

## ● FERPA FOR FACULTY QUICK GUIDE ●

More information on FERPA can be found at [ferpa.mercyhurst.edu](http://ferpa.mercyhurst.edu). Questions regarding FERPA compliance should be directed to the Office of Academic Affairs.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their educational records. Below are some quick tips for ensuring compliance with this federal statute.

### ◆ DO NOT ◆

- Use any personally identifiable information (name, social security number, student id number ) when publicly posting grades
- Link a student's name and social security number or student id number in any public manner
- Circulate a printed class list for attendance that links a student's name and social security or student id number
- Leave graded tests/papers/assignments in any public place for students to pick up
- Provide anyone with lists of students enrolled in your classes for any commercial purposes
- Provide anyone with student schedules or assist anyone other than College employees in finding a student on campus
- Write a letter of recommendation without receiving that request in writing from the student
- Use work-study students to grade papers, exams, or assignments
- Submit student work to plagiarism detection websites with any identifiable information (name, social security, or student id number)
- Assume it is okay to share student progress, grades, status with a parent
- Share information from a student's educational record with anyone at the College unless that person is a "school employee/official" with a "legitimate educational interest" in the information, as defined in the Mercyhurst College FERPA Policy, available online at [ferpa.mercyhurst.edu](http://ferpa.mercyhurst.edu).
- Publish or share any student information until you check with the Registrar's Office to make sure the student has not opted out of having this type of directory information shared—this includes honors/awards won, conferences attended, papers written, etc.

### ◆ FAQ's ◆

◆Q. What should I do if a parent calls or emails inquiring about a student in my class or one of my advisees?

◆A. If you decide that you want to share information with the parent, call the Registrar's Office (ext. 2250) or the Office of Academic Support (ext. 2299) and ask whether the student has authorized the College to share information with this person. If the student has authorized disclosure of information to this person, you can speak to the parent about information from the student's educational record. If the student has not authorized the College to speak with this person, you should explain to the parent that according to federal law, we are not permitted to share information from a student's educational record without their permission (even if the parent pays the bill!).

*Note:* Nothing in FERPA "requires" that you talk with the parent. Rather, you "may" talk with the parent if the student has authorized it and you decide that you want to share this information.

*Note:* Even if the student has *not* authorized the College to share information from their record, you may share personal observations with the parent, as long as those observations are not maintained by the College in some type of record. For example, a parent may call and ask if their student seems "okay". It *is* permissible to share your personal observations about the student such as "he/she appears sleepy, upset, agitated, disinterested, etc."

◆Q. What should I do if a student requests a letter of recommendation?

◆A. One strange result of FERPA is that letters of recommendation can result in a violation of the statute. An easy way to avoid this result is to require students to request letters of recommendation in writing and keep a copy of that written request. A sample letter of recommendation request form is available online at [ferpa.mercyhurst.edu](http://ferpa.mercyhurst.edu).

◆Q. Can I share information in an emergency situation?

◆A. FERPA permits sharing information without the student's consent in emergency situations when the institution determines that the information is "necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals". If an emergency arises with a student, please call Police & Safety (ext. 2541).

◆Q. Can I share information about a student with other school employees/officials?

◆A. You can share information with another school employee/official when that person has a legitimate educational interest in the information, as defined by the Mercyhurst College FERPA Policy.