

Faculty Guidelines

To avoid violations of FERPA rules, DO NOT:

- ✓ display student scores or grades publicly in association with names, SSNs, WINs (or any portion - e.g. last four digits of WINs) or any other personal identifiers. *
- ✓ put papers, exams, or any other graded student work in publicly accessible places. Students are not to have access to the scores and grades of other students in ways that allow students to be identified.
- ✓ share student education record information, including grades or GPAs with other faculty or staff members unless their official responsibilities identify their "legitimate educational interest" in that information for that student.
- ✓ share information from student education records, including grades or GPAs with parents or others outside the institution, including letters of recommendation, without written permission from the student.

* Faculty may display grades using a system of unique identifiers known only to the student and the instructor as long as these are then posted non-alphabetically.

Information may be disclosed without a student's written consent:

- ✓ To university personnel having legitimate educational interest (e.g. advisors)
- ✓ To accrediting organizations
- ✓ To comply with judicial order or subpoena
- ✓ In a health or safety emergency

Requests to disclose information should always be handled with caution and approached on a case-by-case basis.

What rights do parents have under FERPA?

When a student begins attending a post-secondary institution, regardless of age, FERPA rights transfer from the parents to the student.

As an institution of higher education, WMU supports the rights of students under FERPA to choose to whom they disclose their academic and financial information. To facilitate and encourage dialogue between students and their parents, WMU offers two ways to support this interaction.

WMU now has a system in place which allows a student to give a parent authorized user access to view certain academic and financial aid information through the student information system. Access to this information is restricted to what is available in the system and has been authorized by the student.

In addition, students can choose to sign a waiver allowing a faculty or staff member to discuss their records with parents. In both cases, the choice to grant access is the students' and the student has the right to revoke this access at any time.

What are the penalties for FERPA violations?

The Department of Education Family Policy Compliance Office, located in Washington DC, reviews and investigates complaints of violations of FERPA. Penalties can include the withdrawal of Department of Education funds.

WMU employees may also be subject to other employment actions for violations of FERPA requirements and/or university rules.

Semester or session grades are typically available to students through their GoWMU account within a few hours of the grade submission deadline.

Since access requires the use of the student's Bronco NetID and password, students can view final course grades securely.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Informational
Guidelines for
Western Michigan
University
Faculty and Staff



What does FERPA mean to you?

Please note: These guidelines are not intended to be all inclusive or to be legal advice. Please refer to legal counsel for specific legal guidance regarding FERPA.

Western Michigan University
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What is FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of student education records. The Act gives current and former students the right to inspect and review their education records, the right to seek to amend incorrect education records and to have some control over the disclosure of information from their education records. FERPA applies to all educational institutions that are recipients of federal funding.

Who is protected under FERPA?

Students who are currently enrolled or formerly enrolled regardless of age or status with regard to parental dependency are protected by FERPA.

How does FERPA apply to me as a Western Michigan University employee?

Maintaining the confidentiality of education records is the responsibility of all faculty, staff and student employees with access to student-related data. Knowledge of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is important to ensure that student educational information is released in compliance with FERPA guidelines.

What are Education Records?

According to FERPA an education record, with limited exception, is a record which is maintained by the institution, directly related to the student, and from which a student can be identified. Based on this definition, records from virtually all academic, financial, and administrative offices fall under the FERPA umbrella.

May I release information contained in a student's education record?

Directory information is information the University **may** disclose without the consent of the student. Students do have the right to request that directory information not be disclosed. When a student does request, in writing, that directory information not be disclosed a confidentiality designation is noted on the students' record. It is important to always verify in the student information system that the student does not have a confidentiality flag before releasing any directory information.

Non-directory information can be released if a signed and dated consent is obtained from the student. The consent must specify the records that may be disclosed, state the purpose of disclosure, and identify the party or parties to whom the disclosure may be made. Students may request that the information disclosed be released to them as well.

Information can be shared within the University among appropriate university personnel having legitimate educational interest in the records.

Note: When releasing information, inform parties to whom you release the information that recipients are not permitted to disclose the information to others without the written consent of the student.

**When in doubt, do not
release information!
Please call the
Office of the Registrar
at 387-4300.**

What information is defined as directory information at Western Michigan University?

- ✓ Name
- ✓ Address
- ✓ Telephone Number
- ✓ E-mail Address as assigned by WMU
- ✓ Curriculum and major field of study
- ✓ Dates of attendance
- ✓ Enrollment status (full/part time)
- ✓ Degrees/Awards received
- ✓ Most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student
- ✓ Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- ✓ Weight and height of athletes

What are students' rights under FERPA?

FERPA provides students the right to:

- ✓ Inspect and review their educational records
- ✓ Limit disclosure of information from their records
- ✓ Request the amendment of inaccurate educational records.
- ✓ File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the University to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Students may also bring perceived violations to the attention of the university administration.

for further information go online to
<http://www.wmich.edu/registrar/ferpa/>