

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as Amended

What is FERPA?

FERPA is the acronym for the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as Amended, sometimes known as the Buckley Amendment. The U.S. department of Education (DOE) oversees compliance with FERPA, investigates any charges that may be lodged against an institution and may, if negligence is determined, deny the institution the right to participate in federal financial aid programs.

FERPA was originally intended to allow students access to their educational records. However, over the years the emphasis has been changed to placing the responsibility on schools NOT to release private information concerning a student. Therefore, only information normally included in a printed student directory is classified as DIRECTORY INFORMATION and may be released to outside parties. Students are given the opportunity to request that even directory information be restricted and not released to outside parties. In those cases, no information may be released.

Each institution has the obligation to establish an internal policy that requires address, phone numbers, and student's daily schedules NOT be disclosed. The FERPA policy may technically allow us to release this information, but Webster University wishes to respect the privacy of the students by not routinely releasing this information.

Why should I care?

Because improper releasing of private information, or restricted information, would give a student the opportunity to file a complaint with the DOE, it is important for all students who may also be employed by Webster University to understand the implications of FERPA. Equally important is the right of the student to expect us to be good guardians of their records.

Student records are housed electronically on a networked computer system, CARS. Therefore, staff working in many offices may have access to student records traditionally housed in the Registrar's Office. So the problems once unique to registrars have now been passed on to all staff! To remind staff of this fact, a screen alerting you to FERPA restrictions will appear when you sign onto the CARS system.

What are the basic do's and don'ts?

If a student requests information about themselves, e.g., a class schedule, grade reports, etc., ask for a picture ID. If you are satisfied that it is the student in question, feel free to release information to them. If it is a student's parent, spouse, significant other, friend, etc., DO NOT RELEASE ANY INFORMATION. If you are uncertain what to do, call the Registrar's Office for instruction. Faculty, advisors, and members of

Webster's staff are considered to have a legitimate educational interest in the student and may be given information. However, they must not be looking at a student's information for personal reasons, e.g., it is their son, their daughter's boyfriend, their parents, etc. Don't be intimidated by a subpoena, a badge, a reporter, or an irate parent. In that case, direct the individual to the Registrar's Office, where the staff of that office will gladly take responsibility to disclose or withhold the information in question.

Agreement to Abide by FERPA Regulations

- I have read and understand the training information about FERPA.
- I understand that while I am working at Webster University I am considered to be a staff member and may view confidential information.
- I understand that at no time, except while completing tasks relevant to my job, will I discuss confidential information about other students.
- I am expected to respect the privacy of all students and will not disclose directory information to persons other than staff members in the pursuit of their assigned tasks.

Social Security Number

Student ID Number

Print Name

Signature

Date