

## What is FERPA?

Carnegie Mellon recognizes the importance of protecting the confidentiality of student information while complying fully with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA covers the release and inspection of each student's educational records. Students have several rights under FERPA: The right to inspect and review their education records; the right to exercise some control over the disclosure of information from their education records, in certain circumstances; and the right to seek to amendment of their education records, in certain circumstances. 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 or by calling 412-268-2056.

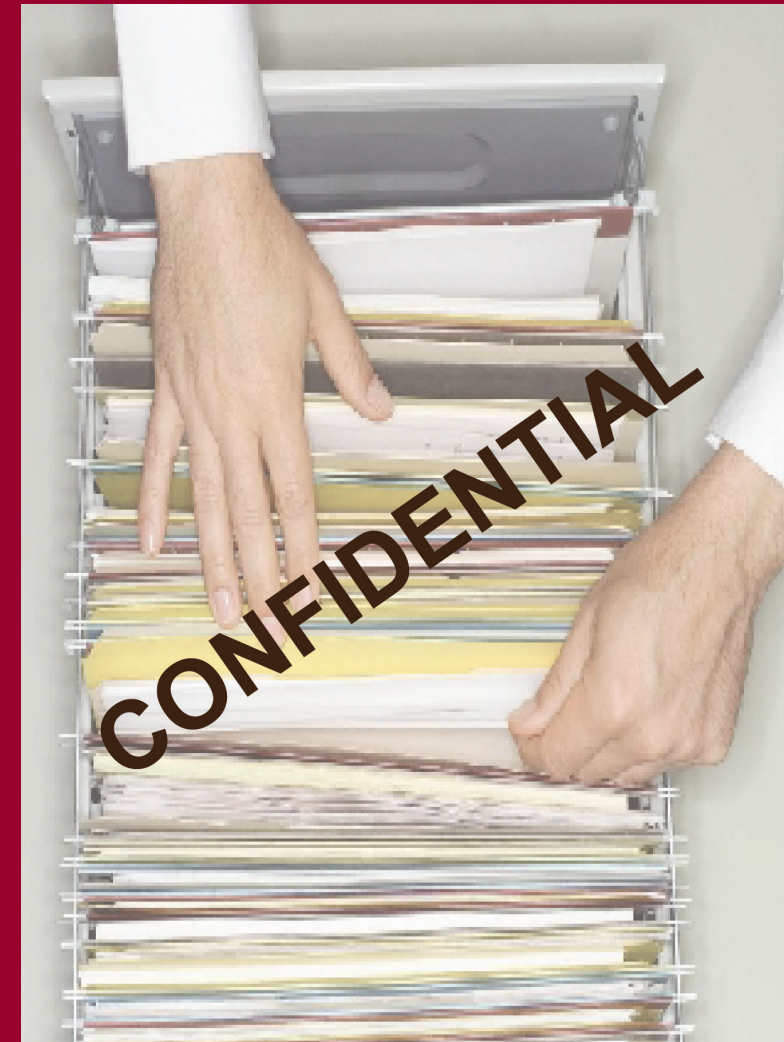
Carnegie Mellon University publishes an annual campus security report describing the university's security, alcohol and drug, and sexual assault policies and containing statistics about the number and type of crimes committed on the campus during the preceding three years. You can obtain a copy by contacting 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](http://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 DEPARTMENTS & STAFF



**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 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 their rights under FERPA. Therefore, without written consent from the student, staff may not share any educational records with a parent.

### 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. Staff who violate the university’s FERPA policy will be subject to corrective or disciplinary action, depending on the individual circumstances.

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

A. You cannot release information to anyone without a signed release form from the student. Refer the investigator to Enrollment Services.

### 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](http://www.cmu.edu/hub).

### Q. Are admission materials covered under FERPA?

A. No. Admission materials are not covered under FERPA until a student enrolls at Carnegie Mellon, which is the first day of class.



### Q. With whom can I share information?

A. You can 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 staff members at the university.

## SOCIAL SECURITY & STUDENT ID NUMBERS

As we continue to ensure student privacy, we need to take particular note that e-mail is not a secure transmission medium. Andrew e-mail is not encrypted and is transmitted as clear text. If someone wants to access our e-mail, they could pick up student data. Therefore, staff should not include student ID numbers or social security numbers in e-mail messages. Also, when working with students at a counter, over the phone, by e-mail, etc., do not ask for their student ID number or SSN. Instead, ask for their first and last names, and locate them in the Student Information System. 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.

## 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 and completing a Request to Restrict Directory Information form. This 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 and/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 DEPARTMENTS & STAFF

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

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

**DO** obtain signed, written permission from the student before sharing educational record information, including grades and grade point averages, with parents or others outside the institution.

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

**DO NOT** release confidential student information to parents unless it is determined that a health or safety emergency exists.

**DO NOT** share by phone or correspondence information from the student’s 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** release a student’s directory information without checking with Enrollment Services to see whether the information has been flagged for non-release.

**DO NOT** leave confidential student information visible on your computer or in any printed format that others can see.

**DO NOT** release student names and addresses for commercial purposes.

**DO NOT** access a student’s records by computer, unless you have a legitimate educational interest or are authorized by the university to do so.

**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.

More information can be found on The HUB website at [www.cmu.edu/hub/reg/reg\\_privacy.html](http://www.cmu.edu/hub/reg/reg_privacy.html).

The U.S. Department of Education also maintains a FERPA website at [www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html).

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](mailto:jp7p@andrew.cmu.edu) or 412-268-7404.

**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 STAFF MEMBERS  
TO RELEASE SPECIFIC INFORMATION  
FROM THEIR RECORD.**