Tennessee Technological University
Policy No. 110

Access to Public Records

Effective Date: January 1, 2014
Policy No: 110  
Policy Name: Access to Public Records  
Policy Subject: Public Records  
Date Revised: January 1, 2014

I. Purpose

Pursuant to the Tennessee Public Records Act, TCA § 10-7-503(a)(2), “[a]ll records shall, at all times during business hours . . . be open for personal inspection by any citizen of this state, and those in charge of the records shall not refuse such right of inspection to any citizen, unless otherwise provided by state law.” This policy establishes uniform procedures for handling requests for such records.

II. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or whenever circumstances require review, whichever is earlier, by the Office of the University Counsel with recommendations for revision presented to the Administrative Council and University Assembly.

III. Scope

This policy does not apply to a student’s request to see his/her own education records or to an employee’s reasonable requests to see his/her own personnel file.

IV. Definitions

A. “Labor”—the time reasonably necessary to produce the requested records and includes the time spent locating, retrieving, reviewing, redacting, and reproducing the records.

B. “Production cost”—all reasonable costs the institution incurred to produce the public records requested by the requesting party. Production costs include copying costs, labor costs, and delivery costs, as described in this policy.

C. “Public Record”—“all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, microfilms, electronic data processing files and output, films, sound recordings or other material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any governmental agency.” TCA §10-7-503(a)(1)(A).

D. “Public Records Designee” (PRD)—the Associate Vice President for Communication & Marketing or her/his designee who coordinates public records requests and maintains documentation of public records requests, responses, and charges.
E. “Request”—includes both written and verbal requests to review, inspect or copy any documents or electronic records. For the purpose of this policy, “requests” do not include requests by students to review their own education records or reasonable requests by current or former employees to review their own personnel files.

F. “Requesting party”—the person who requests to inspect or copy public records. To have access to public records, a requesting party must be a citizen of the State of Tennessee.

V. Procedures

A. Requests for Public Records

All requests to inspect or for copies of records must be forwarded immediately to the PRD.

B. Responding to Requests for Public Records

The PRD will be responsible for coordinating responses for public records, including communicating with the requesting party. Depending on the circumstances, the PRD will request that the owner or custodian of the record provide the documents to the PRD with redactions as directed by the PRD and to keep accurate records of the labor and production cost associated with making the records available for inspection.

C. Costs

TTU will assess costs in accordance with TBR Policy 4:07:10:00 (Charges for Producing Copies of Public Records) as may be amended from time to time: (https://policies.tbr.edu/policies/charges-producing-copies-public-records)

D. Payment of Costs

The requesting party must provide full payment of production costs before copies of the requested records are delivered or otherwise made available. All payments must be made by a check made out to Tennessee Tech University.

E. Waiver of Costs

1. TTU will waive costs when the requesting party is a federal, state or local government agency.

2. In cases where the cost of the total production, including labor, duplication and delivery, is less than $25.00, the PRD will waive such costs.
3. TTU will waive costs for current or former employees who are requesting copies of their own personnel files.

VI. Interpretation

The University Counsel has the final authority to interpret the terms of this policy.

VII. Citation of authority for policy

Tennessee Code Annotated Section 10-7-503 et seq.; TBR Policy 4:07:10:00 – Charges for Producing Copies of Public Records