

What is FERPA?

Faculty members are accountable for maintaining the privacy of student information in compliance with university and federal policies. Carnegie Mellon policy complies with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The act guarantees a student's right to access their educational academic record. The law provides guidelines as to third party access and the appropriate security of the records. Students have the right to inspect and review their records, control disclosure (designate confidentiality), and request amendment to their educational record. Secure practice by faculty requires that they maintain, report, and make available information included in the student educational records in compliance with the requirements of FERPA and Carnegie Mellon's policy.



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.

Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

FOR FACULTY



Carnegie Mellon
ENROLLMENT SERVICES



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What are considered “educational records”?

A. Any record that contains personally identifiable information that is directly related to the student is an educational record under FERPA. Such records include written documents (including student advising folders, computer media, microfilm and microfiche, video, audio tapes or CDs, film, or photographs). This is not limited to academic records.

Q. What are NOT considered “educational records”?

A. These records include private notes (“sole possession” notes) of individual staff or faculty NOT kept in student advising folders, campus police records, medical records, and statistical data compilations that contain no mention of personally identifiable information about any specific student. However, some of these records may be protected under other state or federal laws such as doctor/patient privilege.

Q. What information can I share with a student’s parent(s)?

A. When a student attends a university, the student exercises the rights under FERPA. Therefore, without written consent from the student, faculty may not share any educational records with a parent.

Q. How does a student give specific consent for the release of educational records?

A. Students can give specific consent by completing and signing a Consent to Release Student Information form available in The HUB or on The HUB website at www.cmu.edu/hub.

Q. What if a federal investigator asks me for student information?

A. You may not release any student information to anyone without a signed Consent to Release Student Information form from the student. Refer any investigators to Enrollment Services.

Q. What are the sanctions or liability risks for a FERPA violation?

A. FERPA provides for a complaint procedure to the U.S. Department of Education with an ultimate sanction of withholding federal funding. Students may seek to hold the university or individuals liable. Faculty who violate the university’s FERPA policy will be subject to corrective or disciplinary action, depending on the individual circumstances.

Q. With whom can I share information?

A. Faculty may share information with a school official or colleague who has a “legitimate educational interest” in the protected records. Legitimate educational interest includes performing a task that is specified in the official’s position description or contract agreement, related to a student’s education, or related to the discipline of the student; providing a service or benefit relating to the student or student’s family, such as health care, counseling, job placement, or financial aid; or maintaining the safety and security of the campus. Interest does not include simply having a curiosity. Thus, all records of all students are not open to all faculty at the university.

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

DOS AND DON’TS for FACULTY

DO check with Enrollment Services before disclosing any student educational record information to third parties outside the institution.

DO refer all subpoenas or IRS summons or other legal process requests for education records to Enrollment Services.

DO dispose of confidential student information in a secure manner, such as shredding. Student information should only be kept as long as it is valid and useful.

DO keep course records for a minimum of five years after the course ends. Keep only those individual student records necessary for the fulfillment of your teaching or advising responsibilities.

DO NOT display student scores or grades publicly in association with names, student ID numbers, Social Security Numbers, Andrew User IDs, or other personal identifiers. Do not post a copy of your class roster or final grades roster, even with the names removed, but still in alphabetical order. If scores or grades are posted, ask each student to give you a unique number known only to you and that individual student. Sort your list in numerical order. Displaying the list in alphabetical order allows students to infer other students’ identities.

DO NOT put papers, homework sets, exams, lab reports, etc. containing student names and grades in publicly accessible places.

DO NOT share student educational record information, including grades or grade point averages, with other faculty members. This include requests involving employment decisions. Other faculty members must have official responsibilities with a legitimate educational interest.

DO NOT share by phone or correspondence information from the student educational records, including grade point averages or letters of recommendation, with parents or others outside the university without written permission from the student.

DO NOT request information from the educational record custodian without a legitimate educational interest and the appropriate authority to do so.

DO NOT include in a student’s educational records or make available to him/her, or to a third party, information from medical, psychiatric, or psychological reports; records from law enforcement officials on or off the campus; or notes of a professional or staff person which are intended for that individual alone.

DO NOT release directory information on a student without checking with Enrollment Services to see whether the information has been flagged for non-release.

DO NOT put purely personal notes (for example, from a committee meeting recommending students for a particular program) in the student’s file, because those notes will become accessible to the student. Such records can be kept confidential only if they are kept in the sole possession of the maker and are not accessible or revealed to any other person.

STUDENTS CAN OBTAIN A CONSENT TO RELEASE STUDENT INFORMATION FORM ON THE HUB WEBSITE AT WWW.CMU.EDU/HUB. THIS FORM ALLOWS STUDENTS TO AUTHORIZE DESIGNATED FACULTY MEMBERS TO RELEASE ALL OR SOME OF THEIR RECORDS.

Letters of Recommendation

Student educational records, including grades or grade point averages should not be shared by phone or correspondence with parents or others outside the university, including letters of recommendation, without written permission from the student. The student can give permission by obtaining and completing a Consent to Release Student Information form available online at www.cmu.edu/hub/docs.html.

Social Security & Student ID Numbers

The student ID number (usually the student’s SSN) is no longer reported to faculty on class rosters as an aid to identifying students. The student ID number and SSN are not considered public or directory information either by the university or by the definitions included in FERPA. As such, the student ID number (and SSN) may not be released to a third party without written permission from the student. **THIS INCLUDES THE POSTING OF GRADES BY THE STUDENT ID NUMBER.**

If you have questions or concerns pertaining to FERPA rules and regulations, please contact Director of Enrollment Services & University Registrar John Papinchak at jp7p@andrew.cmu.edu or 412-268-7404.

Visit www.cmu.edu/hub/reg/reg_privacy.html for more information. The U.S. Department of Education also maintains a FERPA website at www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html.