

What is FERPA?

One of the most significant changes a parent or guardian experiences in sending a student to college is the difference in privacy standards for educational records. Carnegie Mellon values the student's right to privacy.

The university adheres to a federal law called the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act** (also called FERPA or the Buckley Amendment) that sets privacy standards for student educational records and requires institutions to publish a compliance statement, including a statement of related institutional policies.

Our hope is that this brochure will provide parents and guardians the information needed to better understand a student's right to privacy.



Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

FOR PARENTS



Statement of Assurance

Carnegie Mellon University does not discriminate and Carnegie Mellon University is required not to discriminate in admission, employment, or administration of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or other federal, state, or local laws or executive orders.

In addition, Carnegie Mellon University does not discriminate in admission, employment or administration of its programs on the basis of religion, creed, ancestry, belief, age, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity. Carnegie Mellon does not discriminate in violation of federal, state, or local laws or executive orders. However, in the judgment of the Carnegie Mellon Human Relations Commission, the Presidential Executive Order directing the Department of Defense to follow a policy of, "Don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue," excludes openly gay, lesbian and bisexual students from receiving ROTC scholarships or serving in the military. Nevertheless, all ROTC classes at Carnegie Mellon University are available to all students.

Inquiries concerning application of these statements should be directed to the Provost, Carnegie Mellon University, 5000 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, telephone 412-268-6684 or the Vice President for Campus Affairs, Carnegie Mellon University, 5000 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, telephone 412-268-2056.

Carnegie Mellon University publishes an annual campus security report describing the university's security, alcohol and drug, and sexual assault policies and containing statistics about the number and type of crimes committed on the campus during the preceding three years. You can obtain a copy by contacting the Carnegie Mellon Police Department at 412-268-2323. The security report is available through the World Wide Web at www.cmu.edu/police/statistics.htm.

Carnegie Mellon University makes every effort to provide accessible facilities and programs for individuals with disabilities. For accommodations/services please contact the Equal Opportunity Services Office at 412-268-2012.

Obtain general information about Carnegie Mellon University by calling 412-268-2000.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Why do I have limited access to my student's college records?

A. Under FERPA, the access rights that parents and legal guardians had in the elementary and secondary school setting are transferred to students once they attend a post secondary educational institution like Carnegie Mellon **OR** turn 18. Parents can be given access to records if the student grants the parent permission to access his or her records by completing a Consent to Release Student Information form. **This form can be obtained by your student in The HUB.**

Q. What records does FERPA cover?

A. The privacy protection FERPA gives to students is very broad. With limited exceptions, the FERPA regulations give privacy protection to the student's "education records." These are defined as records that are "directly related to a student and are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution." Examples of student records covered by FERPA are grade reports, transcripts, and most disciplinary files. FERPA does not cover counseling or medical records but other policies do.

Q. How can I find out my student's grades?

A. The best approach is to ask your student directly. Parents cannot have access to a student's grades unless they have written consent from the student.

Q. Is there a single release that my son or daughter can sign so I can have access to all of their records or are there separate releases for different offices?

A. Enrollment Services maintains information pertaining to a student's enrollment (registration), official academic record, financial aid and student account information. A form can be filled out by the student allowing the parent(s) to have access to specified items in the student's records.

Q. Will I be notified if my student is placed on academic or disciplinary probation or suspension?

A. No. Information about grades and academic standing is sent directly to students. You can, of course, ask your student to keep you informed about his or her academic performance.

Q. In addition to the student, who has access to the education record?

A. Generally, schools must have written permission from the student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities pursuant to specific state law.

Q. Will I be notified if my son or daughter is hurt or in danger?

A. If we learn of an emergency involving one of our students, we will attempt to notify the student's parents in accordance with our emergency notification policy and procedures. Hospitals and police agencies will also follow their own notification protocols.

Q. Will I be notified if my student is not attending classes?

A. No. Carnegie Mellon does not require faculty to take attendance and does not report it to parents.

Q. Will I be informed if my student is receiving medical treatment or seeing a mental health therapist at the university?

A. No. In addition to FERPA, state laws and professional ethical codes preclude the university from routinely sharing student medical information and counseling records with third parties, including parents, without the student's consent.

Q. I've seen press reports about a new FERPA provision allowing notice to parents when a student violates alcohol or drug laws. What position has Carnegie Mellon taken on this new rule?

A. FERPA regulations authorize - but do not require - disclosure to parents of "the student's violation of any federal, state, or local law, or of any rule or policy of the institution, governing the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance." Carnegie Mellon does not disclose violations to parents, except in health and safety situations.



WHAT IS DIRECTORY INFORMATION?

The only public information available is "**Directory Information.**" This information may be disclosed by the institution for any purpose, without the student's written consent. However, students may choose to restrict disclosure of directory information by contacting Enrollment Services. Directory Information includes:

- Student name
- Local telephone listing
- University post office box number
- University e-mail address
- Academic class level (i.e., senior, junior, sophomore, freshman)
- Enrollment status (i.e., enrolled full-time, half-time, less than half-time, or not enrolled)
- Expected degree(s) and/or degree(s) earned
- Dates of attendance
- Weight, height, and sport of participation for members of athletic teams
- Sorority or fraternity affiliation

Carnegie Mellon students can obtain a Consent to Release Student Information form on The HUB website at www.cmu.edu/hub. By completing this form, the student authorizes designated family members to have access to specific information in their records.

For more information, please contact:

Enrollment Services - The HUB
Carnegie Mellon University
5000 Forbes Avenue
Warner Hall, A19
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Or contact Enrollment Services at 412-268-8186
or by e-mail at thehub@andrew.cmu.edu.
Visit The HUB website at www.cmu.edu/hub.

The U.S. Department of Education also maintains a FERPA website at www.ed.gov/offices/OM/fpco/ferpa/parents.html.