FERPA

An introduction to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

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Introduction

- This is an overview of FERPA and is not meant to answer every question you may face.
- Campus policies have been developed to comply with FERPA.
- If you have questions about a situation, contact Deanne Jackson (341-4076 or deannel@mst.edu).
FERPA is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, also known as the Buckley Amendment. Statute: 20 U.S.C. 1232g; Regulations: 34 CFR Part 99. The intent of the Act is to protect the rights of students and to insure the privacy and accuracy of education records. The Act applies to all institutions that are recipients of federal aid administered by the Secretary of Education.
FERPA: What You Need to Know

- Institutions may not disclose information about a student without a student’s written consent (with a few exceptions.)
- You may be the one who is asked for information, so you need to know what, about who, to who, and when information may be released.
Who is protected by FERPA?

Those protected by FERPA are students who are or have been in attendance at the institution, in person or by correspondence, regardless of their age or status in regard to parental dependency. Students who have applied to but have not attended an institution, and deceased students, do not come under FERPA guidelines.
Primary Rights of Students Under FERPA

- The right to inspect and review their education records
- The right to request an amendment to the student’s education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent
Primary Rights of Students Under FERPA (continued)

• The right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education concerning alleged failures
What can I release?

> Directory information may be shared, unless a student has asked that it not be.
Missouri S&T’s Directory Information is (Same for all UM system):

> Name
> Address
> Telephone listing
> Email address
> Major field of study
> Dates of attendance
> Student Level
> Degrees and awards received

> Enrollment status (i.e. full/part time)
> The most recent education agency or institution attended.
> Participation in officially recognized sports
What can I not release?

- Social security number
- Student number
- Race/ethnicity/nationality
- Gender
- Student Class Schedule
- Grades
- Other “personally identifiable” information without written consent.
How can I release non-directory information?

> To release any information, other than directory information, to someone other than the student, the student must have given prior written consent.

> The consent must:
  – Specify the records to be disclosed
  – State the purpose of the disclosure
  – Identify the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made
  – Include a signature and date
When is the student’s consent not required to disclose information?

When the disclosure is:

> to school officials who have a legitimate educational interest;
> to federal, state, and local authorities involving an audit or evaluation of compliance with educational programs;
> to organizations providing financial aid;
> to organizations conducting studies on behalf of educational institutions;
When is the student’s consent not required (continued)?

> to accrediting organizations;
> to parents of a dependent student (upon documentation of dependent status to the Office of the Registrar, based on federal income tax);
> to comply with a judicial order or subpoena;
> in a health or safety emergency;
> releasing directory information;
> releasing the results of a disciplinary hearing to an alleged victim of a crime of violence;
> to a parent of a student under the age of 21 who has violated University regulations pertaining to the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance.
S&T’s policy regarding release of information

> In accordance with S&T’s FERPA policies, you may release directory information if the student has not asked that it be withheld.
What is the penalty of violating FERPA and how would anyone know?

> Students may file complaints with the U.S. Department of Education

> The Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) is authorized by the Secretary of Education to investigate, process, and review complaints and violations under FERPA

> If a complaint is found to be valid, the institution may lose Department of Education funds, for instance federal financial aid.

> Generally this is done only if compliance can not be secured with voluntary means.
FERPA bottom line for you

> Institutions may **not** disclose information about a student **without a student’s written consent** (with few exceptions.)

> You, as a design team chief, could be the one who is asked for information, so you need to know what to release, about whom, to whom and when.

> You need to know how to record requests for release of information

> Most of you will not have access to the data inside PS, however you will have access to data inside new design team database.

> **When in doubt call the Registrar’s Office at 573-341-4181.**
Non-Directory Information Release Form

> If you are asked to share information, a student may sign a release form giving you authority to speak directly with individuals regarding this student's academic record.

> You will need to keep this release form, usually the department secretary has a file, as a record of the release.
Instructors cannot leave homework/tests outside door in pile for students to go through and find their own.

Instructors cannot post scores by number/identifying information for students to see.

When sending a group email with grading or specific academic information, the sender must use the BCC option.

If someone has a FERPA block, you cannot even say that they are a student.
FERPA QUIZ
The Rolla Daily News calls and asks for a list of your Solar Car Team members and their contact information. They also ask if you could provide the students with GPA’s above a 3.5 for an article they are doing about students being a part of a Design Team on campus and also achieving a high GPA.

Can you give them the information?
ANSWER

NO – You cannot give all the information that they are asking.

You can give them the name of the students on the team and their listed contact information, if they do not have a FERPA block, but nothing about their grades or academics.
An employer calls regarding a student on the Concrete Canoe team. He is interested in hiring this student, but would like to speak with them. He asks you for their phone number.

Can you release this?
YES – Phone numbers are part of directory information. You can release a student's phone number listed on the FERPA Panel if they do not have a restriction.
I am sitting in Civ Eng 2200 and the person next to me asks me a question about a student that I reviewed an application for the night before. The information the student is asking about is not directory information, can I release the information?
ANSWER

> NO. The student asking for the information as no educational interest in the student they are asking about.
THANK YOU!

> If you have any questions or concerns please contact Deanne Jackson at 573-341-4181.