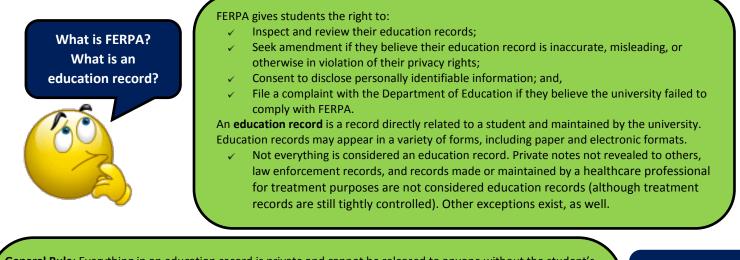# UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SYSTEM

URBANA-CHAMPAIGN · CHICAGO · SPRINGFIELD

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)
What you need to know in less than 5 minutes – Resource Page

What is FERPA? What is an education record?

FERPA gives students the right to:
- ✓ Inspect and review their education records;
- ✓ Seek amendment if they believe their education record is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of their privacy rights;
- ✓ Consent to disclose personally identifiable information; and,
- ✓ File a complaint with the Department of Education if they believe the university failed to comply with FERPA.

An **education record** is a record directly related to a student and maintained by the university. Education records may appear in a variety of forms, including paper and electronic formats.
- ✓ Not everything is considered an education record. Private notes not revealed to others, law enforcement records, and records made or maintained by a healthcare professional for treatment purposes are not considered education records (although treatment records are still tightly controlled). Other exceptions exist, as well.

Is an education record private?

General Rule: Everything in an education record is private and cannot be released to anyone without the student's written consent – not even parents. Some exceptions are:
- ✓ University staff may access education records if they have a legitimate educational interest, i.e., they need the information in order to fulfill their official duties.
- ✓ Each university can designate certain pieces of information about a student as "Directory Information." Once designated, that information can be disclosed without a student's written consent.
  - • Students may opt out of the disclosure of their Directory Information by notifying the university in writing. Their records are then flagged in Banner and their Directory Information may no longer be disclosed without their consent.
    - o When a student opts out, respond to external inquiries by saying "There is no information available for any student by that name."
    - o Students should talk with the Registrar staff so they are aware of the full consequences of suppressing Directory Information before choosing this option.
- ✓ In the event an appropriate university official determines a health or safety emergency exists, the university may release student record information to protect the safety of students or other individuals.

What can I do to keep student's records safe?

Here are some **best practices** to help you protect student education records.
- ✓ Avoid using e-mail for sensitive information.
- ✓ Use the Protected E-mail Attachments Repository (PEAR) to transmit highly sensitive information.
- ✓ Use password protection on computer files, if possible.
- ✓ Keep storage media in a secure, locked location.
- ✓ Restrict access to your computer and configure it to automatically lock after a period of inactivity.
- ✓ Never leave student data displayed on your computer screen.
- ✓ When you have finished a task, exit all files, sign out of all applications, and close all windows
- ✓ Consult with your unit or the RIMS website to find out your responsibilities related to the disposal of education records.

Who to Contact	Office	Email	Phone	Webpage	Policy
Registration Help Line	UIC Registrar	registration@uic.edu	312- 996-8600	Student Records	UIC
Registrar	UIS Registrar	registrar@uis.edu	217-206-6174	Records	UIS
Registration Services	UIUC Registrar	registration@illinois.edu	217-333-6565	FERPA	UIUC