

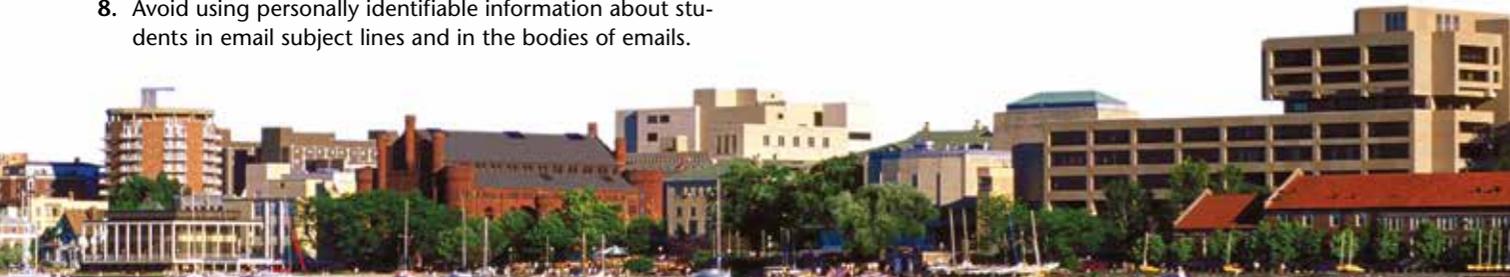
You play a critical role in the confidentiality of your students' educational records.

Please take the following steps to ensure safety and security:

1. Access student records only if you have a legitimate educational interest.
2. Maintain the privacy of all student academic work (paper and electronic) at all times—at work, at home, and in transit.
3. Never allow students to pick up their work by sorting through stacks of graded materials that include classmates' work.
4. Do not use or circulate printed class lists/rosters that include student names, IDs, etc. for attendance purposes.
5. Do not use personal information, including a student's name, ID, and SSN, for the public posting of grades or for any other use.
6. When writing a letter of recommendation, only include private information after receiving permission from the student.
7. Always use blind copies when emailing groups of students.
8. Avoid using personally identifiable information about students in email subject lines and in the bodies of emails.

9. Be careful about sharing private information via wireless technology (cell phones, wireless internet, etc.).
10. Keep only student records needed for the fulfillment of your teaching responsibilities; check with your department for information on record retention and disposal.
11. Advise your students to take caution in the use of websites, electronic communication, and social media. For security advice, visit cio.wisc.edu/security/awareness.
12. Follow UW–Madison guidelines for responsible use of information technology. For details, visit cio.wisc.edu/policies-responsibleuse.aspx.
13. Never share or discuss private or withheld information (including student progress or schedules) with the parents of students. Do not share information with others who do not have a legitimate educational interest.
14. When in doubt, do not release student information; instead, contact the Office of the Registrar at 608-262-3811.

For more information about FERPA and student privacy rights, visit registrar.wisc.edu/student_privacy_rights



Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Is it okay to talk with parents if they call to discuss their student's grades or progress in a course?

Answer: Parents/legal guardians do not have access to student academic information without the student's written consent. We encourage parents to talk with their student about grades, classes, coursework, and other private information. You should not speak with parents without permission from the student.

Question: Can I access any student's academic record?

Answer: Not all faculty and staff have the right to inspect and review the educational records of students. Faculty and staff must have a "legitimate educational interest" within the context of their role.

Question: Where can I learn more about protecting student privacy rights?

Answer: For additional FERPA information, visit registrar.wisc.edu/student_privacy_rights. Follow @UWMad_Registrar on Twitter to stay informed on the latest student record and enrollment updates, including FERPA.

FERPA requires that students be advised of their rights concerning their educational records and the categories of information which the University of Wisconsin–Madison has designated as public or directory information.

It is the policy of UW–Madison to comply fully and fairly with FERPA. Basic university policy concerning compliance with FERPA is contained in this brochure. If you have questions regarding FERPA and student privacy rights, please contact the Office of the Registrar.

Employees who violate FERPA are subject to discipline. The U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office reviews and investigates unresolved complaints of FERPA violations. Penalties for non-compliance can include the withdrawal of Department of Education funds from the university.

Training and Consultation

The Office of the Registrar offers personalized FERPA training sessions for groups interested in learning more about student privacy rights. One-on-one consultation sessions are also available. Call 608-262-3811 or email reginfo@em.wisc.edu to schedule a session.

Questions?

Office of the Registrar
333 East Campus Mall, #10101
Madison, WI 53715-1384

Phone 608-262-3811
Email: reginfo@em.wisc.edu
Web: registrar.wisc.edu/student_privacy_rights



@UWMad_Registrar

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Produced for the Office of the Registrar by University Communications.
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Student Privacy Rights and Responsibilities

A Guide for Faculty and Instructional Staff



WISCONSIN
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

What is FERPA?

FERPA is a federal law that governs the privacy of student educational records, access to those records, and disclosure of information from them.

FERPA provides four specific rights to eligible students:

1. The right to review and inspect their educational records
2. The right to have their educational records amended or corrected
3. The right to control disclosure of certain portions of their educational records
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office

Why should you care?

- As a university official, you are required to comply with FERPA.
- You are building a trust relationship with students. As a member of the university community, you are given access to private information about students. They trust you are using that information in appropriate ways. It is important to honor that trust.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of educational records is the responsibility of all faculty, staff, and student employees with access to student-related data.
- Knowledge of FERPA is important to ensure student educational information is maintained and released in compliance with FERPA guidelines.

What are educational records?

- An educational record is any record in any medium maintained by UW–Madison that is directly related to a student.
- Examples include, but are not limited to, documents with a student's name and ID number, class rosters, grade lists, student employment records, student disciplinary records, and student information displayed on a computer screen.
- An educational record is any information about a student that is shared or stored in an area accessible by others.
- Educational records are stored in the Office of the Registrar and other locations around campus.

What are not educational records?

- Personal notes of UW–Madison faculty and staff
- Medical and counseling records used solely for treatment
- University Police records
- Grades on peer-graded papers before they are collected and recorded by an instructor
- Alumni records
- Financial records of a parent or spouse
- Confidential letters and statements of recommendation for admission, employment, or honorary recognition, which the student has waived the right to inspect and review
- Observable behavior

Directory information (public records)

Public (directory) information is information contained in an educational record of a student that generally would not be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Students have the right to withhold the release of any piece of public information by enacting a FERPA hold. In the absence of a FERPA hold, the following is considered public information:

- Name
- Addresses (home, mailing, and billing)
- Telephone numbers
- Email addresses
- Date of birth
- Major field(s) of study and number of academic credits earned toward degree
- Attendance status (including current year, credit load, and full- or part-time status)
- Dates of attendance (matriculation and withdrawal dates)
- Degrees and awards received (type of degree and date granted)
- Most recent previous educational agency or institution attended
- Participation in officially recognized activities
- Participation in athletics and height and weight of athletes

Non-directory information (private records)

Private (non-directory) information is information contained in an educational record of a student that generally would be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Student information that is considered private must be protected at all times.

Examples of private information include, but are not limited to:

- Social Security Number
- Campus identification number
- Place of birth
- Ethnicity
- Residency status
- Advisor's name
- Academic actions
- Current class schedule and courses completed
- Grades and related information
- Disciplinary actions
- Balance on food account
- Biometric record

Learn@UW and Moodle

Students who participate in a course that uses a learning management system (Learn@UW, Moodle, etc.) may have access to personal information and academic work produced by other students and instructors. Federal law and UW–Madison policy require students and instructors not reveal any information about classmates, course work content, or its authors to anyone outside the course.

Posting grades

It is never acceptable to publicly display student scores or grades (either on paper or electronically) in such a way that they can be associated with the student's name, social security number, ID number or other personal data. Because final grades are available through My UW, you are encouraged to direct your students there whenever possible.

Personal notes about students

Personal notes you make about a student should be stored in a separate file from the student record. Personal notes, if not shared with anyone or accessible by others, are not considered educational records and are not subject to release under FERPA.

Letters of recommendation

Letters of recommendation do not require consent from the student if statements are based on your personal observation or knowledge. If the letter of recommendation is based on non-directory information (private), it is appropriate to obtain written consent from the student prior to producing the letter.

If the letter of recommendation is kept on file in the department, it becomes part of the student's educational record. In addition, the student has the right to read it unless he or she has waived that right to access. Letters kept within the sole possession of the author and not shared with others are not considered educational records.

KEY TERMS

Eligible student: Someone who is currently enrolled for classes at UW–Madison or who has ever been enrolled at UW–Madison. For students new to UW–Madison, FERPA coverage begins on the first day of the first term for which they have enrolled for classes.

Personally identifiable information: Personal characteristics (name, address, SSN, date of birth, student ID number, etc.) that alone or in combination could identify a student with reasonable certainty.

Legitimate educational interest: A university official has "legitimate educational interest" if he or she needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities.

Student Safety and FERPA

While FERPA provides protection to a student's privacy and educational records, it does not bar university officials from sharing critical information about troubled students with appropriate parties.

Instructors who see their students on a regular basis are often the first to observe serious personal problems or troubling behavior. University officials, including faculty and instructional staff, are permitted and encouraged to share information about a student who is or might be considered a risk to him or herself or others.

Changes in a student's behavior could provide warning signs of distress and may include:

- Physical or verbal aggression
- Withdrawn and shy behavior

- Uncontrollable crying
- Bizarre emails
- Talking to oneself
- Disheveled appearance
- Academic performance (drop in grades, not showing up for class, etc.)

Should you become concerned about the welfare or behavior of a student, please contact:

- Dean of Students Office (608-263-5700)
- University Health Services' Counseling and Consultation Services (608-265-5600)

For crisis or immediate threats, call 911.