



# WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of the Registrar

## FERPA GUIDELINES

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The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students the right to inspect and review their educational records, the right to seek to have their records amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from their records. The law generally requires that the written consent of the student be received *before* personally identifiable data about the student is released.

### DIRECTORY INFORMATION

An exception permitted by FERPA is the release of Directory Information. Directory Information at Weber State University is currently specified as:

- a. name
- b. address
- c. telephone number
- d. major (program of study)
- e. dates of attendance (semester/yr)
- f. degree(s) received
- g. full-time/part-time status
- h. honors received

A student may have their directory information made confidential by submitting a written request to the Registrar's Office.

### CONFIDENTIALITY BLOCK

When a student has a "Confidentiality Block" on their record the appropriate response to inquiries is:

**"I have no information on that individual."**

In most instances, ALL OTHER student educational record information may not be released without written consent from the student, other than to school officials with a "need to know." This includes grades, social security number, ethnicity, ID number, academic progress, etc.

### SECURITY GUIDELINES

- A. Close all files when not in use or when third parties are present.
- B. Position computer screen so that third parties cannot see information.
- C. Lock computer whenever you leave your work area.
- D. Ensure fax machines, copiers, and printers are in secure areas.
- E. When discussing educational record information with a student, use a private office or area whenever possible.

## INFORMATION RELEASE GUIDELINES

### A. To a school official

- a. Identify basis for need
- b. No signature is required

### B. To the Student

- a. In person
    - i. Verify ID (government issued or WSU ID)
    - ii. No signature is required
    - iii. If in the presence of a third party, only release the information specifically requested by the student.
  - b. By telephone
    - i. Verify requestor is the student by asking questions only you and the student would know. Other than their name, questions cannot be based on items listed as directory information. Keep in mind that there should be no standard list of questions; you simply want to confirm that you know they are who they state they are. Examples can include:
      - 1. Name
      - 2. Interactions you've previously had with the student
      - 3. Specific courses and their professor
      - 4. Other questions which will convince you that this is the student.(If requestor cannot confirm, DO NOT release information)
  - c. In writing (paper or Fax, email sometimes)
    - i. Signature, information requested, and who to release it to are required
  - d. Via Social Media (SMS, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, etc)
    - i. **Do Not Communicate Education Records Information via Social media.** It is the least secure method of communication available. Even with signed permission, we discourage disclosing any educational record information via this format.
  - e. Email
    - i. Respond only if the request comes from the student's Wildcat email (@mail.weber.edu) account ... or
    - ii. If you have a written release to send via another email.
- Caution:** We strongly recommend avoiding sending any confidential information via non-Wildcat systems even with a student release.

### C. Third Parties (including other students, parents, spouses, references, etc.)

- a. If releasing information other than directory information, you MUST have:
  - i. Signature of release with a notation of specific information to be released
  - ii. Or, in case of parents, proof of student dependency via tax forms
- b. You need to verify that the 3<sup>rd</sup> party is indeed who they state they are. So, follow the same protocol you would with the student. Have them show photo ID, etc.
- c. You are NOT obligated by FERPA to release information to third parties. If you don't feel comfortable, you may elevate the request to the Registrar's Office.