
FERPA

FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, is a federal law that pertains to the release of and access to student educational records. The law, also known as the Buckley Amendment, applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the US Department of Education. Go to <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco> to learn more.

To which information does FERPA apply? FERPA applies to personally identifiable information in educational records. Personally identifiable information includes items such as the student's name, names of family members, addresses, personal identifiers such as social security numbers, and personal characteristics or other information that make the student's identity easily traceable.

Educational records do not include the following:

Sole possession records (those records kept in the sole possession of the maker which are used only as a personal memory aid and are not accessible or reviewed by any other person except a temporary substitute for the maker of the record)

Medical or psychological treatment records that include but are not limited to records maintained by physicians, psychiatrists, and psychologists

Employment records, provided that employment is not contingent upon being a student

Law enforcement records

Records collected about an individual after the individual is no longer a student at UT Austin

To whom does FERPA apply? At UT Austin, FERPA rights apply to a student; a student is a person who is, or has been, in attendance at the institution, regardless of the person's age. FERPA rights begin when the student enrolls; that is, when they have registered and paid and classes have begun.

May I access my child's student records? At the post-secondary level, parents have no inherent right to access or inspect their son's or daughter's educational records. The right of access is limited solely to the student.

May I view my child's grades, exams, or academic progress? Final grades, grades on exams, and other information about academic progress are examples of the confidential information that make up part of a student's educational record. This information is protected under FERPA and parents do not have access to it unless the student has provided express, written authorization.

How does a student submit written authorization? A Plan II student may come to the Plan II office and request an Authorization to Release Student Information form. This authorization form provides express, written authorization for one academic year. Plan II students may elect to submit a new form each year, if they so choose.

What about crisis or emergency situations? If non-directory information is needed to resolve a crisis or emergency situation, an educational institution may release that information if the institution determines that the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

Whom should I contact with questions or concerns? Direct general questions to the Office of Institutional Compliance, the vice president for student affairs, or the registrar, as appropriate. Send comments or suggestions to the registrar's office. More information can also be found at:

<http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/ferpa>