

Faculty Center

FERPA Dos and Don'ts for UMass Employees

FERPA Quick Reference

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is the primary federal law that protects the confidentiality of student records. As an employee who works with student records, you must uphold all applicable federal laws and University policies designed to protect students' privacy. You are responsible for properly handling student information and are accountable for all information you release, even if the release is unintentional.

To avoid violations of the FERPA law, please DO NOT:

- * Post grades using student I.D.s, SSNs, or other personally identifiable data.
- * Link a student's name with his/her student I.D. or SSN in any public manner.
- * Leave graded tests in a stack for students to pick up by sorting through other students' papers.
- * Circulate a printed class list with student names, I.D.s, SSNs, or grades as an attendance roster.
- * Discuss the progress of any student with anyone (including parents) other than the student without the student's consent.
- * Provide anyone with lists of students enrolled in certain classes for any commercial purpose.
- * Provide anyone with student schedules or assist anyone other than eligible University employees in finding a student on campus.
- * Provide any student's address, phone, or email information unless it is your job to do so.

Please ALWAYS DO:

- * Ask for a photo I.D. to confirm the student's identity, when he/she inquires about his/her own files.
- * Respond only to inquiries that you are authorized to field. Refer all other inquiries to an authorized source, even if you have access to the information sought.
- * Password-protect your computer and files in which you store students' records.
- * Use only your assigned SPIRE account and do not share it with other individuals. You are responsible for all actions taken using your account.
- * Keep diskettes and other storage media with student data in a secure or locked location.
- * When you have finished a computer task involving student data, exit all files, sign off all applications, and close all application windows.
- * Shred printed materials that contain sensitive or restricted data when they are no longer needed.

When in doubt, contact the Registrar's Office at 545-0555, or the Dean of Students Office at 545-2684 for guidance. Otherwise, always err on the side of caution and do not release student records to anyone unless you are sure it is okay.

For more information about FERPA, please refer to the [UMass FERPA Tutorial](#) and [Academic Regulations](#).

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