

What rights do students have under FERPA?

- The right to inspect and review their education records within 45 days of the day the university receives a request for access.
- The right to request an amendment to the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the college to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

What is directory information?

Institutions may disclose information on a student without violating FERPA if it has designated that information as "directory information" and the student has not restricted the information. At Purdue University, this includes a student's:

- name
- e-mail address
- address (local and home)
- telephone number (local and home)
- college/school and curriculum
- enrollment status and credit hour load
- dates of attendance
- classification
- receipt or non-receipt of a degree
- academic awards received (dean's list, honors students)
- participation in officially recognized activities
- sports photograph
- position, weight, and height of athletes

What is a Restricted Directory Listing?

A student may choose to restrict the release of his or her directory information by reporting in person to the Office of the Registrar and requesting a restricted directory listing (RDL). Such requests will apply only to subsequent actions of the University and shall remain in place until removed by written request of the student.

What is "Legitimate Educational Interest?"

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

What are education records?

With certain exceptions, an education record is any record from which a student can be personally identified and maintained by the university. A student has the right of access to these records. Education records include any records in whatever medium (handwritten, email, print, magnetic tape, film, diskette, etc.) that are in the possession of any school official. This includes transcripts or other records obtained from a school in which a student was previously enrolled.

While some medical records may also be considered education records, all records maintained by the University containing medical information about a student should be treated confidentially, and only released with written, signed permission from the student.

What is not included in an education record?

- sole possession records or private notes held by school officials that are not accessible or released to other personnel,
- law enforcement or campus security records that are solely for law enforcement purposes and maintained solely by the law enforcement unit,
- records relating to individuals who are employed by the institution (unless contingent upon attendance),
- records relating to treatment provided by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or other recognized professional or paraprofessional and disclosed only to individuals providing treatment,
- records of an institution that contain only information about an individual obtained after that person is no longer a student at that institution, i.e., alumni records.

Parents' Access to Education Records

- When a student reaches the age of 18 or begins attending a postsecondary institution, regardless of age, FERPA rights transfer from the parent to the student.
- Parents may obtain directory information at the discretion of the institution.
- Parents may obtain non-directory information (grades, GPA, etc.) at the discretion of the institution and only after it has been determined that their child is legally their dependent.
- Parents may also obtain non-directory information by obtaining a signed consent from their child. Please refer emergency parent calls to the Office of the Dean of Students.
- Parents may receive information about disability services, but the records pertaining to a particular student's services received are treated the same as other education records.

May I obtain the GPA of a student in order to nominate that student for an award when the nomination form requires the student's GPA?

Unless you have access to student information in your professional role (e.g., as an advisor), and in that role you have the responsibility of considering nominees for awards, you will need to ask the student for a signed statement releasing the information for the stated purpose. With a signed release from the student you may contact the student's advisor or the Office of the Registrar, Records, Registration, and Graduation (765-494-6165), to obtain the student's grade index.

What information may I provide to a scholarship donor requesting enrollment, aid and grade information?

You may release scholarship criteria information to a scholarship donor only if the student has signed a release statement that specifies the information that may be disclosed to the scholarship donor.

Should I have work-study students handling student information?

If work-study students in your area are assigned duties that require the handling of student information, provide training to the student workers on the privacy of student education records. Have each student complete the online training offered by the Office of the Registrar.

How can I confirm the identity of a student over the phone?

The preferred method for confirming identity is the student's personal presentation of a valid Purdue University Identification card, driver's license, or passport (picture ID). Over the phone, a student's identity *may* be verified if you ask a full series of verifying questions: full name; local and home addresses; guardian name and address; date of birth; student identification number; college/school; course load, course numbers, and course titles; and grade received in a particular course. If you have access, go into the student's academic record to ask questions about the student's historical information, if needed. If you have any doubt of a caller's identity as the student, you may ask for a written request from the student. Never release information if you doubt the identity of the caller.

SSNs (Social Security Numbers) may never be disclosed as directory information. The use of SSNs to confirm directory information is strictly prohibited.

Letters of Recommendation

Statements made by a person making a recommendation that are made from that person's personal observation or knowledge do not require a written release from the student who is the subject of the recommendation. However, if personally identifiable information obtained from a student's education record is included in a letter of recommendation (grades, GPA, etc.), the writer is required to obtain a signed release from the student which:

- specifies the records that may be disclosed,
- states the purpose of the disclosure, and
- identifies the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure can be made.

Since the letter of recommendation would be part of the student's education record, the student has the right to read it – unless he/she has waived that right of access. All requests and disclosures from the education records of a student must be recorded indicating the parties who have requested or obtained the information and their legitimate interests in obtaining it. This requirement does not apply to disclosures to a parent of a dependent student, disclosures pursuant to the written consent of the student, disclosures to a school official with a legitimate educational interest, or disclosures of directory information.

Public Posting of Grades

The public posting of grades, either by the student's name, institutional student identification number, or social security number is a violation of FERPA. Using an assigned random number that only the student and instructor know would be an appropriate way to post grades. Even then, the order of posting should not be alphabetic.

More Information

- [Indiana Social Security & Information Breach Law](#)
- [Executive Memorandum C-51](#)
- [Family Policy Compliance Office](#)
- [Final Rule December 9, 2008](#)
- [Student Education Records](#)
- FERPA and education records at Purdue: [Natalie Rausch](#), Office of the Registrar, (765) 494-8219
- Academic records, grades and restricted directory listing: [Office of the Registrar](#), (765) 494-6165
- Data release services: [Information Services](#), Office of the Registrar, (765) 494-6125