Disclosure of Information from Student Records
Quick Reference

Office of the Registrar
University of California, Santa Barbara
What is your FERPA quotient? Find out by reading the questions and information below. Then compare your responses to the answers on the next page.

1. Final exams are over and you’ve assigned the students’ grades for the quarter. To expedite the disclosure of these grades to your students, you decide to post a list with student ID numbers and grades outside your office. Have you violated any laws by doing this?

2. You’ve just completed grading midterms. Can you distribute them by leaving them in a bin outside your office?

3. You receive a telephone call from a parent of one of your students. “My daughter is majoring in math. I want to know what math courses she took, the grades she received, her overall GPA and her current academic status. Can you please help me?” You have access to the student’s academic records. How would you respond to the parent?

4. Another parent telephones your office in desperation. “I need to contact my son. His sister was seriously injured in an automobile accident. Can you please give me his class schedule?” You have access to the student’s schedule. How would you respond in this instance?

Many University faculty and staff have access to students’ personal and academic records. In fact, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for many to do their work without this information. However, we are not at liberty to disclose just any information from student records to which we have access. The disclosure of information from student education records is governed by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and is intended to protect the student’s right to privacy.

So, you may ask, what are student education records and what can be disclosed to parties other than the student (including parents and spouses)? Student education records maintained by UC or another group acting for UC include, but are not limited to: transcripts (grades), exam papers, test scores, evaluations, financial aid records, and loan collection records. The following are NOT considered student education records:

- Admission records
- Alumni records
- Personnel/Employment records
- Police records
- Psychological/Medical records
- Personal records of instructional, supervisory, and administrative personnel and educational personnel which are (1) kept in the sole possession of the maker of the record, and (2) not accessible or revealed to any other individual.

Student information falls into two general categories:

1. **Directory information**, to which third parties* have access, and
2. **Confidential information**, to which third parties have access ONLY if the student provides written authorization.

*anyone other than you as the record custodian and the student about whom the information pertains.
Directory information, which may be released without the student’s prior consent, is information contained in a student record that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. UCSB has defined the following as directory information:

- Student’s name
- Address (local/permanent/email)
- Telephone number (local/permanent)
- Major field of study
- Class level
- Date and place of birth
- Dates of attendance
- Last school attended
- Number of course units in which enrolled
- Degrees and honors awarded
- Participation in officially recognized organizations
- The name, weight, and height of participants on intercollegiate athletic teams

Everything in a student record that is not included in the aforementioned list of “directory information” is considered confidential. Policies also permit students to have the University treat some or all directory information as confidential, so third party access to the above information may be limited if a student so requests.

1. Under no circumstances should you post a list of student ID numbers and grades without first obtaining written consent from every student on that list. ID numbers and grades are confidential information, and posting such information is a violation of FERPA regulations.

2. No. Exams are considered student records. Thus, you must first obtain the student’s written authorization in order to leave graded exams in a public area.

3. Under no circumstances should you release to inquisitive parents, or any other third party, a student’s course work, grades, GPA, or academic standing. Again, this information is confidential and requires a written authorization to release from the student.

4. In emergency situations, refer the caller to the Office of Student Life at (805) 893-4569 with a description of the nature of the emergency and the need to contact the student. At the discretion of the Office of Student Life and the Office of the Registrar, disclosure of a limited amount of information may be made to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency when the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or other persons.
Disclosure of Information from Student Records

Now that you’re familiar with what can and cannot be disclosed to third parties, what can you disclose to students themselves? You can disclose almost every part of their own student records, including, but not limited to: transcripts, grades, exam papers, test scores, evaluations, financial aid records, and loan collection records. However, students are not allowed access to:

• Financial statement of parents/guardians (unless the parent or guardian has given written authorization).
• Confidential statements and letters of recommendation to which the student has waived access rights, such as letters of recommendation for a grant.
• Records containing information about another student, such as a course roster.
• Personal records relating to individual students (separate from their academic records) that are kept in the sole possession of the maker of the record and not accessible or revealed to any other individual.

Resources

UCSB Office of the Registrar
E-Mail registrar@sa.ucsb.edu
Phone (805) 893-2987

Federal Family Compliance Office
Technical Assistance Family Policy Compliance Office
and Advice U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605
Phone (202) 260-3887
FAX (202) 260-9001