

## Emergencies

FERPA recognizes the need to balance privacy and safety. In an emergency, the law permits school officials to disclose information without student consent to protect the health or safety of the student or others. The exception is limited to the period of the emergency and generally does not allow for a blanket release of personally identifiable information. In the event of an imminent emergency, contact the UMaine Police Department at 581.4040. If you are concerned about the welfare or behavior of a student, contact the Dean of Students Office at 581.1406.

## How Students Share Information

The student consent to release information form allows students to grant access to their educational records to specified individuals. This access is permanent and remains in effect until the student revokes permission in writing. Once the Office of Student Records receives the completed form, the information will be documented in MaineStreet. Information on how to view the student consent to release information in MaineStreet is available on the Student Records website under the FERPA section.

## How Students Restrict Information

Students have the option to restrict the release of all directory information or just their address. This is referred to as a "FERPA block." These privacy settings are controlled by the student and managed in the Student Center in MaineStreet. The FERPA block prevents release of personal information to anyone including, but not limited to, lists provided to third-party requesters under the Freedom of Access Act (FOAA), publications such as Dean's List and the Commencement program. Information on how to view the FERPA restrictions a student has requested is available on the Student Records website under the FERPA section.

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The Office of Student Records provides this brochure for faculty and staff as a training tool outlining best practices and common scenarios. Additional information is available at [studentrecords.umaine.edu](http://studentrecords.umaine.edu).

To discuss a specific scenario or schedule training, contact:

UMaine FERPA Contact  
Office of Student Records  
5781 Wingate Hall, Room 201  
207.581.1288

Federal FERPA Contact  
Office of the Chief Privacy Officer  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-8520

When in doubt, call the Office of Student Records for guidance with FERPA.



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# *The federal* **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**



[studentrecords.umaine.edu](http://studentrecords.umaine.edu)

## The Law

The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 governs the privacy of student educational records, access to records and disclosure of them. As a university official, you are expected to understand and comply with FERPA.



*In accordance with the University of Maine System Administrative Practice Letter for FERPA Guidelines, the University of Maine respects student privacy and rights granted under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.*

### Education Records

Education records are records that are directly related to a student and are maintained by the university or a party acting on behalf of UMaine. These records include but are not limited to grades, transcripts, class lists, student course schedules, student financial information and student discipline files. The information may be recorded in any way, including, but not limited to, handwriting, print, computer media, videotape, audiotape, film and email.

### Non-Directory Information (Never share)

- Social security number
- Student ID number
- Grades/exam scores
- Grade point average (GPA)
- Test scores (SAT, GRE, etc.)
- Class schedule
- Race/ethnicity
- Citizenship/nationality
- Gender
- Religious affiliation

### Directory Information (Public)

The university allows the public release of the following information unless a student has placed a FERPA block in MaineStreet.

- Name
- Address
- Phone numbers
- Email address
- Date of birth
- Program of study
- Dates of attendance
- Degrees and awards received
- Most recent previous educational institution attended
- Participation in sports and activities
- Class level
- Enrollment status (full/part time)
- Appropriate personal athletic statistical data



### Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation limited to your own personal observations or assessments of a student do not require consent. Letters including information from a student's educational record, such as test scores, GPA and assignment and class grades, require consent. A letter of recommendation release form is available on the Student Records website ([studentrecords.umaine.edu/forms](http://studentrecords.umaine.edu/forms)). Institutions must allow students to inspect letters unless the student has waived the right in writing.

### Best Practices

- Never discuss the academic progress of students with anyone, including parents, without written consent of the student.
- Never circulate an attendance sheet containing student ID numbers or SSNs.
- Never provide anyone (other than the instructor) with class rosters.
- Never give anyone a student schedule or assist anyone in finding a student.
- Never display grades with student ID numbers or names.
- Never provide group assignment grades in a group email to students.
- Never post pictures of students on websites or bulletin boards without written permission.