

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974

Confidentiality of Student Records: What is FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, also known as the Buckley Amendment) was passed by Congress in 1974 to protect the confidentiality of students' records and information.

Hope College's policy on student records incorporates the rights guaranteed by FERPA. Students are notified of their FERPA rights annually through publication of the rights in the college catalog and the student handbook.

Questions about the policy should be directed to the Office of the Registrar, 141 East 12th Street, Holland, MI 49423, registrar@hope.edu, or 616.395.7760.

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FERPA for Students

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- When do these rights begin?
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- Whom should students contact if they have questions or need more information?

WHAT RIGHTS DOES FERPA GIVE STUDENTS?

1. The right to inspect and review their education records.
2. The right to request to amend their education records.
3. The right to limit disclosure of personally identifiable information (information that would directly identify the student or make the student's identity easily traceable) known as directory information.
4. The right to file a complaint with the Department of Education concerning an alleged failure by the institution to comply with FERPA.

WHEN DO THESE FERPA RIGHTS BEGIN?

Students' FERPA rights begin at Hope College when admittance is accepted by payment of enrollment deposit.

WHAT ARE “EDUCATION RECORDS”?

Education records include any information directly related to the student whether stored on paper or in an electronic file, on a computer or other media (microfilm, CD, etc.).

WHERE IS INFORMATION ABOUT STUDENTS KEPT?

Type of record	Location of record	Custodian of record
Academic records	Office of the Registrar DeWitt Center, first floor	Registrar
Advising records	Faculty office Office of the Registrar	Faculty advisor Registrar
Alumni records ¹	Office of Alumni Relations	College Advancement
Application records ²	Admissions Office	Director of Admissions
Career development records ³	Career Development Center Anderson-Werkman Building, first floor	Director of Career Development
Financial records ⁴	Business Services Anderson-Werkman Building, second floor	Director of Finance and Business Services
Financial aid records ⁴	Financial Aid Office Anderson-Werkman Building, first floor	Director of Financial Aid
Medical records ⁵	Health Center, Dow Center	Assistant Dean, Health and Counseling
Psychological records ⁶	Counseling and Psychological Services, DeWitt Center, 1 st floor	Assistant Dean, Health and Counseling
Student development records—housing, judicial, residence life, employment files	Office of Student Development DeWitt Center, first floor	Dean of Students

¹When students become alumni, their directory information becomes part of their alumni record. The College stores and uses other information necessary for the advancement staff to fulfill their responsibilities. This includes marital status, religion, race, ethnicity, financial aid filing status, and gender. Information collected after students become alumni is not part of the education record and is not subject to FERPA guidelines.

²When students enroll at Hope, their applicant files become their academic records, housed in the Registrar's Office.

³Alumni have access to all materials, except to references for which they have waived the right of access.

⁴Dependent students and their custodial parents or legal guardians have access to students' financial records and financial aid files unless students have requested in writing that their access be restricted. Parents and guardians of self-supporting students do not have access to these files.

⁵Information about access to medical records is posted http://www.hope.edu/admin/healthcenter/confidentiality_statement.pdf

⁶Information about access to psychological records is posted <http://www.hope.edu/admin/counseling/confidentiality.htm>

DO STUDENTS' FAMILIES HAVE ACCESS TO STUDENTS' EDUCATION RECORDS?

Only with the written consent of the student; release forms are available in the Registrar's Office, first floor of the DeWitt Center.

Parents and guardians of dependent students have access to their financial and financial aid records unless the student has requested in writing that access to these records be restricted (see the previous section).

WHAT IS "DIRECTORY INFORMATION"?

Public or directory information is information contained in students' educational records which would not be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if the information were disclosed. Public or directory information includes:

- Name
- Addresses: local, permanent, e-mail
- Name of parent or guardian
- Previous school(s) attended
- Dates of attendance
- Awards and honors received
- Degree(s) awarded and dates of degree(s)
- Majors and minors
- (for athletes) Statistics (weight, height, etc.) included on team activity sheets
- Photograph (official Hope College ID photo)
- Class standing (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior)
- Enrollment status (full-time or part-time)

Unless students request in writing (forms are available in the Registrar's Office) that this public (directory) information be withheld, directory information is available to others. Hope College exercises restraint in the release of this information and keeps students' welfare in the forefront as it determines whether to release directory information.

CAN STUDENTS WITHHOLD THE RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION?

Yes. To withhold the release of directory information students must submit a request in writing; forms are available in the Registrar's Office.

Hope College is required by law (the Solomon Amendment) to provide the name, address and other demographic information of all students to any legitimate military recruiter who makes such a request in writing to the Registrar's Office. According to the Solomon Amendment, this release must be honored even if a student has submitted a request to withhold directory information.

WHAT INFORMATION IS CONSIDERED CONFIDENTIAL?

Except for directory information, other information collected and stored about students is considered confidential. The confidentiality of this information is guaranteed to students.

UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES CAN CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION BE RELEASED TO OTHERS?

- Confidential information can be disclosed to Hope College faculty and staff who have a legitimate educational interest.
- Confidential information can be disclosed pursuant to a court order or subpoena.
- Confidential information is disclosed to the National Student Clearinghouse (for financial aid purposes only).
- Confidential information can be disclosed to protect the safety of the student or the safety of others.

In other circumstances, confidential information can be released to others only with the written consent of the student.

WHOM SHOULD STUDENTS CONTACT IF THEY HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Students should contact the Registrar's Office, 141 East 12th Street, Holland, MI 49423, registrar@hope.edu, or 616.395.7760.

FERPA for Faculty and Staff

Maintaining the confidentiality of students' records is everyone's responsibility—because it's the right thing to do and because the federal government requires it through FERPA (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, also known as the "Buckley Amendment").

WHAT ARE "EDUCATION RECORDS"?

Education records include any information directly related to the student whether stored on paper or in an electronic file, on a computer or other media (microfilm, CD, etc.).

WHAT ARE THE BASIC RULES?

Students' education records are confidential and may not be released without the written consent of the student.

In practical terms, this means that students' class schedules, grades, progress in a class or program should not be shared with others, including family members. Grades should not be posted (by name or ID number or other personal identifiers); graded materials (papers, tests, lab reports, etc.) should not be put in places where others can see the grades; class lists should not be shared with others outside the college. Faculty and staff have access to students' education records only if they have a legitimate need to know.

If you post grades on Moodle, students can see only their own grades and ID numbers (this is not a breach of confidentiality since others cannot see their grades or ID numbers). However, if you have designated any student workers (paper graders, TAs, etc.) as "teachers" or "non-editing teachers," it's important that they understand these basic rules of confidentiality.

Faculty and staff are responsible for explaining the basic rules of confidentiality to students they hire to do any grading (papers, quizzes, lab reports, tests, etc.).

If you have doubts about disclosing information, do not release anything until you contact the Registrar's Office (x7760). The Registrar's Office is responsible for maintaining student records.

FERPA for Families

Sending students to college is a life-transition for families, not just for the students themselves.

One of the transitions involves how information is communicated. In elementary, middle, and high school, your student probably brought home lots of graded work. You may have attended parent-teacher conferences, been sent quarterly report cards, and been notified about disciplinary issues. You may even have been able to track your student's grades and assignments through an online account every day!

Under FERPA regulations, when students attend college, the right to see such information transfers from family members to students.

This clear-cut regulation can be frustrating for families who have previously had frequent and easy access to their students' education records. How can families know whether their students are attending classes? What grades they are earning? What progress are they making toward completing their degrees?

Our best advice is to **talk with your student**. Talk with your student about what information you expect to be shared. You may want to see midterm or final grades (these are posted on students' KnowHopePlus accounts). If you have agreed to pay some or all the tuition bill if your student earns certain grades, remind your student of this agreement. Keep connected: ask questions about classes, schedules, and progress. Students who know that their families have high ideals of conduct and a realistic approach to academics are better equipped to meet academic expectations and to conduct themselves responsibly.

Even though we cannot release specific academic information about student, we are eager to respond to your questions about campus policies and want to know if you have a concern about your student so we can follow up appropriately. Please contact the Registrar's Office at registrar@hope.edu or 616.395.7760.

Our goals for your student are the same as yours: to foster academic success, independence, self-reliance, good judgment, and mature relationships with others. For this reason, we encourage students to communicate with their families about important academic, personal, and medical issues.

Parents are notified if their student is placed on academic probation or on the Dean's List, though the student's grade point average (GPA) is not shared. Families are also notified if their involvement is important for the resolution of judicial or behavioral issues.

Questions about FERPA policy as it relates to Hope College should be directed to:

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141 East 12th Street
Holland, MI 49423
registrar@hope.edu
616.395.7760.

U.S. Department of Education
Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO)
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[U.S. Department of Education website](#)