

FERPA Public Notice to Faculty/Staff

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Annual Faculty and Staff Notice

Maintaining the confidentiality of student records is the responsibility of every college employee. This memorandum serves as annual notification of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) policy.

Basic information from the policy is detailed below. Please become familiar with the information. You may view the entire policy [here](#). View Heidelberg's FERPA policy [here](#).

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (sometimes called the Buckley Amendment) was passed by Congress in 1974. The Act grants four specific rights to a student:

- the right to see the information that the institution is keeping on the student
- the right to seek amendment to those records and in certain cases append a statement to the record
- the right to consent to disclosure of his/her records
- the right to file a complaint with the FERPA Office in Washington

What is a student educational record?

Any information provided about a student for use in the educational process is considered a student educational record. Some examples are: personal information, enrollment records, grades, schedules.

The storage media for information does not matter; all media are considered official. Student educational records may be a document in the registrar's office, a computer printout in your office, a class list on your desktop, a computer display screen, or notes you have taken during an advisement session.

Guidelines

Student educational records are considered confidential and may not be released without the written consent of the student.

As a faculty or staff member you have a responsibility to protect educational records in your possession.

Some information is considered public (sometimes called "Directory Information"). This information can be released without the student's written permission. However, the student may opt to consider this information confidential as well. You have access to information only for legitimate use in completion of your responsibilities as a college employee.

If you are ever in doubt, do not release any information until you contact the Registrar's Office. The Registrar's Office is responsible for student record information.

Letters of Recommendation

Statements made by a person making a recommendation that are made from that person's personal observation or knowledge do not require a written release from the student. However, if personally identifiable information obtained from a student's educational record is included in the letter of recommendation (grades, GPA, etc.), the writer is required to obtain a signed release from the student which (1) specifies the records that may be disclosed, (2) states the purpose of the disclosure, and (3) identifies the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure can be made.

If the person writing the recommendation keeps this letter on file, it would be part of the student's education record and the student has the right to read it unless he or she has waived that right to access.

To avoid violations of FERPA rules, DO NOT:

- use the entire Social Security Number of a student in a public posting of grades
- link the name of a student with that student's social security number in any public manner

- leave graded tests in a stack for students to pick up by sorting through the papers of all students
- circulate a printed class list with student name and social security number or grade information as an attendance roster
- discuss the progress of any student with anyone other than the student (including parents) without the consent of the student
- provide anyone with lists of students enrolled in your classes for any commercial purpose
- provide anyone with a student schedule or assist anyone other than college employees in finding a student on campus
- notify a student of a grade via a postcard
- notify a student of a grade via e-mail.

Questions regarding the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act may be referred to registrar@heidelberg.edu.