

FERPA Essentials for Faculty

DOs	DO NOTs
<p>DO refer requests to the Registrar's Office when you are uncertain how to respond.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DO post grades on Banner and Canvas.</p> <p>Do feel comfortable to contact the Registrar's Office for assistance including the parental release for dependent students.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DO shred unneeded confidential documents.</p> <p>DO hide confidential information on computer screens from unauthorized individuals.</p>	<p>DO NOT display student scores or grades publicly in association with names, student ID numbers (even the last 4 digits of the SSN) or other personal Identifiers.</p> <p>DO NOT put exam papers containing student names and grades in publicly accessible places. Students should not have access to the scores and grades of the other students in the class.</p> <p>DO NOT share by phone or e-mail information from student education records, with parents or others outside the institution, including letters of recommendation, without written permission of the student.</p> <p>DO NOT circulate a class Roster and/or Grade Roster since it will have the students' names and student IDs.</p> <p>DO NOT view education records for personal reasons.</p>
<p><i>" When In Doubt, Don't Give Out "</i></p>	

How should I contact students?

CANVAS and student email are protected forms of communication. Even so, use discretion when releasing any information that may be considered personally identifiable information (PII). (A list of PII can be found at the bottom of this document)

If a teacher wants to discuss personally identifiable information, what is the best way to do so?

- If you must discuss personally identifiable information with a student, the best way to do so would be either through a CANVAS direct communication or through a university issued email address.

What should I do if a parent asks for information on a current student?

- In this situation, you should check the student's Flight Plan to see if the student has filled out a FERPA release and who they have listed as having access to that information.
- Information about FERPA waivers for individual students can be found under the "FERPA" tab in Flight Plan.
- Be sure to verify the access code displayed in this section
- When in doubt, contact the student to verify FERPA release information.

I am a college professor and need information about my students on hand while I switch to virtual instruction. Can I take home with me PII from my students' education records?

- Yes - FERPA does not prohibit teachers from taking PII from students' education records home with them as long as the teacher has a legitimate educational interest in the education records, as determined by their educational agency or institution.

- School officials, including teachers, who take education records home are prohibited from further disclosing the PII from the education records, except as otherwise permitted under FERPA; and, should use reasonable methods to protect the education records, and the PII in those records, from further disclosure.

How can I post or discuss grades?

- Since grades can never be directory information, it is inappropriate to post grades in a public setting.
- An instructor may, however, post grades if the grades are posted in such a manner that only the instructor and the individual student can identify the individual and his or her grade.
- Grades should never be posted by any portion of the SSN. Additionally, it is recommended that such a posted list should not be in the same order as the class roster or in alphabetical order.

Due to our transition from holding in-person classes to virtual lessons, is it permissible to record classes and share the recording of the virtual classes to students who are unable to attend?

- Yes - assuming the video recording does not disclose PII from student education records during a virtual classroom lesson or appropriate written consent is obtained if PII from the education record, FERPA would not prohibit the teacher from making a recording of the lesson available to students enrolled in the class.
- The educator should be transparent about it (i.e., every participant should know the session is being recorded).
- The educator should also be transparent about the purpose of the recording (e.g., it will be available so any students who missed the lesson may catch up) and who will be able to access the recording (e.g., if anyone else at the school, such as the principal or a supervisor, can access it).
- The educator should also indicate how long the recording will be maintained before it is deleted.

Can the teacher talk about the class ranking of a recent test to the group by email?

- Rankings that contain any information that could identify a student should never be used.

Is it an issue if parents or other individuals in the home can observe the virtual class?

- FERPA does not relate to physical classroom observations, and the same applies to virtual classrooms.

When may an educator have a one-on-one conversation with a student using web conferencing software?

- Before conducting one-on-one conversations, we recommend that educators review their relevant ethics policies and standards related to communicating with students. Otherwise, educators should use approved methods for communication (e.g., work email address, not a personal one, etc.)
- Answering content-related questions or providing one-on-one help likely does not implicate any privacy laws.
- If the purpose is to discuss information from education records (e.g., discussing issues with grades), extra care should be taken to ensure that the conversation is private (e.g., asking that other individuals in the home not be present).
- As a best practice, teachers may consider holding virtual office hours (i.e., have a specific set of hours where they will be available on the web conference to answer questions and be available to students).
- It is also highly recommended that educators log a record of all one-on-one conversations (e.g., when they started and finished, what was discussed)

What are students' rights under FERPA?

FERPA gives students four basic rights with respect to their education record:

- The right to control disclosure of their education record
- The right to review their education record
- The right to request amendment of inaccurate or misleading portions of their education record
- The right to file a complaint regarding non-compliance of FERPA with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education

The following information is considered personally identifiable information (PII) and should not be released to anyone outside the institution:

- Social Security Number
- Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Academic Standing
- Grades
- Gender
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Nationality

Directory information is not considered harmful if disclosed, and may be released by the college without the student's consent.

What is included in directory information?

- Name, address, telephone number and email
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth

- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Participation in officially-recognized activities
- Degree(s) conferred (including dates)
- Honors and awards received
- Most recent educational institution attended

The link below provides additional information regarding FERPA and online education in response to Covid-19:

<https://ferpasherpa.org/covid19resources/>