



**OHIO**  
UNIVERSITY

Guide to the  
**Family  
Educational  
Rights and  
Privacy Act  
of 1974**



## **The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended (FERPA)**

This act governs the release of and access to education records maintained by Ohio University. This publication is designed to help you better understand FERPA and the rights of students and parents with respect to students' education records.

### **What are education records?**

An education record is any record, in any form, that is directly related to a student by way of personally identifiable information and is maintained by Ohio University or an agent acting on behalf of Ohio University.

Some types of information are not considered education records and are not protected by FERPA (although the information may be protected by other state and/or federal laws). These types of information not protected by FERPA include:

- Ohio University Police Department records.
- employment records, except for those whose employment at Ohio University is tied to their status as a student.
- notes made by and remaining in the sole possession of the maker.
- Ohio University medical and psychological records used only in connection with the provision of treatment of the student.
- Ohio University alumni records.

### **Student rights under FERPA**

Each student has the right to:

1. Inspect and review his/her education records, except:
  - those records containing information about other students.
  - financial records of parents/guardians.
  - confidential letters of recommendation with access rights waived.
2. Amend a record that is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's rights of privacy.
3. Consent prior to disclosure of education records, except that consent is not required for the University to release education records:
  - that are institutionally defined as "directory information."
  - to an employee/agent of the institution with a legitimate educational interest (i.e., a University employee who needs access to education records in order to perform his/her job).
  - to another institution where the student seeks or intends to enroll.
  - to the U.S. Department of Education.
  - to parents/guardians of IRS-defined dependent students.
  - to federal/state officials in conjunction with legislative requirements.
  - to address a health/safety emergency.
  - to persons or organizations providing financial aid to students or making financial aid decisions.
  - to comply with a lawfully ordered subpoena or judicial order.

4. File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office.

### **What is directory information?**

FERPA requires institutions to define what it considers to be directory information and permits release of that information to third parties without consent from the student. Ohio University defines directory information as the following:

- name, addresses, telephone number, e-mail address.
- major academic program(s), dates of enrollment and current enrollment status, degrees and awards, standing and degree level, primary advisor, expected graduation date, current college and campus.
- participation in officially recognized activities and sports with weight and height of athletic team members.
- previous institution attended, a.k.a. name(s), residency and admission status, record hold(s), deceased status, and directory release status.

**NOTE:** Ohio University will never release to third parties the following information without the student's written consent: Social Security or student personal identification (PID) numbers, race, gender, grades, schedule, grade point average, citizenship, or religious preference.

### **May parents access their son's/daughter's education records without written consent?**

Students may give their parent(s) or guardian(s) permission to access their records or grades by providing a signed and dated request to the department at Ohio University that maintains that particular record.

A parent or guardian may request access to his/her student's records or grades without student consent if he or she claims the student as a dependent according to the IRS tax code. In that case, please contact the Office of the University Registrar at 740.593.4199 or [registrar@ohio.edu](mailto:registrar@ohio.edu) to request the proper form.

### **How can I find out about my student's grades and/or academic probation status?**

Information about grades and academic standing is given directly to students. Most parents find out this information by asking their student. Doing so fosters a trust and a sense of mutual respect and responsibility. You may, of course, ask your student to keep you routinely informed of his/her progress.

### **I had easy access to my child's school records before. Why don't I have the same access to records kept by Ohio University?**

Under FERPA, once a student has turned 18 or is attending any post-secondary educational institution, the access rights that parents and legal guardians had in the elementary and secondary school setting change.

### **What if my student violates Ohio University policy or other state/federal laws? Will I be notified?**

As permitted by FERPA, when first-year students who are under the age of 21 are found responsible either for a second Code B or an initial Code A alcohol or other drug offense of the Student Code of Conduct, University Judiciaries will routinely notify students' parents/guardians in writing. Notification will only detail the fact that the student was found responsible for the offense(s). Parents/guardians interested in specific information concerning their student's judicial case are encouraged to discuss the case with their student. Please see this Web site for more details:  
[www.ohio.edu/judiciaries/parental.cfm](http://www.ohio.edu/judiciaries/parental.cfm).

### **What if I want to file a complaint?**

Students who believe Ohio University has failed to comply with FERPA requirements have the right to file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education. Contact information is listed below.

#### **Family Policy Compliance Office**

U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue SW  
Washington DC 20202-5901  
[www.ed.gov/offices/om/fpco/](http://www.ed.gov/offices/om/fpco/)

For more information please contact:



**OHIO**  
UNIVERSITY

**Office of the  
University Registrar**

**Chubb Hall  
Athens OH 45701-2979**

**T: 740.593.4191  
E: [registrar@ohio.edu](mailto:registrar@ohio.edu)**

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You may also read Ohio University's complete Student Records Policy at this Web site:  
[www.ohio.edu/policy/12-020.html](http://www.ohio.edu/policy/12-020.html).