



UNIVERSITY
AT ALBANY
State University of New York

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

Student Privacy Reminder

FERPA (The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

Students have four primary rights under FERPA: (1) The right to inspect and review their education records, (2) the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from their education records (including, but not limited to personally identifiable information), (3) the right to seek an amendment of their education records, and (4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the University to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

FERPA forbids disclosure, to third parties, of student personally identifiable information (PII) and information related to a student's education record without the student's written consent.

- **A third party** may include, but is not limited to: fellow students, parents, family members, classmates, friends of the student in question, unofficial guest instructors or teaching assistants that are not officially assigned to the schedule of classes, and third-party providers such as Dropbox, Box, Weebly, etc. when there is no campus contract for the service with the provider.

University at Albany employees should be alert to the existence of this strong and binding restriction, and should take care not to reveal information about students directly or indirectly to third parties.

Guidance below on the following FERPA related topics:

- Posting Grades
- Student Photos
- Videos
- Communication via e-mail
- E-mail Best Practices
- Virtual Learning
- Guidelines on the transmission and storage of regulated information

Posting Grades:

In order to provide students with timely information about assignments, papers, and exams, many faculty post the results at a convenient location for students to check their grades. Faculty who use this strategy

are advised that it is a violation of FERPA to post exam results or grades in a manner that allows any third party to infer a specific student's grade. For example, you violate a student's rights under FERPA if you leave graded papers in a public hallway, share grades via an e-mail distribution list, or permits students to examine faculty evaluation of the work of other students.

Posting grades by full or partial student identification number, full or partial social security number, or name, is prohibited. An acceptable way to comply with the law is to post the grades using a unique identifier known only to the instructor and the student. If this method is chosen, the identifier cannot be composed of personally identifiable information such as birth date, phone number, etc., and the list cannot be in alphabetical or seating order. If all grades in a course are the same, those grades should not be posted.

Resources for faculty - posting grades:

- How to upload test scanning grades to Blackboard - <https://wiki.albany.edu/display/askit/Uploading+Grades+from+the+Test+Scanning+Service>
- Help with Grade Rosters, Entering Grades, and Uploading Grades: **Log on** to MyUAlbany via: <https://www.albany.edu/myualbany/>. Select the Help page, choose "Faculty Tutorials" link on left side of page. Select the appropriate tutorial.
- Additional help and consultation – For detailed assistance with using the Grade Center in your Blackboard courses, you are encouraged to make an appointment with the ITS-Educational Technology Services.
 - Appointments: <http://www.albany.edu/edtech>
 - Workshops: <https://wiki.albany.edu/display/public/askit/Blackboard>
 - [Best Practices with Grade Center](#)

Student Photos:

The use of student photos by faculty and staff for the limited purposes of student identification on class rosters, class seating, examinations and academic advisement enriches the classroom and advisement discourse between faculty/staff and students, protects the integrity of the examination process, and overall, enhances the educational experience and retention of students at the University. ***Please be advised that posting or distributing student photos violates a student's rights under FERPA and is prohibited.*** [University at Albany Policy on Use of Student Photos By Faculty and Staff in Classrooms and Academic Advisement.](#)

Videos:

As with any other "education record," a photo or **video** of a student is an education record, subject to specific exclusions, when the photo or video is: (1) directly related to a student; and (2) maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution. (20 U.S.C. 1232g(a)(4)(A); 34 CFR § 99.3 "Education Record"). [U.S. Department of Education FAQ's on Videos.](#)

Communication via E-Mail:

Communication via e-mail is helpful in many ways, however care should be taken when exchanging student personally identifiable information (PII) via e-mail. Prior to sending an e-mail, it's important to evaluate the risk associated with sending student information. Personally identifiable information such

as names in combination with Social Security Numbers, NYS Driver's License Numbers, or bank account information, should **never** be transmitted via plain text e-mail. [U.S. Department of Education Protecting Student Privacy Video](#).

E-Mail Best Practices:

The sender should always verify that the e-mail recipients are actually the intended recipients. To do so, right click on the receiver names to identify the correct e-mail addresses and departments. Often times there are multiple students with the same name or students with the same name as an employee. Additionally, e-mails should be checked for attachments to ensure they are appropriate to send to the recipients and that they are the correct attachments. Opening an attachment before sending an e-mail is a good practice. Internal correspondence (@albany.edu-to-@albany.edu) is encrypted in transit. However, personally identifiable information should be sent as encrypted attachments to prevent exposure in the event the recipient has their mail forwarded to a non @albany.edu account. A safer avenue of exchanging data within a department is to place the data in a network shared drive and let people know via e-mail where to retrieve it.

Virtual Learning:

Faculty and staff can protect student privacy rights and ensure FERPA compliance by properly utilizing the tools and resources available to them through the University.

- [FERPA and Virtual Learning Related Resources](#) from the Student Privacy Policy Office.

Guidance on the transmission and storage of regulated information:

- <https://wiki.albany.edu/display/public/askit/Category+1+Storage+Standards>

If you have questions about privacy law and/or disclosure please refer them to the Registrar's Office at registrar@albany.edu.

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