



South Carolina State University

FERPA: What Faculty and Staff members need to know *It's Your Responsibility*

1. 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.**
2. Your access to student information, including directory information, is based on your faculty or staff role within the university. You may **not** release lists or files with student information to any third party outside your college or departmental unit.
3. Student educational records (other than directory information) are considered confidential and may not be released without written consent of the student. Student information stored in electronic format must be secure and available only to those entitled to access that information.

FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) was enacted in 1974. It is a set of regulations that applies to those institutions that receive funding from the Department of Education. FERPA was written specifically for students and guarantees them the right to inspect and review their education records, the right to seek to amend education records, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from those education records.

If you're in doubt about a request for a student, you can contact the Registrar's Office at 803-536-7185.

Student Information Types

Student educational records

include information directly related to the student and maintained by SCSU such as the following:

- Personal identifiable information (social security number, etc.)
- Enrollment records
- Student's exam or paper
- Grades
- Class schedules
- Disciplinary files
- Financial aid information
- Student employment records

Directory/Public Information and SCSU 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 released at the discretion of the University.**

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 from an advising session

Directory information includes:

- Student's name
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- The most recent educational institution attended

How does FERPA affect you?

1. If a student has a NO to release of directory information, you may not release any information about that student. We recommend you say, "**I have no information about that individual.**" Please refer to the Registrar's Office concerning the release of directory information on students.
2. Departments may not release non-directory or personally identifiable information about a student to a third party (parents included) without the student's written authorization. You must have the student fill out a Student Information Release Form in the **Registrar's Office** if the student wants you to speak with a third party. The student must sign a new form each time s/he allows you to release non-directory information.

Non Directory Information-Do Not Release Without Written Authorization:

- Campus/BANNER ID Numbers
 - Grades/Exam Scores
 - Grade Point Average
 - Social Security Number
 - Parent Address/Phone
 - Detail of Registration Information (class schedule, building location, etc.)
 - Race, Ethnicity, or Nationality
 - Gender
 - Financial Aid Information
 - Total Credits
 - Number of Credits Enrolled in a Semester
 - Emergency Contact
3. The **public posting of grades** either by the student's name, campus/BANNER number, or social security number without the student's written permission is a violation of FERPA. This includes the posting of grades to a class website and applies to any public posting of grades in hallways and in departmental offices for all students including those taking distance education courses.

If an instructor wants to post grades, then a system (such as "Web for Faculty") needs to be put in place that ensures FERPA requirements are met. The last four digits of the student number may be used. The instructor may also obtain the student's written permission or use code words or randomly assigned numbers that only the instructor and individual student know.

Notification of grades via email is in violation of FERPA. There is no guarantee of confidentiality on the Internet. The institution would be held responsible if an unauthorized third party gained access, in any manner, to a student's education record through any electronic transmission method.

4. The student has a right to inspect and review any departmental or college record you maintain on him/her except for 'sole possession records'. A sole possession record is a

record you never share with anyone else (including faculty & staff) and that is maintained solely by you. Sole possession records are not subject to FERPA if they are not shared with anyone else.

5. Do not allow **Student Workers** to view or release personally identifiable or non-directory information on other students. The release of a student's educational record without the student's consent is a violation of FERPA.
6. Employment records are not education records, unless employment is conditional upon the individual being a student. The records of student workers are education records.

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, photo, or grades as an attendance roster.
- discuss the progress of any student to individuals or parties (including parents) external to the University 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 unless that information is secured

Contact the Registrar's Office at 803-536-7185 if you have any questions.

You may also want to look at the SCSU [FERPA page](#) for further information.