

In general, all student information must be treated as confidential. Even public or “directory” information is subject to restriction on an individual basis. Examples of FERPA violations include:

- Releasing confidential student information (non-directory) to another student, University Organization, or outside entities
- Distributing transcripts of a student’s academic record. Transcript requests must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office
- Leaving reports or computer screens containing confidential student information in view of others or leaving your terminal unattended
- Allowing another person to access student records because you permit him or her to use your computer access code
- Putting paperwork in the trash or recycle bin with student information (i.e., social security number or grades)
- Giving out directory information if the student has submitted the Exclusion of Directory Information Form (or has a privacy warning message displayed on the university’s student information system).

A Special Note to Student Employees

Safeguarding student privacy is a matter of concern to all offices within the University and to all persons who have access to office facilities. Although records relating to students are maintained in many other offices on campus, the Office of the Registrar is the official repository for student academic records, folders and other files. As a student employee, you are placed in a unique position of trust since a major responsibility of offices is the security and confidentiality of student records and files.

Examples of FERPA violations include:

- Making or permitting unauthorized use of any information in the files maintained, stored, or processed by the office in which you are employed. This includes copies of registration and add/drop forms
 - Discussing the contents of any record, report, or academic status with any person
 - Removing any official record or report, or copy thereof, from the office where it is maintained
 - Disclosing information about a student over the phone, directory or non-directory without consulting with your supervisor
- Any knowledge of a violation must be immediately reported to a supervisor.

What happens if the University does not comply with FERPA?

The Department of Education may issue a notice to cease the practice complained of and ultimately could withhold student aid funding. Depending on the type of record and the nature of the disclosure, other penalties could be imposed.

Western Illinois University

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)



Faculty/Staff Brochure

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What is FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's education record and prohibits the University from disclosing information from that record without the written consent of the student.

What is Directory Information?

Under the terms of FERPA, the University is permitted to disclose "Directory Information" without the student's consent. Western Illinois University has established the following as directory information:

- The name of a student who is in attendance or who has been in attendance
- The school and home addresses of a present or former student
- The telephone numbers of a present or former student
- The major field of study of a present or former student
- Dates of attendance
- Full- or Part-time status
- Degrees and awards received
- Honors received (including Dean's List)
- The most recent previous educational agency or institution attended
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams

FERPA permits students to inform WIU that directory information is not to be released. A student may restrict the release of Directory Information by submitting the Exclusion of Directory Information Form to the Office of the Registrar. A copy of this form can be printed from the Registrar's home page at www.wiu.edu/Registrar.

If the student restricts the release of Directory Information, a notation of "P" is placed in the student information system that activates a privacy warning message on the university's student information system. No information can be released on that student without written consent of that student.

To Whom and under what Conditions can the University disclose Non Directory personally identifiable information without the written consent of the student?

- School officials (people employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position) with legitimate educational interests
- A person or company with whom the University has contracted (attorney, auditor, collection agent or other service provider such as the National Student Clearinghouse or Credentials Inc.)
- A person serving on the Board of Trustees
- A student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks
- Officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll

Can Parents have Access to Children's Educational Records?

At the postsecondary level, parents have no inherent right to inspect the education records of their sons or daughters. Western provides students with the ability to give online access to their records through STARS - Parent and Guest Account Management. Otherwise, the university policy requires that parents provide written authorization from their students when they request access to education records. With appropriate documentation the University may disclose education records to parents of students who are claimed as dependents for federal income

tax purposes without the student's written authorization.

Is the Posting of Grades by Faculty permissible under FERPA?

No. The public posting of grades by the student's name or WIU ID number without the student's written permission is a violation of FERPA.

Additional violations include:

- Linking the name of a student with that student's WIU identification number in any public manner, such as requiring SSN on submitted materials
- Leaving graded tests in a stack for students to pick up by sorting through the papers of all students
- Circulating a printed class list with names and social security numbers of grades as an attendance roster
- Discussing the progress of any student with anyone other than the student (including parents) without the written consent of the student
- Providing lists of students enrolled in class to a third party for any commercial purpose
- Providing student schedules or assisting anyone other than University employees in finding a student on campus

Your Responsibilities as a Staff Member

As an employee of Western Illinois University, you may have access to student records. Their confidentiality, use, and release are governed by FERPA. You have a responsibility to protect all education records in your possession. These include records relating to students who have business with your department, any documents from the Registrar's Office, computer printouts in your office, name lists, official course or grade rosters. Your job places you in a position of trust and you are an integral part in ensuring that student information is handled properly.