

# OFFICIAL NOTICES

The statements set forth in this publication are for informational purposes only and should not be construed as the basis of a contract between a student and this institution.

In case of any divergence or conflict with the Bylaws or Policies of the Board of Regents, the official Bylaws and Policies of the Board of Regents shall prevail. This catalog is prepared for the convenience of students and is not to be construed as an official publication of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

While the provisions of this publication will ordinarily be applied as stated, Georgia Highlands College reserves the right to change any provision listed in this catalog, including but not limited to academic requirements for graduation, without actual notice to individual students. Every effort will be made to keep students advised of any such changes. Information on changes will be available in the offices of the Provost and Executive Director of Enrollment Management. **It is especially important that students note that it is their responsibility to keep themselves apprised of current graduation requirements for their particular degree program.**

## Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) helps protect the privacy of student records. The Act provides for the right to seek to amend those records and to limit disclosure of information from the records. The Act applies to all institutions that are recipients of federal funding.

The Office of the Registrar maintains the official academic transcript and a “personal folder” containing official documents of each student. Examples of these documents include applications for admission, immunization records, official transcripts from high school or previous college/university, the results of admissions tests, and copies of official correspondence concerning the admission status and other actions taken with respect to the student’s academic work or study. These records are available only to (1) employees who have a legitimate educational need to access them, (2) other parties that have obtained written permission of the student, or (3) when required by law. Academic transcripts provided by Georgia Highlands College (GHC) contain only information about the student’s academic status, except where disciplinary action is recorded in cases where it may affect the student’s eligibility to register for classes.

FERPA affords student certain rights with respect to their educational records. Students have the right to:

- inspect their official transcript and/or personal folder.<sup>1</sup>
- request an interpretation/explanation of information recorded within these records.
- request an amendment of educational records that are incorrect, misleading, or violate their privacy rights and request a hearing to amend their educational records, if necessary.<sup>2</sup>
- consent to disclosures of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

FERPA permits the disclosure of a student’s educational records without consent to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school

official, as defined in FERPA, is a person employed by the institution in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the institution has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent, or official of the National Student Loan Clearinghouse); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill their professional responsibility.

In certain other circumstances, GHC may disclose education records:

- to comply with a court order or a lawfully issued subpoena.
- to appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency.
- to officials of another school, upon request, in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
- in connection with a student’s request for or receipt of financial aid, as necessary to determine the eligibility, amount, or conditions of the financial aid, or to enforce the terms and conditions of the aid.
- to certain officials of the U.S. Department of Education, the Comptroller General, and/or to state and local educational authorities in connection with certain state or federally supported education programs.
- to accrediting organizations to carry out their respective functions.
- to organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the institution.
- as part of a disciplinary proceeding against a student who is alleged of criminal conduct.

GHC designates the following as public or “directory information”: student name, mailing address, telephone number, major, degree sought, expected date of completion of degree requirements and graduation, degrees and honors awarded, dates of attendance, weight and height (of students participating in athletic programs) and participation in officially recognized activities. Directory information does not include student email address, GPA, grades, citizenship status, race, ethnicity, gender, or federally protected information such as a student’s Social Security number. Students may make request the nondisclosure of their directory information. This request must be made in writing and becomes a permanent part of the student’s record until the student instructs GHC, in writing, to have the request removed.

Students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by GHC to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office where these complaints should be filed is:

### Family Policy Compliance Office

U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20202-4605

The address for the Office of the Registrar is:

### Office of the Registrar

Georgia Highlands College  
3175 Cedartown Hwy  
Rome, GA 30161

## Civil Rights Compliance

Georgia Highlands College is an equal educational opportunity institution and, as such, students are admitted and treated on the basis of merit and performance only without regard to race, sex, color, age, religion, national origin, disability, or veteran status. The College is in compliance with the regulations of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the 1978 Georgia General Assembly Act 807.

## Equal Employment Opportunities

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, political persuasion, disability, or veteran status be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by Georgia Highlands College. This policy ensures fair treatment of all employees and applicants as well as compliance with related laws.

## Drug-Free Workplace Policy

Georgia Highlands College is committed to maintaining a campus community that is drug and alcohol-free. Georgia Highlands College expects all employees to meet appropriate standards of performance, to observe basic rules of good conduct and to follow institutional employment policies and procedures. The adherence to these policies on alcohol and drugs shall be the individual and personal responsibility of each employee of the College. Any employee who violates the policy on alcohol and/or drugs shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination from the College and referral to the proper federal, state, and/or local authorities for prosecution, as appropriate.

## Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment

Georgia Highlands College strives to create and maintain an environment in which people are treated with respect and employees and students can work and learn in a safe environment. Therefore, Georgia Highlands College will not tolerate discrimination or harassment. Through enforcement of this policy and through education, Georgia Highlands College will seek to prevent, correct, and discipline behavior that violates this policy.

This policy applies to all employees and students at all locations regardless of their status or position within the College, and they are expected to comply with it. Any employee or student who violates this policy will be subject to dismissal or other disciplinary action commensurate with the seriousness of the offense.

## Student Employment

Various student employment opportunities are available. The Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act requires the use of the "Federal Work Authorization Program" known as the E-Verify system to electronically verify information on all newly hired employees. The finalist will also be required to submit to a background investigation as required in USG Board of Regents policies and guidelines.

## Limitation on Institutional Liability

If an administrative hearing officer or a court of records determines that publications issued by the College create a contractual or quasi-contractual relationship with any person, the amount of damages recoverable by the parties shall be limited to the amount of consideration

paid by the person for the privilege of admission, enrollment, continued enrollment, or other service rendered by the institution to such person. As used herein, the term publications (without limiting the generality of the normal meaning of the term) shall be deemed to include any and all written forms of other documents issued by the institution concerning applications for admission, enrollment or continued enrollment, waivers of liability, consents to medical treatment, and any and all other written forms, documents, letters, or other materials issued by the College in furtherance of its educational mission.

1

The right to inspect and review the student's education records must be granted by GHC within 45 days after the institution has received a formal, written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. An employee of the Office of the Registrar will make an appointment with the student for the records inspection. If the records are not maintained by the Office of the Registrar, the Registrar shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.

2

Students seeking to request one or more amendments to an educational record must submit a formal, written request to the Office of the Registrar clearly identify the part of the record that may be inaccurate, misleading, or violates their privacy rights and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading or violates their privacy rights. FERPA does not provide a process to challenge qualitative judgments which are correctly recorded. For example, a student may not challenge a grade in a course because they felt a higher grade should have been assigned. If the institution does not to amend record(s) as requested by the student, the Office of the Registrar will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.