

FERPA: What faculty members need to know

It's the Law

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), also known as the Buckley Amendment, was passed by Congress in 1974. It grants four specific rights to a postsecondary student:

- to see the information that the institution is keeping on the student.
- to seek amendment to those records and in certain cases append a statement to the record.
- to consent to disclosure of his/her records.
- to file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office in Washington, D.C.

FERPA applies to all educational agencies or institutions, including Syracuse University, that receive funds under any program administered by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

FERPA governs **what** may be released but does not require that any information be released.

It's Your Responsibility

As a faculty or staff member, you have a legal responsibility under FERPA to protect the confidentiality of student educational records in your possession.

You have access to student information only for legitimate use in the completion of your responsibilities as a university employee. **Need to know is the basic principle.**

Your access to student information, including directory information, is based on your faculty or staff role within the university. You may not release individual information, lists, or files with student information to any third party outside your college or

departmental unit without written consent of the student(s).

Student information stored in electronic format must be secure and available only to those entitled to access that information.

If you're in doubt about appropriate use of or a request for student information, contact the Registrar's Office at 443-3535.

Student Information Types

Student educational records include information directly related to the student and maintained by Syracuse University such as the following:

- personal information (name, etc.)
- enrollment records
- students' exams or papers
- grades
- class schedules
- disciplinary files
- financial aid information
- student employment records

Directory/Public Information and SU Directory Information

"Directory information is . . . information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed." (FERPA Regulations, 34CFR, Part 99.3.)

Directory information is considered public and can be released without the student's written permission. *However, the student may opt to keep this information confidential.*

All third party requests for Directory Information should be directed to the Registrar's Office: (315) 443-2422 or crecords@syr.edu.

Storage media for an educational record may vary and can include one or more of the following:

- document in the registrar's office
- electronic document or e-mail
- computer printout in your office
- class list on your desktop
- computer display screen
- notes taken during an advising session

Directory information at SU printed in the SU Directory

- Name and Current address
- Current telephone number
- SU e-mail address
- Hometown
- College, class/level

Other public information

- Permanent address
- Permanent telephone number
- Dates of attendance at SU
- Full- or part-time status
- Majors/degree programs
- Academic awards and honors
- Syracuse degree(s) and date(s) awarded
- Prior post-secondary institutions attended
- Athletic participation

Information not included in the list above is considered confidential and may not be released. Confidential information includes:

- Social security number
- Student identification number
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Nationality
- Gender
- Grades
- GPA
- Class schedule

Can I post grades?	<p>Faculty are responsible for protecting the identity of students and keeping student grades confidential. Grades or evaluations linked to personal identifiers (names, SUID numbers, or SSNs) may not be publicly disclosed without specific permission from the student. Without student permission grades or evaluations may be posted, whether on office doors or on websites, only by using randomly generated codes or numbers, known only to the faculty member and the individual students. Graded papers, exams, quizzes and other assignments are considered part of the student's education record, and must be returned to the student in a manner designed to maintain confidentiality. (Note that BlackBoard® provides a secure method for providing grade information to individual students.)</p> <p>Notification of grades via email is in violation of FERPA. There is no guarantee of confidentiality on the Internet. The institution may be held responsible if an unauthorized third party gained access, in any manner, to a student's education record through any electronic transmission method.</p>
What are parental rights under FERPA?	<p>FERPA allows parental access to students' educational records if the student requests, in writing, that academic information be released to the parent(s) or if the parent claims the student as a dependent for Federal income tax purposes (proof of dependency status must be submitted to the Registrar's Office). A student who wants to release grades or other personal information to parents may set up third party access accounts(s) through MySlice (https://myslice.syr.edu/), but such authorization does not permit direct release of information by university faculty or staff to parents.</p> <p>Progress in a course, deficiencies in a subject area, scores and grades on papers, exams, etc. are all examples of personally identifiable information that make up part of the student's education record. This information is protected under FERPA and parents may not have access unless the student has provided written authorization that specifically identifies what information may be released.</p>
Do students have the right to view my records?	<p>Students have a right to inspect and review any departmental or college records you maintain on them except for 'sole possession records'. A sole possession record is a record you never share with anyone else and that is maintained solely by you.</p>
Do I need to be concerned about email addresses?	<p>Because students may request that directory information, including their SU email address, be withheld, student email addresses should not be shared, even among students within a class. When sending an email message to multiple students, enter the addresses in the bcc: area so they can't be viewed by others.</p>
For more information . . .	<p>Contact Ann Corbett (443-3535) or Maureen Breed (443-1034) in the Registrar's Office. Additional information about student rights under FERPA is available at: http://registrar.syr.edu/students/ferpa.html</p>

DO NOT!

- use the University ID number of a student in a public posting of grades or any other information.
- link the name of a student with that student's University ID number in any public manner.
- leave graded tests, papers, or other student materials for students to pick up in a stack that requires sorting through the papers of all students.
- circulate a printed class list with student name and University ID number or grades as an attendance roster.
- discuss the progress of any student with anyone other than the student (including parents) without the consent of the student.
- provide anyone with lists or files of students enrolled in your classes for any commercial purpose.
- provide anyone with student schedules or assist anyone other than university employees in finding a student on campus.
- access the records of any student for personal reasons.
- store confidential student information on any computer or data storage device unless that information is required and secure from intrusion or loss.