

Four Questions About FERPA

Know The Requirements



eLEARNING &
DISTANCE EDUCATION

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TEACHING TIP

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FERPA, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, addresses education records and a student's right to those records and to whom else sees them. As an instructor or faculty at UAF, you have a responsibility to adhere to the requirements set out by the Act. By being aware of a few key requirements, you can adhere to the act without too much effort. Here are some of the most common questions you may have.

I have a high school student in my class. May I share his grades with his parents?

Once a student reaches the age of 18, or enrolls into post secondary education, parents (or spouses) no longer are allowed access to performance details or grades. The minute an under-18 aged student (or any aged student) enrolls in a UAF class, parents may not receive information about their grades or standing in the class, without the student's written approval.

Student Forms for giving authorization — <https://www.alaska.edu/files/student-services/ferpa/forms-for-students/UAF-Online-FERPA-Release-Form.pdf>

Can I use a public blog or discussion platform with students where I make comments to my students?

There are two issues here. Of course you can require any kind of public forum for your classwork. However, FERPA does not allow any kind of public disclosure of personally identifiable student information. Which means you must allow students to use an alias if they believe their UA username is identifiable. As long as the student tells you what alias they are using, this is an acceptable practice.

Secondly, student's class standing or performance is a protected student right. While it can be good for instructors to facilitate discussion, be careful with how you give feedback to students in a public setting. If you aren't sure, give your comments privately through Blackboard or other Learning Management System.



I'm writing a recommendation for a student. May I include information about their grades and/or GPA?

Most likely if you are writing a recommendation for a student, it is at their request. If they want you to include information about their grades, performance indicators and/or GPA, it is best to get their request (and approval) in writing.

May I send a student's grade through email?

It is best to assume that email, even if you send information to the official @alaska.edu email, may be read by someone other than the intended student. It is not normal university practice to send grades via email. The best option for transmitting grades is through the Blackboard Grade Center and UAOnline. If a student insists that you use email to relay this kind of information, it makes sense to get a written approval from them and to keep this on record with your class materials.

RESOURCES

- [How to Access FERPA Information and Training Through UAOnline](#)
- [UA Board of Regents Policies and University Regulations of FERPA \(Chapter 09.04\)](#)
- [FERPA and Privacy Concerns](#)



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