
Subpoenas, Summonses, Other Legal Notices, and Notices from Outside Attorneys

From time to time, University employees may receive official legal documents. Examples include:

Subpoenas (requiring the University to produce copies of records in court proceedings)

Summonses/Complaints (notifying the University that a lawsuit has been commenced against it)

Notices from Outside Attorneys (typically seeking information relating to the University or asserting a claim against the University)

These legal notices are sometimes addressed to "Princeton University", "The Trustees of Princeton University" (the University's legal name), or to individually named officials of the University. In some instances, legal notices are received by mail; in other instances, they may be hand-delivered by a "process server" (for example, a representative of the sheriff's office).

Subpoenas and Summonses/Complaints: In general, University employees should not accept a subpoena or summons/complaint that is addressed to another individual or department, unless that individual or department has specifically authorized you to accept it. If you do not have specific authority to accept service of a summons or subpoena addressed to another individual or department, you should tell the process server that you do not have authority to accept service of the document, direct the process server to the Office of the General Counsel (New South Building, 4th Floor), and call 8-2500 to alert us.

If you do receive a subpoena or summons/complaint involving University business, please inform the Office of the General Counsel immediately (preferably the same day). You should also keep a record of the date, time and method (by hand or mail) by which you received the notice.

Notices Sent by Outside Attorneys: These notices typically seek information relating to the University or assert a claim against the University. All dealings with outside attorneys should be conducted through the Office of the General Counsel. If you receive a letter or a call from an outside attorney, please refer it to the Office of the General Counsel.

Law Enforcement Agency Requesting Information About a Member of the University Community

From time to time a federal (e.g. FBI) or local law enforcement agent may arrive at your office and request information about a member of the University community. You should generally refer the agent to the Office of the General Counsel, and call 8-2500 to alert us. One exception is when the agent is seeking information relating to a student as part of a background check for a

government job for which the student has applied, in which case you should engage with the agent as follows:

- Politely ask to examine the agent’s credentials. Satisfy yourself that they are genuine. (You may wish to have the assistance of a co-worker.) Write down the agent’s name and phone number, or copy his or her badge or card.
- Examine and copy the forms the agent should present, in which the person about whom the background check is being conducted consents to Princeton’s production of documents to the agent, or to an interview. Make sure the consent or authorization form clearly identifies the individual, has been recently signed, and otherwise appears to be genuine.
- If all seems to be in order, you may answer the agent’s questions and provide the agent copies of the requested documents (usually a transcript, work history, and the like). Make a note of the documents that you have provided the agent and retain it with the student’s records.

If the agent does not have a signed consent or authorization form, or is seeking information for any purpose other than a background check, direct the agent to the Office of the General Counsel (New South Building, 4th Floor), and call 8-2500 to alert us.

Request for Educational Records

Federal law places restrictions on the release of certain student information consisting of “education records”. Such information may not be released to third parties without the student’s consent, with certain exceptions.

If you receive a request for education records from someone other than the student or a Princeton University employee who needs the information to perform their job, please refer it to the Office of the General Counsel.