

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)

is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of education records. College students must be permitted to inspect their own education records, request amendments of the records that the student believes are inaccurate, and the right to control disclosures of their records. School officials may not disclose personally identifiable information about students, nor permit inspection of their records without written permission unless such action is covered by certain exceptions.

One of those exceptions permitted by FERPA is the release of directory information to parties outside the institution. Directory information is defined as information which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. The university considers the following to be directory information:

- Name
- Local and home address
- CWU email address
- Telephone number
- Class ranking (FR, SO, JR, SR, PB, Grad)
- Majors, degrees, and certificates awarded
- Honors, awards, activities and affiliations

Students may withhold directory information by going into MyCWU user preferences and editing their FERPA/directory restrictions. A confidentiality flag will indicate for CWU not to release any information, thus, any future requests for such information from non-institutional persons or organizations will be refused.

In most instances all other student educational record information may not be released without written consent of the student, other than to school officials with a need to know. This includes but is not limited to:

- Grades
- Ethnicity
- Academic progress
- Social Security Numbers
- Student ID number
- Student Classes

FERPA for Faculty

There are some issues that faculty need to be aware of in dealing with student education record information. Confidential record information can only be given directly to the student or someone they have authorized, which must be documented. The following are some do's and don'ts to help you comply with the law.

- Don't put homework or tests in an open area or common box or file cabinet for students to sort through to find their work.
- Do have a department assistant or other employee keep the homework or tests, and have the students show picture ID to get their graded work returned. OR have students sign a release form telling you they want their graded work returned to them in a common box. Use a common box only for those students who have signed a release.
- Don't post grades in public locations by any part of a student's ID number or name.
- Do assign a random number to a student for your class that only they know, and use a random order to the list, if you want to post grades outside your door.
- Don't release confidential information to parents or spouse about a student and their work unless the student has given them a signed release verified by the Office of Student Success.

What must be in a written release?

- Specify the records to be released.
- State the purpose of the disclosure.
- Identify the party or parties to whom the disclosure may be made.
- Signed and dated by the student.

For more information:

Office of the Registrar | 509-963-3001



Office of the Registrar