

FERPA FAQ:

What is FERPA?

FERPA (**F**amily **E**ducational **R**ights and **P**rivacy **A**ct), also known as the Buckley Amendment, was passed by congress in 1974. **FERPA applies to all educational agencies or institutions, including Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, that receive funds under any program administered by the Secretary of Education. FERPA protects the privacy of student education records.**

Why should I care about FERPA?

- If you are a **student**, it is important for you to understand your rights under FERPA.
- If you are a **parent**, you will need to understand how the law changes once your student enters a post-secondary institution.
- If you are an **employee** of Slippery Rock University with access to student education records, you are obligated to comply with FERPA and protect those records according to the law.

What are students' rights under FERPA?

- **Inspect and review their education records.**
- **Seek amendment of incorrect educational records.**
- **Consent to disclosure of his/her/their educational records.**
- **File a complaint with the Department of Education.**
- **Obtain a copy of institution's policy.**

What is an "Educational Record"?

Any record, with certain exceptions, maintained by an institution or educational agency or by a party acting for the institution or educational agency that directly identifies a student or students. A key

distinction of education records is that education records are shared. This record can contain a student's name or information from which an individual student, or students, can be personally (individually) identified. These records include files, documents and materials in whatever medium (handwriting, print, monitor screen, tapes, disks, film, microfilm, microfiche or notes) that contain information directly related to students and from which students can be personally identified such as:

- Grades
- Class List
- Student Course Schedules
- Disciplinary Records
- Student Financial Records
- Payroll Records for Student Employees

Are any records NOT considered Educational Records?

The following records are **excluded** from the definition of educational records:

- "Sole Possession" records made by faculty/staff for their own use as reference or memory aids and not shared with others (personal observations).
- University Law Enforcement Records.
- Medical and Mental Health Records, used only for the treatment of the student.
- Alumni Records.
- Peer graded papers and exams prior to the grade being recorded by instructor.
- Employment Records.

What disclosure controls does the student have?

The student's educational records may be disclosed only with the student's written consent.

The written consent must:

- Specify the records to be released
- State the purpose of the disclosure
- Identify the party(ies) to whom the disclosure is to be made
- Be signed and dated by the student.
- Parent Portal (MySRU).

Who at SRU can access my information?

Access to personally identifiable information contained in educational records may be given to **appropriate University administrators, faculty members, or staff members and appropriate student workers**. Faculty/Staff members and student workers should not access student academic records **unless their normal job duties specifically require access**.

This type of access is termed **"legitimate education's interest"**.

Is there information that never requires written consent?

FERPA permits institutions to define a class of information as **"directory information."** Such information may be disclosed without a student's previous consent by the institution for any purpose, at its discretion.

What does SRU define as Directory Information?

- Student Name
- Addresses (*local, permanent, and e-mail*)
- Telephone Number (*local, cell, and permanent*)
- Date and Place of Birth
- Program, Concentration(s), and Minor(s)
- Student Activities (*including athletics*)
- Height and Weight (*athletic teams*)
- Dates of Attendance
- Date of Graduation
- Degrees and Awards Received
- Student ID Number used to communicate in electronic systems (*that cannot be used to access educational Records without a PIN, password, etc.*)
- All Educational Institutions Previously Attended
- Academic Awards / Scholarships
- Title of Master Thesis
- Number of Credits Registered (*full / part - time*)
- Pictures of Students
- Class Level
- Anticipated Graduation Date

More information regarding Directory Information can be found in the Public Notice Designating Directory Information document.

Is the University required to release any information?

FERPA permits the disclosure of information (Directory or with written student consent), **but does NOT require, or deem an institution obligated to release any information.** The only required disclosure is to the student.

Can a student prevent information from being released?

Currently enrolled students have the opportunity to withhold disclosure of all 18 categories of information under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). **The University will not partially withhold this information**, so students are advised to think carefully before requesting non-disclosure.

To withhold disclosure, students must complete the Non-Disclosure of Directory Information form, located on the [Academic Records & Registration Forms page](#).

Slippery Rock University assumes that failure on the part of any student to specifically request the withholding of "Directory Information" indicates individual approval for disclosures.

Former students and alumni are not covered under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). As such, the University is not obligated to honor requests for non-disclosure of "Directory Information" from former students.

NOTE: Students requesting that "Directory Information" not be disclosed during their final semester of enrollment will have this information withheld indefinitely after leaving the University. Students are cautioned that making such a request may adversely impact future requests from potential employers, and other important individuals/organizations.

When do student's FERPA rights begin?

For the purposes of complying with FERPA, an applicant to Slippery Rock University becomes a "student" **on the first day of the first term/semester in which the student is registered at the University.**

Do parents have any rights under FERPA?

In **primary and secondary (K-12) educational institutions, all FERPA rights belong to the parent.** However, **when the student reaches the age of 18 or begins to attend a post-secondary institution regardless of age, all FERPA rights transfer to the student.**

Who do I contact with questions or concerns?

For more information, see "Students' Right Under FERPA" or "SRU's Detailed FERPA Guide," both of which are [available on the Academic Records & Registration webpage.](#)

Direct general questions to:

Office of Academic Records & Registration
104 Maltby Avenue, Suite 107 Slippery
Rock, PA 16057

(Phone) 724.738.2010

(Fax) 724.738.2936

(Email) academic.records@sru.edu