FERPA FAST FACTS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was passed in 1974 by Congress to require educational institutions to:
- Provide students access to their educational records.
- Allow students to correct inaccurate or misleading information in these records.
- Limit the release of information to third parties.

EDUCATION RECORDS ARE:

Education records are All records that directly relate to a student and are maintained by an institution. These records can be in any media form: handwritten, print, type, film, electronic, microfiche, etc.

EDUCATION RECORDS ARE NOT:

Personal notes – kept by a faculty/staff member, if kept in the sole possession of the one who made the record. Personal Notes taken in conjunction with any other person are not sole possession notes. Sharing personal notes with another person or placing them in an area where others can view them makes them "educational records."

DIRECTORY INFO

Under certain conditions, the University may disclose any of the "directory information" items listed below without prior written consent, unless the student has submitted a written request to the Registrar's office not to release directory information pertaining to them. When accessing a student's record in Banner, if the student has requested non-disclosure, you will see a warning "Information about this person is confidential" before you enter the student's record. <u>Directory information is the following</u>:

- Student's name
- Student's address (electronic mail, home and campus addresses) when the release is related to a Tennessee Tech activity, including, but not limited to, a student organization or alumni affairs activity, or for law enforcement purposes
- Enrollment status - (undergraduate, graduate, full or part-time), including progress towards degree (grade level); degrees, honors, and awards received
- Hometown or city at the time the application for admission was filed by the student
- Major or field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level - (progress towards degree)
- Most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student.
- Participation in officially recognized activities or sports
- Weight and Height of athletic team members
- Photographs or video when related to a Tennessee Tech activity
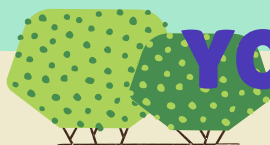
YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

You are responsible for controlling access and protecting the student records you possess:

- Always be conscious and aware of others who may be able to overhear your conversation or see your computer screen.
- Do not provide anyone with student information, including schedules.
- Keep confidential paper in file cabinets and shred rather than trash.
- Keep your Banner password secure and Banner screens hidden from unauthorized individuals.
- Final grades are always posted in Eagle Online - there should be NO need to post them elsewhere.
- If you post exam or assignment grades throughout the term, use a system that ensures that FERPA requirements are met, such as D2L or using code words or randomly assigned numbers that only the instructor and individual student know.
- Students at TTU are assigned a T # for identification purposes. Never ask for or use a SSN under any circumstances.
- Don't leave graded assignments together in a public place for students to pick up (and see the grades of others).
- Be sensitive to student privacy—don't inadvertently display confidential information on distributed class materials.
- Don't volunteer confidential information in letters of recommendation (get specific written request from student).
- Get signed confidentiality statements from staff, faculty, graduate assistants, and student workers who work with student educational records.

<u>Do not discuss student information with those who are not school officials with a legitimate educational interest.</u>

CONTACT THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

Let us know your feedback or questions!
Visit www.tntech.edu/records
email us at registrar@tntech.edu

Registrar: Brandi M. Fletcher | bmfletcher@tntech.edu | 931.372.3419

POSTING GRADES

Grades can never be directory information; therefore, it is inappropriate to post grades in a public setting. An instructor may post grades if the grades are posted in such a manner that only the instructor and the individual student can identify the individual and his or her grade. Any portion of the SSN should never be used to post grades. Additionally, it is recommended that such a posted list should not be in the same order as the class roster or in alphabetical order.

WEB–BASED TOOLS TO SUPPORT CLASSES

Whether students are on campus attending class in a traditional classroom or halfway around the world taking courses via the Web, students have the same FERPA rights and are to be accorded equal treatment under the law. Only directory information can be made available to the general public and other class members. Courses supported by class Web sites and/or discussion groups must take extra precautions against inadvertent release of non-directory student information; Web-based tools employ a security layer so that only class members and instructors can access appropriate information.

CONFIDENTIALITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Students cannot choose to be anonymous in the classroom setting. If a student has chosen "no release" for his or her directory information, that does not mean that an instructor cannot call on him or her by name in class or that the student's email address cannot be displayed on an electronic classroom support tool such as a discussion board, blog, or chat feature.
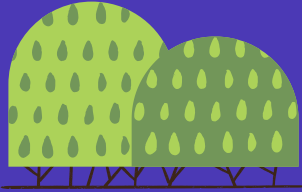
LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

If non-directory information is included in a letter of recommendation, you must have a signed consent from the student. The signed consent should include the following: 1) Who has permission to write the letter, 2) Where the letter should be sent, and 3) What non-directory information should be included.

UNDERSTAND "NEED–TO–KNOW"

According to FERPA, a faculty member, staff member, or school official has a legitimate educational interest in accessing or reviewing a student's educational records without the student's written consent if, and only if, he or she needs to:
-review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
·Perform an administrative task outlined in person's official job duties.
·Perform a supervisory or instructional task directly related to the student's education.
·Perform a service or benefit for the student such as health care, job placement, financial aid, etc., from which the identity thief obtains the victims' information.
When in doubt, contact the Registrar's Office.

RECORD DISPOSAL

Records containing Social Security Numbers or grades should be shredded, not just thrown in the garbage or placed in an unsecured recycling bin.

FINAL HELPFUL HINTS

·When in doubt – don't give it out.
·Refer requests for student academic information to the Office of the Registrar.
·Information about a student can be released with a signed consent from the student.
·Information on a computer should be treated with the same confidentiality as a paper copy.
·Curiosity is not a valid reason to view student information.
·Records should only be accessed in the context of official business.

Please do not:
·Use the SSN/Student ID number to post grades.
·Leave graded tests in a stack for students to sort through.
·Circulate a printed class list with the Student Name and SSN/Student ID.
·Provide anyone with student schedules.
·Provide anyone with lists of students enrolled in your classes.
·Include confidential information (i.e. grades, GPA, number of credit hours) in a recommendation letter without the written consent of the student.
·Leave confidential information displayed on an unattended computer.
·Leave papers lying around that contain confidential information if you are going to step away from your desk.

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