



# FERPA 101

## Introduction to FERPA for Faculty & Staff

# Welcome to FERPA 101

This tutorial provides a basic introduction to FERPA. FERPA 101 is intended for **FACULTY** and **STAFF** whose job responsibilities normally involve accessing student data.

# What is FERPA?

Also known as the "Buckley Amendment," FERPA is a federal law enacted in 1974 which enables students certain rights with respect to their education records. Specifically, it enables students the right to:

# What is FERPA?

- Inspect and review their education records.
- Request the amendment of inaccurate or misleading records.
- Consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in their education record.
- File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by VIU to comply with this law.

# What is FERPA?

Virginia International University strives to fully comply with this law by protecting the privacy of student records and judiciously evaluating requests for release of information from those records. FERPA authorizes the release of "Directory Information" without the student's prior consent under certain conditions which are set forth in the Act.

# Who is protected under FERPA?

FERPA protects the education records of **any student** that has ever enrolled at Virginia International University.

# Q) Whose record is confidential and protected by FERPA?

- a) A current VIU student
- b) An alum who got a VIU degree in 1999
- c) A VIU employee who took a non-credit class at VIU two years ago.
- d) A prospect student who has applied to a Master's program, but has never taken classes at VIU.

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- d) A prospect student who has applied to a Master's program, but has never taken classes at VIU. *No*

# What is "Directory Information"?

Information contained in the education records of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

# What is "Directory Information"?

- Student's full name
- Mailing address and telephone number
- Permanent address and telephone number
- Date and place of birth
- Participation in officially recognized activities
- Dates of attendance.

# What is "Directory Information"?

- Class Level and Academic major/minor
- Fact that the student is or has been enrolled
- Degrees, honors, certificates awarded
- Cumulative credit hours
- Full-time, half-time or less than half-time enrollment status

# What does FERPA require us to do?

## Keep student records confidential:

- Only school officials with legitimate educational interest have access to students' education records.
- School Officials do not disclose information without students' written permission, except under certain conditions.
- Allow students to inspect, and when incorrect, to amend their education records.

# Who is a school official?

VIU defines a school official as a person employed by the university including a full time or adjunct professor/instructor, an administrator, clerical staff, a member of the board of trustees or a member of committees and disciplinary boards, or a student who is enrolled at the university and working on campus as a student staff or serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary committee, with legitimate educational interests.

Q) Which of the following is a school official?

- a) A student worker in the Library
- b) The sibling of a student
- c) A VIU Admissions Officer
- d) The president of the university
- e) A faculty member
- f) The cashier at the nearest supplies store

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# What is a “legitimate educational interest”?

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility.

e.g., performing a task that is specified in his or her position description or contract; conducting a task related to a student’s education or to student discipline; providing a service or benefit related to the student or student’s family; maintaining safety and security on campus.

Q) Which of the following is considered a legitimate educational interest?

- a) A staff member hears that a student is ill and wants to mail her a card. He looks up her address in the student information system.
- b) A professor emails the Dean of the School of Business with concerns to a student's grades.
- c) The Student Services Office wants contact information so that they can announce a special event to students.
- d) A student staff contacts the registrar's office to request attendance information for a classmate.

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# What are Education records?

Directly related to a student and maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution.

- a) Handwriting
- b) Print
- c) Computer media (eg. Electronic databases, associated password(s)).

# Q) Which of the following are Education records?

- a) Email about a student's attendance record from an academic advisor to the DSO department.
- b) A student's schedule displayed on a computer list
- c) A class list.
- d) A student's final exams grades
- e) Schedule of Courses for the coming semester
- f) A student's email address, which he wrote down and handed to classmates

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# What are your Responsibilities?

- Protect all transactions that occur under your username and password.
- Deny any request for data that you feel is not legitimate
- Verify if a student has placed a restriction on his/her record when responding to an inquiry.
- Protect identity of students and keep student grades confidential.

# What to respond when a student has placed a directory restriction?

“ I’m sorry, I have no information for a person (or individual) by that name”

The use of the term “student” in a response is not permitted under FERPA regulations.

You may not indicate that the person has restricted the release of his/her information.



The Registrar's Office at Virginia International University requires Faculty and Staff to complete this basic training. If you have any questions about your access to student records, please ask the Registrar's Office.