

FERPA for Faculty/Staff

Grand Valley State University

Contact the Registrar's office if you have any questions (616) 331-3327

FERPA - Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act requires that the university establish a policy and adopt and enforce procedures to protect the confidentiality, accuracy and privacy of the information it collects on its students. The information collected on students may be viewed by those individuals who have a "business" need to use the data as determined by the University's FERPA Officer; the Responsible Officer at Grand Valley is the Registrar.

Who on campus can access student records?

At Grand Valley, access to student educational records without prior consent of the student is limited to those faculty, administrators and staff who individually or collectively, are acting in the student's educational interest, within the limitations of their need to know.

FERPA Do's and Don'ts – Are you in compliance?

DO - Obtain a written release from a student when using educational record information for a recommendation. For example, if you want to refer to a student's GPA, class standing, or a particular grade in a course in a recommendation, you would need to obtain a written release from the student.

WHY? Because this type of data is considered part of the student's educational record and therefore it is protected under FERPA.

DON'T - Post student grades by name, by student number or in any other personally identifiable manner. Student ID numbers should be used for internal use only and should never be released or posted publicly. Grades are available on the web the morning following the grading deadline. If you use Blackboard and the grade book function the students can all view their grades.

DON'T leave graded papers with student names or student numbers on a table for students to collect themselves. The idea is to prevent students from seeing one another's grades and personal information.

DO lock up file cabinets and secure rooms that are used for storing confidential student files.

DON'T just toss degree audits, transcripts, grades, etc. in the trash barrel. Any piece of paper with personally identifiable information on it needs to be destroyed properly. Shred it!

DON'T ask for students' social security numbers unless required by law. Student ID numbers should be used for internal use only and should never be released or posted publicly.

What are education records?

Handwriting, print, computer, videotape, audiotape, film, microfilm, microfiche or e-mail – of an institution that:

- Contain information directly related to the student and are maintained by an agency or institution or party acting in its behalf.

Education records do not include:

- Private notes in your possession that are not accessible or revealed to any other persons and are not stored in the students record.
- Medical records
- Employment records when employment is not contingent on being a student, provided the record is used only in relation to the individual's employment
- Records created and maintained by a law enforcement unit used only for that purpose, is revealed only to law enforcement agencies of the same jurisdiction, and the enforcement unit does not have access to education records
- Information obtained when a person is no longer a student (i.e., alumni records) and does not relate to the person as a student

Directory Information at Grand Valley State University:

FERPA allows the release of certain pieces of "directory information" without the prior written consent of the student. Each college and university identifies what, if any, information will be considered as "directory information." The student has the legal right to "opt out" of the directory so that **no** information is released to anyone at anytime unless written consent is granted. Our directory information includes the following:

Name, local phone number and email address – this information appears in the PeopleFinder on the Grand Valley home page. The University does NOT print a directory, nor do we release the directory in an electronic or list type format.

Can directory information be released to anyone who requests it?

NO- If the student has requested that directory information be withheld, no information can be released.

YES- If the student has NOT requested that directory information be withheld.

How can a student request that their information be withheld?

Those students who do not desire the release of directory information can request the privacy block in person at the Student Assistance Centers. The form is also available at www.gvsu.edu/registrar by clicking on 'Forms-GVSU' and selecting 'Directory Information Release/Withhold.'

How can a student request that non-directory FERPA protected information be released?

Students can complete the Permission to Release form and submit it at either Student Assistance Center.

Who is responsible for the collection, upkeep and maintenance of student records data?

The Registrar is the official keeper and disseminator of student information. Any and all requests for the use or release of student information must be approved by the Registrar. ***GVSU offices as well as those outside the university must have prior approval.***

If I have a question, to whom shall I speak?

Phone the Registrar's office at (616) 331-3327. You might ask for an Associate Registrar.

(Adapted from Merrimack College)

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