

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Informational Guidelines

What is FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 helps protect the privacy of student education records. The Act provides for the right to inspect and review education records, and the right to limit disclosure of information from the records. The intent of the legislation is to protect the rights of students and to ensure the privacy and accuracy of education records. The Act applies to all institutions that are recipients of federal aid administered by the Secretary of Education.

Who is protected under FERPA?

A student who has reached the age of 18 or attends a postsecondary school at any age is considered an “eligible student” and all rights formally given to his or her parents under FERPA, transfer to the student. Eligible students who are currently or formerly enrolled, regardless of their age or status in regard to parental dependency are protected under FERPA. Students who have applied to but have not attended an institution and deceased students do not come under FERPA guidelines.

Parents of students declared as “dependent” for income tax purposes may have access to the student’s education records. A copy of the parent’s most recent federal income tax return, on which the parents declared the student as a dependent, must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar to document “dependency”.

What rights does FERPA afford students with respect to their education records?

- The right to inspect and review their education records within 45 days from the day the college receives a request for access
- The right to request an amendment to the student’s education records that the student believes are inaccurate and misleading

- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the college to comply with requirements of FERPA.

The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

What are education records?

With certain exceptions, an education record is any record (1) from which a student can be personally identified and (2) maintained by the college. A student has the right of access to these records.

Education records include any records in whatever medium (handwritten, print, email, magnetic tape, film, diskette, etc.) that is in the possession of any school official.

What is not included in an education record?

- Sole possession records or private notes held by school officials that are not accessible or released to other personnel
- Law enforcement or campus security records that are solely for law enforcement purposes and maintained solely by the law enforcement unit
- Records relating to individuals who are employed by the institution (unless contingent upon attendance)
- Records relating to treatment provided by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional and disclosed only to individuals providing treatment
- Records of an institution that contain information about an individual obtained only after that person is no longer a student at that institution, i.e., alumni records

What is directory information?

Institutions may disclose student information without violating FERPA if that information is designated as “directory information.” For purposes of access by school officials of the CT Community Colleges and State Universities governed by the Board of Regents for Higher Education, directory information includes but not limited to:

- Student name
- Address
- Month and day of birth
- Dates of attendance
- Full-time or part-time enrollment status
- Awards and honors
- Graduation date

A detailed list is available in our online catalog, click on Student Records www.threerivers.edu

What is directory Opt-Out?

A student has the right to refuse to permit the College to release their directory information, except when issued to school officials with a legitimate educational interest and others as indicated in the previous paragraph. A student choosing to exercise this right must:

- notify the Office of the Registrar in writing at 574 New London Turnpike, Norwich, CT 06360 or
- complete the FERPA Directory Opt-Out form available in the Registrar’s Office or via the College’s website at www.threerivers.edu

Once filed, this notification becomes a permanent part of the student’s record until the student instructs the College, in writing, to remove it.

When is the student's consent NOT required to disclose information?

When the disclosure is:

- To school officials (defined in policy) who have a "legitimate educational interest"
- To federal, state, and local authorities involving an audit or evaluation of compliance with educational programs
- In connection with financial aid (this includes veteran's benefits);
- To organizations conducting studies for or on behalf of educational institutions
- To parents of a dependent student as defined by the Internal Revenue Code
- To a person in response to a lawfully issued subpoena or court order, as long as the college first makes a reasonable attempt to notify the student. Normally, the college will comply with a subpoena after two weeks have elapsed from the day the subpoena was received
- In a health or safety emergency
- To release directory information
- To release the results of a disciplinary hearing to an alleged victim of a crime of violence.

How does a student authorize release of his or her education records in the form of an academic transcript?

To authorize the release transcript(s):

- Complete and sign a transcript request form available in the Office of the Registrar or online at www.threerivers.edu .
- The receipt of a signed written request is permissible via fax.
- eTranscript request is available at <https://mycommnet.edu>
 - Click "student Records" link
 - Click "Transcripts" and choice of transcript
- There is no fee for TRCC transcripts

How does increasing technology impact FERPA on our campus?

The same principles of confidentiality that apply to paper records also apply to electronic data.

- DO keep any personal professional records relating to individual students separate from their education record.
- DO NOT display student scores or grades publicly in association with names, Student Identification Number, or Social Security numbers, or other personal identifiers.
- DO NOT put papers, graded exam books or lab reports containing student names in publicly accessible places.
- DO NOT access or request information from the student educational record without a legitimate educational interest and the appropriate authority to do so.
- DO NOT share student educational record information, including grades or grade point average with other faculty or staff unless their official responsibilities identify their legitimate educational interest in that information for that student.
- DO NOT share student educational record information, including grades or grade point average with parents or others outside the College, including in letters of recommendation, without written permission from the student.
- WHEN IN DOUBT, err on the side of caution and do NOT release student educational information. Contact the Registrar's Office for guidance.

(FERPA) Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act Guidelines for Three Rivers Community College



FACULTY/STAFF VERSION

**Office of the Registrar- Rm A115
Three Rivers Community College
574 New London Turnpike
Norwich, CT 06360**

This informational brochure is produced by the Office of the Registrar and provides students with general information about FERPA. For more detailed information, visit the U. S. Department of Education website www.familypolicy.ed.gov

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