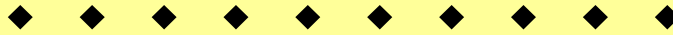


FERPA FOR STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES

QUICK GUIDE



The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their educational records. More information on FERPA can be found in the Mercyhurst College FERPA Policy located online at ferpa.mercyhurst.edu.

◆ BASICS ◆

The College is not permitted to release any information from a student's educational record without their written permission. An educational record is a record maintained by the College that contains personally identifiable information directly related to a student.

Educational records include transcripts, conduct records, probation/suspension status, student account information, and many other types of documents.

Below are some tips and frequently asked questions that should assist your office in complying with this federal statute.

◆ DO NOT ◆

- Link a student's name and social security number or student id number in any public manner
- Provide anyone with lists of enrolled students for any commercial purposes
- Provide anyone with student schedules or assist anyone other than College employees in finding a student on campus
- Assume it is okay to share student progress, grades, financial information, or status with a parent
- Share information from a student's educational record with anyone at the College unless that person has a legitimate educational interest in the information, as defined in the Mercyhurst College FERPA Policy
- 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

◆ FAQ's ◆

◆Q. What do I do if a parent calls and wants to discuss information from a student's account?

◆A. If the student is a sophomore, junior, or senior, go to the Datatel screen STMC. In field Misc.6, if there is an "A" or a "T", the student has authorized us to speak with their parent or parents. In order to determine who the authorized person is, you must pull the student's file in the Registrar's Office.

If the student is a freshman, go to STRK in Datatel. If FERPA is the first listing, the student has authorized us to talk to those parents or guardians listed.

If there is no "A" or "T" in the Misc6 field, or no indicator in STRK, the student has not authorized us to speak with anyone about their educational record. At this point, you can simply explain to the parent that according to federal law, you are not permitted to share information from a student's educational record without their permission (even if the parent pays the bill!). Students can go fill out an Authorization Form in the Registrar's Office at any time.

Note: There is an exception under FERPA which states that if a parent provides the previous year's tax return with the student claimed as a dependent, we do not need consent from the student in order to speak with the parent. If you make a disclosure to a parent under these circumstances, FERPA requires that we maintain a record of the disclosure in the student's file. Please inform the Registrar's Office if you make a tax return disclosure.

◆Q. Do I have to speak with a parent if the student has authorized it or if the parent provides a tax return?

◆A. Nothing in FERPA "requires" you to give information to a parent. The statute states that we "may" disclose information when authorized in writing by the student or when the parent provides a tax return showing the student was claimed as a dependent.

◆Q. Do I have to share information with a student from their file?

◆A. Yes. Students have a right under FERPA to review their record.

◆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. If the other school employee/official has a legitimate educational interest in the information, you can share it. The Mercyhurst College FERPA Policy defines who has a legitimate educational interest.