



EMPLOYEE GUIDE:

Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) protects the privacy of educational records. Take the online FERPA training through DevelopWest for an understanding of how FERPA works.

The University of West Georgia **will NOT** release non-directory or personally identifiable information about a student to a third party (including parents) without the written consent of the student.

As a faculty or staff member, please remember:

1. You are considered a University official and required by law to take every precaution to protect students' privacy.
2. Student papers and exams should be handled as confidential and should not be left where there is any chance others may have access to them.
3. **When preparing an email distribution list**—unless you have written permission of the student to publish their email—be certain you use a listserv or blind copy (bcc) to prevent inadvertently publishing the email address of a student who has requested that we not disclose their Directory Information.
4. **Do not** give a student's graded paper or exam to anyone other than the student without written permission from the student.
5. **Be cautious** about what information you share and with whom you share it, particularly over the phone.
6. **You are not required to—nor should you**—speak to special investigators who are seeking information about students who have applied for government positions. Feel free to email them to the Open Records Officer at openrecords@westga.edu.
7. Writing a letter of recommendation may require written permission from the student allowing a faculty member to disclose confidential information from a student's educational records to a third party. It is recommended that before writing a letter of recommendation containing confidential information— i.e., grades, GPA, etc.—faculty receive the student's written permission to release this information to a third party. Personal observations about a student may be disclosed without the student's consent.

The University is required to prevent improper disclosure of information; therefore, to confirm a student's FERPA disclosure status follow the My Family Portal guide on the FERPA for Employees web page or email studentsolutions@westga.edu.

When in doubt, don't give it out!