

FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT OR “FERPA”

What is it?

FERPA is a federal law that protects a student’s privacy interest in his or her “education records.” The term “education records” is broadly defined as those records, files, documents, and other materials that (i) contain information directly related to the student; and (ii) are maintained by the university. FERPA generally prohibits the nonconsensual disclosure of student education records, except in specific circumstances.

Why is this important?

FERPA is the cornerstone of all policies that dictate how we can and should communicate and share information about students. It applies to all communication (electronic, verbal) between all types of individuals (students, other employees, parents, others, etc.) when the information being communicated directly identifies students. It has enormous implications and applies to every single record maintained in this University that identifies students. As an employee of the University, you have an affirmative duty to comply with FERPA. Failure to do so puts the University and yourself at risk.

How do you make sure you’re in compliance?

University officials/ student employees should not share any information about a student without that student’s permission except in the following circumstances or as indicated by the individuals identified under “Resources” below:

- University employees may share education records with other University employees who have a legitimate educational interest. A University employee has a “legitimate educational interest” if they need the information to do their job. Employees should ask the requestor to articulate the “legitimate purpose” for which they need the student records. Accordingly, all employees should be able to identify their legitimate purpose when requesting education records.
- University employees may share education records with other individuals in a health or safety emergency. (Refer to your supervisor in a health or safety emergency.)
- University employees may share education records with to other institutions where the student has enrolled or seeks to enroll requesting information on the student. (Refer all requests to the Registrar.)
- In connection with the receipt of student financial aid. (Refer all requests for information to Financial Aid Department.)
- To organizations conducting certain types of studies on behalf of the University. (Refer all requests for information to Attorney General's Office.)
- In compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. (Please send all subpoenas to Attorney General's Office immediately.)

Important Notes:

- The University has a [FERPA website](#) that contains the following information, in addition to other information:
 - Student employee Training Modules
 - FERPA release
 - FERPA Fact Sheet

University Policies that Pertain to this Issue:

- [University FERPA Policy](#)
- [Responding to Requests for University Records](#)
- [Electronic Workstation Use and Security](#)

Resources:

- Denielle Burl, Director of Risk Management, who may be contacted at denielle.burl@uconn.edu or 860.486.2265.
- Office of Attorney General at the University of Connecticut, which may be reached at 860.486.4241.
- [U.S. Department of Education Family Policy Compliance Office home page](#)