

Important topics

Posting grades

It is never acceptable to publicly display student grades (either by paper or electronically) in such a way that they can be associated with the student's name, social security number, student ID number, or other personal data. Grades may be posted only if using a unique identifier known only to the student and instructor and should never be posted in alphabetical order.

Letters of recommendation

Written letters of recommendation for a student, including statements based on your personal observation, knowledge, or directory designated information do not require consent from the student. However, letters that include the student's private data (i.e. grades or class rank) require the student's prior written consent. The consent should:

1. Specify the records that may be disclosed
2. State the purpose of the disclosure
3. Identify to whom the disclosure may be made

Key terms

Eligible Student

Someone who is currently attending ATSU or who has ever been in attendance.

New students' coverage begins on the first day they attend classes.

Educational Records Information recorded in any form that is directly related to a student and maintained by the University.

Personally Identifiable Personal characteristics or other information which would make the student's identity easily traceable.

Legitimate Educational Interest A university official has a legitimate educational interest if he or she needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill their professional responsibilities



How to avoid FERPA violations

Prior to releasing directory designated student information, ensure that they do not have a hold on their information. If a student is available in the ATSU online directory, they do not have a FERPA hold on their records. If confirmation is required, the Registrar's Office can verify whether a hold exists.

- Ensure that student information is shredded when no longer needed
- Do not leave confidential information displayed on an unattended computer
- Cover or put away papers that contain confidential information if you are going to step away from your desk
- Student data, whether electronic or hard copy, must be kept secure and available only to those entitled to access the information
- Do not share student educational record information with others unless a legitimate educational interest exists
- Refer requests for student information to the Office of the Registrar.

For additional FERPA information, visit the Office of the Registrar's web page at www.atsu.edu/registrar/ferpa.

ATSU

A.T. STILL
UNIVERSITY



FERPA Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Your need-to-know guide for handling student information

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FERPA guidelines

What you need to know

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is the federal law designed to protect the privacy of educational records and guarantees eligible students the right to:

- Inspect and review education records
- Seek to amend education records
- Consent to disclosure of their records
- File a complaint with the Department of Education

What is an Education Record?

Any record which is maintained by the University, agency, or party acting for the University, from which a student can be personally identified, is an education record. These records can be found in written documents, computer media, video or audio tape, photographs, and electronic files.

Examples of student records

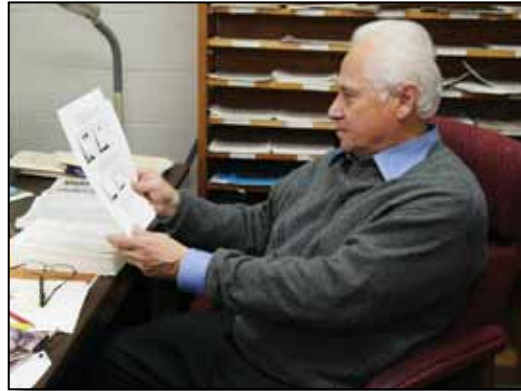
- Student directory
- Students' exams or papers
- Grades
- Schedules
- Electronic file or email
- Photographs

The following *are not* education records

- Sole possession notes
- Law enforcement records
- Employment records
- Alumni records

Why comply with FERPA?

- It's the law (Code of Federal Regulations 34, part 99)
- Failure to comply could result in the withholding of federal funds, including student financial aid
- Students trust that you, as a member of the University community, are using their information in appropriate ways



What is directory information?

Directory information is information that is not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. A student may choose to keep this information confidential by requesting a FERPA hold on any or all directory designated items. ATSU designates the following information to be directory information:

Name, Address, Phone Number, Email, Dates of Attendance, Class, Full/Part Time Status, Spouse's Name, Previous Institutions Attended, Major, Field of Study, Awards, Honors, Degree(s) Conferred (Including Dates), Class Roster/Class Schedule, and Photographs.

Student information not defined as *directory* is private and cannot be released without the written consent of the student. However, certain exceptions are defined under FERPA which permits the release of information without prior consent. For a complete listing of these exceptions, visit the Office of the Registrar's FERPA webpage at: www.atsu.edu/registrar/ferpa.

Legitimate Educational Interest

One exception under FERPA allows the release of information to school officials with a *legitimate educational interest*. A school official is a person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or support staff position, a person, or company with whom the University has contracted, such as an attorney, auditor, etc.

In accordance with FERPA, a school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill their professional responsibility, which includes:

- Performing appropriate tasks that are specified in their position or job description or by a contractual agreement
- Performing a task related to a student's education
- Performing a task related to the discipline of a student



Basic principle

Student educational records (other than directory information) are considered confidential and may not be released without written consent of the student. Student information should always be stored in a secure manner and available only to those entitled to access that information. Your access to student information, including directory information, is based on your faculty or staff role within ATSU.