

Berea College

FERPA: Quick Guide for Faculty and Staff

(This document is a supplement to the [FERPA information on the Registrar's webpage](#))

What is FERPA?

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) is a Federal law passed in 1974 that protects the privacy of student education records.

FERPA identifies the rights of students and their families with respect to student educational records kept by institutions. An educational record is any record maintained by the college which is directly related to the student.

What are student rights under FERPA?

- To inspect and review their educational record
- To amend an incorrect record
- To consent to disclosure of their record (with some exceptions)

As a school official within Berea College, you should have access to the student records necessary for you to perform your job. It is your responsibility to protect the confidentiality of all records in your possession (and to destroy them when no longer needed if applicable).

Application of the FERPA law:

- Students cannot be anonymous in the classroom. Even if a student has restricted their directory information, as an instructor, you can still call on the student by name in class and post their name/campus email address on electronic classroom support tool.
- Student grades cannot be posted publicly. This includes leaving personally identifiable graded papers/work unattended. Please place the grade or mark on the last sheet of the assignment when handing back in class.
- Labor students must know about, understand, and adhere to the FERPA law. All labor students should sign

[the FERPA Statement of Understanding.](#)

- You may not release student information to any third party.
- If you are writing a letter of recommendation for a student, it is best to ask the student for their transcript if you need GPA or course history of any type. You may not disclose the student's grades or GPA unless the student has given expressed written consent.
- A student's FERPA rights begin on the date the student begins taking classes. Individuals who apply for admission but who are not admitted have no rights under FERPA. Admitted students are covered by FERPA only after they have enrolled at the institution and have started classes.
- Parents and FERPA.

- Once a student begins taking classes in college, the FERPA rights transfer to the student from their parents.

- Under FERPA, the term "parent" refers to either parent (including custodial and non-custodial, if divorced). You can only discuss progress of a student with parents if the student provides a signed, dated, and written consent. The consent must include the record to be released; the purpose of the disclosure; the parties to whom the information may be disclosed, and it must be signed and dated by the student.

- If you would like to conduct research using student data, please contact the Registrar for guidelines.

What is and what is not an educational record?

Education records include but are not limited to: grades, class rosters, papers, tests, student course schedules and financial records, and emails and notes about students that are not "sole possession" records.

The following are NOT educational records:

- Notes kept on students by a faculty/staff member for their own records or reference that are not shared with others (called "sole possession records").
- Informal peer graded papers and exams prior to the grade being recorded in an instructor's grade book.

What can be released without student permission?

"Directory information" is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if publicly available. Each institution establishes what it considers to be directory information and may release it at its discretion. Student IDs are considered directory information by Berea College. The full list of directory information is available at: <http://catalog.berea.edu/Current/Catalog/About-Academics/FERPA>

Students have the right to restrict all of their directory information from release and are notified of their right to do so each fall.

What can NEVER be "directory information"?

- Social security number, birthdate, race/ethnicity, gender, nationality/citizenship, grades, GPA, financial information, pins/passwords.
- All emails sent with any protected student data must be encrypted. Please see [Berea's email policy concerning FERPA-protected data.](#)



Sources: AACRAO FERPA guide, University of Wisconsin La Crosse, Indiana University Bloomington, Pennsylvania State University