

## How to protect your own records:

- Know what information you have elected to withhold and/or disclose, and review it regularly.
- Be careful about sharing private information via cell phones and other wireless technology.
- Take caution when using websites, electronic communication, and social media. Do not reveal information that compromises your privacy or the privacy of others.
- Educate yourself about safe computing and protecting your privacy; visit [cio.wisc.edu/security](http://cio.wisc.edu/security) for details.

Visit [registrar.wisc.edu/ferpa\\_tips\\_students.htm](http://registrar.wisc.edu/ferpa_tips_students.htm) for additional tips to safe guard your student records.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Question:** Will my parents have access to my information?

**Answer:** No. 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, balances on food accounts, and other private information. You should never share your NetID and password with your parents or others.

**Question:** Will you be contacting my parents if I get in trouble?

**Answer:** Your parents/legal guardians would likely be contacted if you are transported to the detox unit of a hospital due to the use of alcohol. They may also be contacted in other situations involving an articulable and significant threat to your health and safety or that of others, or if your disciplinary status is such that further violations may result in suspension.

**Question:** Will the university contact me by email or phone to request my personal information?

**Answer:** No. The university will never ask you to reveal your NetID and password or other private information through email, phone, text or other means of communication. If you are unsure whether an email message is legitimate, do not respond to it! Instead, contact the DoIT Help Desk at 608-264-HELP (4357) and ask for advice.

Visit [cio.wisc.edu/security-scams.aspx](http://cio.wisc.edu/security-scams.aspx) for additional information about phishing scams.

**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 your student privacy rights, please contact the Office of the Registrar.

## Questions?

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

Phone: 608-262-3811  
Email: [reginfo@em.wisc.edu](mailto:reginfo@em.wisc.edu)  
Web: [registrar.wisc.edu/student\\_privacy\\_rights](http://registrar.wisc.edu/student_privacy_rights)



@UWMad\_Registrar

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# Protecting Your Student Data

## FERPA Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act



OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR



**WISCONSIN**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

### What is FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that governs the privacy of student educational records, access to those records, and disclosure of information from them.

### As a student, the following primary rights are protected under FERPA:

- Your right to review and inspect your educational records
- Your right to seek to have your educational records amended or corrected
- Your right to control disclosure of certain portions of your educational records
- Your right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office

### 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/or statements of recommendation for admission, employment, or honorary recognition, for which you have waived the right to inspect and review
- Observable behavior

### Reviewing and inspecting your records

Educational records are not stored in a central location on campus. Requests to review your records must be made in writing and presented to the appropriate office. That office will have up to 45 days to honor your request. For most students, educational records are stored in the Office of the Registrar, school or college dean's office, major department, Office of Student Financial Aid, Dean of Students Office, and University Housing.

### Respect the rights of others

UW–Madison expects that you will respect the rights of faculty, staff, and other students as you participate in the educational process. Follow the guidelines below to ensure the privacy of other students:

- When emailing groups of students, always use blind copies.
- Do not post personal information about other students on web-sites or share personal information via email.
- If you participate in a course that uses a learning management

system (Learn@UW, Moodle, etc.) you may have access to personal information and academic work produced by other students and instructors. Examples include class lists, discussion board postings, drafts of papers, and other work produced in the course. Federal law and UW–Madison policy require you must not reveal any information about classmates, course work content, or its authors to anyone outside the course.

### DISCLOSURE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION

#### Directory Information (public records)

UW–Madison, in accordance with FERPA, has designated the following categories of information about individual students as public, or directory, information. This information can be released to any inquirer unless you specifically request that all or part of the following list be withheld:

- Name
- Addresses
- 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)
- Previously attended educational agencies or institutions
- Participation in officially recognized activities
- Participation in athletics and height and weight of athletes

#### Non-Directory Information (private records)

Some examples of private information (considered protected by UW–Madison) 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

Please remember that you share an equal responsibility with the university for protection of your privacy. Be sure to read the section entitled "Protect your own records" in this brochure to learn more about ways to protect your privacy.

### RELEASING YOUR RECORDS

#### Who can request access to your records?

Under FERPA, prior written consent must be obtained before a student's educational records may be disclosed to a third party, with some exceptions. Groups or individuals who are exempt and do not require written permission include the following:

- UW–Madison faculty and staff with a legitimate educational need-to-know
- Entities performing duties on behalf of the university
- Representatives of agencies or organizations from which you have received financial aid, including banks or other lending agencies from which you have guaranteed student loans
- Other schools to which you are transferring or have transferred
- Individuals or groups specifically exempted from the prior consent requirement
- Federal and state officials, organizations conducting studies on behalf of UW–Madison, and accrediting organizations

Examples of when prior written consent is not required for release of your record:

- When there is an articulable and significant threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals
- In response to a lawful subpoena or court order
- When directory information is released, if not restricted by you

If written consent is needed, go to [registrar.wisc.edu](http://registrar.wisc.edu) to find the Third Party Release form that grants a one-time release of educational records to parents, employers, insurance company, etc.

#### Withholding your public records (directory information)

Students can elect to withhold the release of any or all directory information. You can change your disclosure preferences in your Student Center. Select the 'Privacy' tab under Personal Information and then click on the 'FERPA Restriction' tab.

Be aware that withholding directory information through a *FERPA hold* can affect you in unexpected ways (we will not be able to provide degree information to prospective employers, your name will not appear in the commencement brochure, or on the public dean's list, etc.).

You can also place a *third party hold* on your record if you want to receive less junk mail. This is similar to "opting out" of a mailing list and most requestors of contact information honor the student's choice to opt out of receiving third party mailings and solicitations. This option is also located in the 'Privacy' section of your Student Center.