

FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

WHAT IS FERPA?

FERPA stands for the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (sometimes called the Buckley Amendment). Passed by Congress in 1974, the act grants four specific rights to the student:

- The right to see the information that the institution is keeping on the student
- The right to seek amendment to those records and in certain cases append a statement to the record
- The right to consent to disclosure of his/her records
- The right to file a complaint with the FERPA Office in Washington D.C.

THE BASIC RULES

- Student education records are considered confidential and may not be released without the written consent of the student.
- As a faculty or staff member, you have a responsibility to protect education records in your possession.
- Some information is considered public (sometimes called “Directory Information”). Under the terms of FERPA, Hamline University has established these items as Directory Information, which may be released to those requesting it, unless the student specifically requests otherwise by completing a “nondisclosure form” with the Registrar.
- You have access to information only for legitimate use in completion of your responsibilities as a university employee. “Need-to-know” is the basic principle.
- If you are ever in doubt, do not release any information until you contact the Office of the Registrar (Undergraduate and Graduate Schools at 651-523-2804 and School of Law at 651-523-2130 or cclish01@hamline.edu). The Office of the Registrar is responsible for student record information.

SPECIAL FERPA “DO’S”

Make sure you protect all education records in your possession. This includes paper documents in your office such as:

- Computer printouts
- Class lists
- Display screen data
- Advising notes

These are practical tools that you need to do your job; however, they should be protected like you would protect a purse or wallet. You should not leave these items out in open areas, but store them out of sight, preferably in a locked cabinet or drawer when not in use.

SPECIAL FERPA “DON'TS”

To avoid violating FERPA rules, **do not at any time:**

- Post grades using any part of a student’s social security number or ID number
- Leave stacked graded papers for students to pick up—not even in sealed envelopes (unless you have students’ permission to do so); instead, try these alternatives (and add information to your syllabus to alert your students)
 - Mail graded papers/exams via campus or U.S. mail in envelopes that students pre-address, pre-stamp, and provide for you
- Circulate a printed class list for attendance purposes if it shows names and social security numbers or IDs
- Allow students to view, read, or record another student's social security number while in your work area
- Discuss student progress with anyone other than the student without the student’s consent (this includes the student’s parents and spouse!)
- Provide anyone with a student's schedule or help anyone other than university employees find a student on campus (Safety & Security will assist—call x2100)

You may find out more about FERPA by visiting the U.S. Department of Education at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

Adapted from “FERPA Tutorial”:

<http://www.hamline.edu/offices/registration-records/faculty-staff/ferpa-tutorial.html>