

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and UC policy restrict the disclosure of information from student records. As a rule of thumb:

Presume that all student information is confidential, and do not disclose information without a student's consent except to University officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the information. Consult with the Office of the Registrar to understand which information the University can properly disclose.

Avoid inadvertently disclosing information from student records. For example:

- Do not place graded, identifiable student work in the hallway or an unmonitored area for students to pick up.
- Do not post or display grades either publicly or to other students, in print or electronic form, if grades are linked to a student ID number, name, or other identifier. For larger classes, grades can be posted for exams only if a unique ID or number is used that is known only to the instructor and a student.
- Avoid requiring students to post identifiable homework assignments or projects in a publicly accessible online forum (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, and other social media spaces).
- Instead of requiring students to participate in a publicly accessible online blog, allow students to opt out, create a private blog, or consider using the campus learning management system.
- If you use Doodle or a similar system to solicit or share calendar or schedule information, create a private poll so student information is not disclosed to other students.
- Obtain consent from new students before sharing any of their personal information, biographical or academic, with other students, faculty, or others.
- Do not circulate or post a class roster of student names or one that includes photographs or student ID numbers.
- The “cloud computing” environment offers many handy and inexpensive applications. However, placing any information about students on a website not under contract with the University may raise FERPA issues. Make the use of these sites optional, or allow students concerned about privacy to provide their information to you in a secure manner.
- In letters of recommendation, faculty, teaching assistants, and readers can discuss their personal observations, but they should not disclose information from student records, such as grades, without the student's consent.

Student Consent

Students who wish to consent to disclosure of information from student records must state **in writing** which records may be disclosed, identify the party or class of parties to whom the records may be disclosed, indicate the purpose of the disclosure, and sign and date their consent statement.

Faculty Access to Student Information

Faculty are not automatically entitled to access all information about their students. Faculty have a legitimate educational interest in information only if the information is relevant and necessary for them to fulfill their role in the student's education.

Health or Safety Emergency Disclosure

Faculty, teaching assistants, and readers **can** share information about distressed or disruptive students with University officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the information. In addition, if a health or safety emergency exists, faculty, teaching assistants, and readers can share information with other people, within and outside the University, to protect the health or safety of the student or others.

Students' Right to Access Information

Students have a right to access most information in the records that the University maintains about them, including e-mail messages between faculty or staff that refer or relate to them. Knowing that a student might read your e-mail message later, keep your e-mail messages focused on facts and try to avoid communicating subjective judgments. Notwithstanding their general right of access, students do not have a right to access records that are kept in the sole possession of the person who created the record, are used only as a personal memory aid, and are not accessible by or revealed to any other person except a temporary substitute for the person who created the record.

Students' Right to Restrict Information

Some students exercise their right under FERPA to restrict the University from disclosing any information about them, not even their name or existence at the University, because serious threats to their personal safety exist or for other reasons. The University must ensure that no information about students who exercise this right is disclosed except to University officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the information.

Parental Access to Student Information

Parents of UC students do **not** have a right to obtain information from student records, including grades and faculty records about a student's performance in class. However, a student may consent to disclosure of information to his or her parents.