

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)
Top Ten Things to Know About FERPA

10. The purpose of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is to afford certain rights to students concerning their educational records. The primary rights afforded are; the right to inspect and review educational records, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from the records.

Who is a student? Current and former students. **NOT** parents, spouses, or applicants.

What is an educational record? Any form directly related to the student, maintained by the institution, in whatever media.

Why do we comply? To protect the student!

9. UNM has designated certain items as directory information. (This is information that can be given out to any requestor, provided that a restriction has not been placed on the individual's record.)

What is directory information? *At UNM*, it consists of; name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, **date of birth**, major, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, most recent educational agency or institution attended, participation in officially recognized activities and sports. What is defined as directory information will vary from school to school but it cannot include SSN, student schedules, or other strictly private information.

8. UNM policies on FERPA, the release of directory information, or how to restrict one's directory information can be found in the student handbook, The Pathfinder at www.unm.edu/~sac/pathfind.html.

7. If a student has completed a UNM Student Information Release form restricting the release of directory information, it will be flagged in the Banner screens and LoboWeb listings with a "CONFIDENTIAL" notation, this is the **Confidential Indicator**. Absolutely **NO** information can be released without consent if the Confidential Indicator has been set. If someone is calling for information you must say "**There is no information available on that person, please have him or her contact us directly.**"

How do students set their **Confidential Indicator**? By coming to the Registrar's Office. This is an all or nothing Indicator, if it is set we cannot release **ANY** information about the student, including their attendance or graduation status.

6. Grades may not be posted by social security or UNM ID number, in whole or part, because an alphabetical order class list could easily be used to link name and number.
5. "School officials" *at UNM* are defined as those members of the institution who act in the student's educational interest within the limitation of their "need to know" to perform job duties. This may include faculty, administrators, employees (including students) who manage student education record information.

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4. SPECIAL “DON'TS” FOR FACULTY

To avoid violations of FERPA rules, **DO NOT**:

- At any time use personally identifiable information (UNM ID#, name, etc.) in a public posting of grades.
- Link the name of a student with that student's UNM ID # in any public manner.
- Leave graded tests or assignments in an unsecured area for students to pick up.
- Circulate a printed class list with student names and UNM ID# or grades as an attendance roster.
- Discuss the progress of any student with anyone (including parents) other than the student without the consent of the student.
- Provide anyone with lists of students in your classes for any commercial purpose.
- Provide anyone with student schedules or assist anyone other than University employees in finding a student on campus.

No personally identifiable information should be used in a public posting of any kind.

3. As an employee of UNM you have a responsibility to protect **all educational records** in your possession. This includes any documents in the Registrar's Office, computer printouts in your faculty or staff office, class lists on paper or on a computer desktop, computer display screens, and personally identifiable notes taken during any kind of advising session in your workspace.

Is **your Desk** a public or private space? Generally, it is a public space since other staff, students, and janitors have access to it. So cover up or turn over records that must be on your desk and file or lock up records you keep.

2. Parents, spouses, partners, friends or relatives of any kind, of a UNM student, do not have access to information on students beyond directory information. This also includes people with badges, subpoenas, court orders, or other legal documents without confirmation from the University Counsel's Office.

If you are feeling pressure to comply with a request for information, refer the requestor to the Registrar's Office.

And the number one Most Important Thing to Remember About FERPA is:

1. **When in doubt, don't give it out!**

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

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