The University of Michigan Student Rights and Student Records

It is the policy of the University of Michigan to comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Federal law that governs release of and access to student education records.

Definitions

A student is an individual for whom the University maintains education records and who is or has been enrolled in and attended credit bearing courses at the University.

Education records include those records which contain information directly related to a student and which are maintained by the University or by a person acting for the University. The following are not education records: records kept in the sole possession of the maker, law enforcement records, records relating to individuals employed by the University, records related to treatment provided by a health professional when maintained solely for treatment purposes, records that contain information about an individual after that person is no longer a student, i.e. alumni records.

Directory information may appear in public documents and may otherwise be released to individuals outside the University without the student's specific consent. The University of Michigan has designated the following items as directory information: name, address, e-mail address, telephone number, UM school or college, class level, major field, dates of attendance at the University of Michigan, current enrollment status, degree(s) received and date(s) awarded, honors and awards received, participation in recognized activities, previous school(s) attended, height and weight of members of intercollegiate athletic teams.

Non-disclosure of directory information may be requested by currently enrolled students. Non-disclosure means the University may not release any directory information about the student, except as permitted under the provisions of FERPA. The University may not even acknowledge to third parties that the person is a student.

Legitimate educational interest is the need to review an education record in order for a University official to carry out his or her responsibilities in regard to performing an administrative task outlined in the official's duties, or performing a supervisory or instructional task directly related to the student's education.

A University official is any person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or support position; a person elected to the Board of Regents; a student or a University graduate serving on an official University committee or assisting another University official in performing his or her tasks; or a person employed by or under contract to, or serving as the agent of, the University to perform a specific task.
Authorized disclosures without the student's prior written consent may include but are not limited to information necessary to the health or safety of the student or other individuals if the University determines that there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals, internal disclosures for a legitimate educational reason, information returned to the author/sender of the information, to parents of a student regarding the student's violation of any federal, state, or local law, or of any rule or policy of the University, governing the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance if the University determines the student committed a disciplinary violation and the student is under the age of 21, information forwarded to schools where the student plans to enroll or transfer. The University of Michigan does not routinely disclose information without the student's consent to parents of federal tax dependents. State and Local Education Authorities may allow access to your records to third parties with written agreement in conjunction with the evaluation of federal or state supported education programs; including early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, postsecondary education, special education, job training, career and technical education, and adult education.

Student Rights

Beginning the first day of class, you have the following rights concerning your student records:

1. The right to inspect and review all material in your file(s) except:

   a. Professional mental health treatment records to the extent necessary, in the judgment of the attending physician or professional counselor, to avoid detrimental effects to the mental health of the student or of others. These records may, however, be reviewed by a physician or other appropriate professional of your choice.
   b. Financial information furnished by your parents in support of an application for financial aid.
   c. Confidential letters of recommendation that were placed in your file prior to January 1, 1975.
   d. Confidential letters of recommendation concerning admission, employment, or honorary recognition, for which you have waived access. (The University may not require you to sign a waiver in order to obtain services, but a person writing a recommendation may insist on a waiver as a condition for his or her writing it.)
   e. Personal notes made by a faculty member or counselor that are accessible only to that person and are not shared with others.
   f. Materials in any admissions files, until you have been admitted to, and have attended the U-M school or college for which the materials were submitted.
   g. All other records which are excluded from the FERPA definition of education records.

Education records are maintained in a number of University offices. Requests to review records must be made in writing to the responsible official of each office that maintains the records. The responsible office will comply with the request within 45 days of its receipt.
2. The right to request an amendment of your education records if you believe it is inaccurate or misleading. If you believe there is an error in your record, you should submit a statement to the University official responsible for the record, clearly identifying the part of the record you want changed, and why you believe it is inaccurate or misleading. That office will notify you of the decision and advise you regarding appropriate steps if you do not agree with the decision.

3. The right in most instances to control access to information in your records by persons or agencies outside the University. With respect to University officials, information from your records will be made available only if the University official can demonstrate a legitimate educational interest consistent with their official functions for the University and consistent with normal professional and legal practices. Except for directory information, however, persons outside the University - including your parents and/or spouse - will be given information from your records only (a.) when you authorize it in writing, or (b.) in connection with your application for or receipt of financial aid, or (c.) in connection with studies conducted for the purpose of accreditation, development and validation of predictive tests, administration of student aid programs, or improvement of instruction, or (d.) when disclosure is necessary in a health or safety emergency, (e.) or as required by federal or state law or by judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, or (f.) to parents of a student regarding the student's violation of any federal, state, or local law, or of any rule or policy of the University, governing the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance if the University determines the student committed a disciplinary violation and the student is under the age of 21. If information from your record is subpoenaed or required by judicial order, a reasonable attempt to notify you will be made as quickly as possible unless the order or subpoena prohibits such notice. In addition, the results of a disciplinary hearing conducted by the institution against the alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence will be made available to the alleged victim of that crime.

4. The right to limit disclosure of your directory information. If you do not want the University to release those items designated as directory information, you must file a written request to that effect with the Office of the Registrar. However, you should carefully consider the consequences of that action before making the decision to do so. Information is not withheld selectively. If you choose to have directory information withheld, all items designated as directory information will be withheld from everyone who inquires. If you have requested non-disclosure of directory information and wish to repeal that request, you must file a written request to that effect with the Office of the Registrar.

5. The right to a hearing if you believe that you have been improperly denied access to your records, your records contain information that is inaccurate or misleading, or information from your records has been improperly released to third parties. If you believe one or more of these situations has occurred, contact the head of the office responsible for the record or send an e-mail to ro.ferpa.request@umich.edu detailing the specifics of the situation including the office(s) and records involved. If the head of the office involved agrees with your contention, he or she will see to it that the necessary corrective action is taken. If the head of the office does not agree with your
contention, you may request a hearing by a hearing panel or hearing officer designated by the Office of the Registrar's procedures. If the decision of the hearing panel or hearing officer agrees with you, the necessary corrective action will be taken. If the decision of the hearing panel or hearing officer disagrees with you, you have the right to submit an explanatory statement, which must be included as a permanent part of your record.

6. The right to file a complaint to federal officials if you believe that there has been a violation of the rights afforded you under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. The complaint must be submitted in writing within 180 days of the alleged violation to:

U. S. Department of Education  
The Family Policy Compliance Office  
600 Independent Avenue SW  
Washington, D. C. 20202-4605  
Phone: 202.260.3887

Questions about the policies and procedures of any unit should be directed to the head of that unit. Questions about the University's "Policies on Student Rights and Student Records" or about the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 should be directed to:

Paul Robinson  
University Registrar  
1210 LS&A Building  
500 S. State St.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1382  
Phone: 734.647.3502

Revised June 2015

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