpose(s):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> scholarship application or award | <input type="checkbox"/> application for employment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> admission to an educational institution | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

How will the reference be delivered (check all that apply):

- Written letter (provide name and mailing or email address)
- Verbal (provide name and phone #)

Name of person, company, agency, etc. that will be receiving this information (includes the student and their delivery method):

Name	Mailing or email address, phone number

Start and end dates of reference period (how long will this agreement be valid?)

What would you like highlighted about yourself?	What don't you want shared?

Both parties agree that the above terms have been fully discussed and understood. Any outstanding questions have been addressed, with the assistance of the Registrar's Office as needed, before signing this form. The original signed form is to be filed by the student at the Registrar's Office in the Pinksa Center. Faculty/staff members and students/alumni may retain a copy for their records.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

General Information & Frequently Asked Questions

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is a federal law protecting the confidentiality of student education records. Dunwoody College faculty and staff may not disclose personally identifiable information from student education records without the student's written consent unless the information is "directory information" as defined in the [Student Handbook](#), which can be disclosed without the student's consent, unless the student has directed that such information not be disclosed by having a FERPA restriction placed on their student record.

AACRAO 2001 FERPA Guide: 5.17 Letters of Recommendation.

Statements made by a person making a 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 is obtained from a 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, the letter of recommendation would be part of the student's education record and the student has the right to read it unless he or she has waived the right of access.

- **Do I need to have a signed release?** If you are going to release any information beyond very generalized statements and what is included in directory information, yes.
- **Can I send the letter of recommendation directly to a graduate school or employer?** Yes, if the student has completed the form indicating that information from student education records can be released directly to the graduate school/employer.
- **Must I still provide a recommendation or reference if a student declines to submit a Request for a Letter of Recommendation or Verbal Reference form?** You may share with the student that you cannot provide a meaningful recommendation, or serve as a reference, if directory information and generalized statements are the only information you are permitted to disclose.
- **What if I am asked for a reference and the student has not signed a release form?** If the student has not signed a Letter of Recommendation or Verbal Reference form, any requests for information about the student, even directory information, can be referred to The Registrar's Office.

For additional information regarding FERPA, please visit Dunwoody's FERPA Information [webpage](#) or Student Handbook [page](#) or the U.S. Department of Education's [website](#).