

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

FERPA for Students—General Information

FERPA is a federal law that applies to educational institutions. Under FERPA, schools must allow students who are 18 years or over or attending a postsecondary institution:

- Access to their education records
- An opportunity to seek to have the records amended (see the Student Handbook for this procedure)
- Some control over the disclosure of information from the records

FERPA General Guidance for Parental Disclosure

When a student turns 18 years of age or attends a postsecondary institution, the student, and not the parent, may access, seek to amend, and consent to disclosures of his or her education records.

If you are an undergraduate day student and you choose not to share information with your parents, Northeastern will, if asked, indicate that you have restricted access to your records.

Release of Directory Information

The primary purpose of directory information is to allow Northeastern University to confirm attendance for employers, health insurance companies, and loan agencies. Northeastern may disclose appropriately designated “directory information” without written consent, unless you have advised the University to the contrary in accordance with the procedures below. If you choose not to release directory information, all communications with all third parties and agencies will need to be done through your written request to the University or in person.

Northeastern Directory Information:

- College and major
- Dean’s List or other recognition lists
- Graduation degree(s) and honors
- Dates of attendance
- Sports activity participation, such as for soccer, showing weight and height of team members
- A playbill, showing your role in a drama or music production

If Northeastern currently has permission to release data and you do not want the University to disclose directory information without your prior written consent, you must notify the University by coming to the Office of the Registrar, 120 Hayden Hall.

Notification of Rights under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within forty-five days of the day the University receives a request for access. Students should submit to the registrar, dean, or head of the academic department (or appropriate official) written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The University official will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the University official to whom the request was submitted, that official shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education record that the student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Students may ask the University to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the University official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the University decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the University will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is defined as a person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit and health staff); a person or company with whom the University has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a person assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the University to comply with the requirements of FERPA. At Northeastern, the Office of the University Registrar, 120 Hayden Hall, administers FERPA.

5. Information concerning the following items about individual students is public and the offices listed below have the most accurate and up-to-date information:
- **Office of the Registrar**
(120 Hayden Hall)
Full name, major field of study, dates of attendance, class year, degrees and awards received, most recent previous educational institution attended.
 - **Department of Athletics**
(219 Cabot Physical Education Center)
Participation in formally recognized University athletics, weight and height of members of athletic teams.
 - **Campus Activities**
(434 Curry Student Center)
Participation in officially recognized University activities and student organizations.

Additional Information

Additional information can be obtained at the following Web site:

www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html

or by writing to:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5920

FERPA and the USA Patriot Act

The USA Patriot Act preempts FERPA, described above. The act provides federal law enforcement agencies access to otherwise confidential student records upon the presentation of specified authority. The act also says that the University cannot notify the individual whose records or information is being sought that the request has been made. All requests for student information made under the authority of the USA Patriot Act are handled by the Office of University Counsel, 115 Churchill Hall.