

FERPA for College Advisors

**Understanding Student Privacy
Rights and Advisor
Responsibilities**

What is FERPA?

FERPA stands for the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

- It is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.
- Applies to all schools receiving funds from the U.S. Department of Education.

When Do FERPA Rights Transfer?

FERPA rights transfer from parents to students when:

- The student turns 18, or Enrolls in a postsecondary institution.
- Students become 'eligible students' and control access to their records.

What Are Education Records?

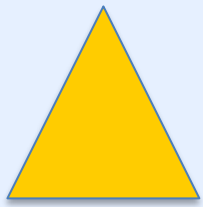
Education records are records directly related to a student and maintained by the institution.

- Examples include:
 - Grades and transcripts
 - Class schedules
 - Disciplinary records
 - Financial aid information

Advisor Responsibilities Under FERPA

Advisors must:

- Protect student information
- Share records only with authorized personnel
- Obtain written consent before disclosing information to third parties
- Understand exceptions to consent requirements



Case Study: FERPA Violation

An advisor emailed a student's academic standing to their parent without consent.

- Violation: The student had not signed a FERPA release form.
- Outcome: The institution issued a warning and retraining on FERPA compliance.
- Lesson: Always verify consent before sharing student information.

Common Exceptions to Consent

FERPA allows disclosure without consent in certain cases:

- Health or safety emergencies
- Compliance with a judicial order or subpoena
- School officials with legitimate educational interest
- Parents of dependent students (IRS definition)

What is Directory Information?

Directory information may include:

Name, email, date of attendance, enrollment status, previous school attended, class, major field(s) of study, graduation honors, degrees conferred (including dates), and date of birth

These items can be disclosed without consent unless the student opts out.



Advisor Q&A

Q: Can I talk to a parent about a student's grades?

A: Only if the student has provided written consent or is a dependent.

Q: Can I share information with other faculty?

A: Yes, if they have a legitimate educational interest.

Q: What should I do if I'm unsure?

A: Consult your institution's FERPA officer or legal counsel.

Final Thoughts

FERPA is about respecting student privacy and fostering trust.

- Advisors play a key role in compliance and education.
- When in doubt, ask for guidance and prioritize confidentiality.