

FAQ – Collecting Data via Forms on WCU Websites

Handling of WCU data is governed by University Policy 97 *Data Security and Stewardship* and the associated Data Handling Procedures.

Can I use Google Docs or other cloud/hosted services to create forms and put them on/link them from my website?**

Yes – forms which collect publicly available, non-sensitive data.

This includes publicly available data such as calendar of events or schedules, sports rosters, public articles and phone directories, which can be shared with the general public and which does not need to be protected.

No – forms which collect education records as defined by FERPA* or personal data.

FERPA information includes directory information like student name, address, major, email, and dates of attendance. FERPA also includes other student information like 92# and course information. Personal data includes email address, phone number, and some employee data like ID # and salary information.

Can I use Qualtrics or have Web Services use OU Campus to create forms and put them on my website?

Yes – forms which collect publicly available, non-sensitive data OR education records or personal data, AND the forms email to and from WCU email addresses AND the aggregated form data is stored within these approved systems or on Mercury.

No – forms which collect more sensitive data.

This includes student financial data, medical information, private contributors, attorney/client data, Social Security numbers, credit card info, driver's license numbers, export controlled data, criminal justice information, OR the aggregated form data is stored on a local machine, a web server, or a public cloud service like Google Docs or Dropbox.

Why can I use Qualtrics or OU Campus, but not Google Docs or other public cloud services?

You may use a public cloud service for FERPA records and sensitive data only if Western Carolina University has entered into an agreement with said public cloud service. No such agreement currently exists.

Can I by-pass all the FERPA issues if I only store directory information?

No. While FERPA permits a university to release directory information, WCU does not permit university faculty or staff to independently release directory information. Therefore, you may not store FERPA records, including those FERPA Records that may be considered directory information, with a public cloud service that has not entered into an agreement with WCU.

***FERPA** - Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. <http://www.wcu.edu/academics/campus-academic-resources/registrar-office/records-and-transcripts/ferpa.asp>

****Cloud or Hosted** - An application or data storage service that is not located on campus and is not operated by WCU IT. Some of these are adopted by an end-user (consumer-level) and others are have been adopted by WCU which has a service contract with the provider (enterprise-level).