Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law enacted in 1974 to protect the privacy of student education records. The law applies to those institutions that regularly receive federal funding from the Department of Education and is enforced by the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA defines an eligible student as a student who has reached 18 years of age or is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

Students have four primary rights under FERPA:

• To inspect and review their education records
• To seek to amend those education records they believe to be inaccurate or misleading
• To have some control over the disclosure of information from those education records
• To file a complaint concerning alleged failures by an institution to comply with FERPA regulations within 180 days

Complaints of alleged violations may be addressed to
Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

The UT Dallas FERPA violation link is located at www.utdallas.edu/legal/ferpa.

The student’s education record is established and maintained to provide both the student and the University with information regarding the student’s progress while enrolled at the University. Any student enrolled in the University has access to and may inspect those records relating to his or her academic progress, to the extent allowed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Texas Public Information Act. The record is considered to be confidential and may be released only within the limitations clearly defined by university regulations and state and federal statutes or with the student’s written permission.

The student’s education record contains both directory and non-directory information. Directory or public information is information that is not generally considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. A student may choose to withhold release of directory information. A student may do so by completing the "Request for Confidentiality of Directory Information" form at www.utdallas.edu/registrar/forms.

FERPA does not extend to research papers and theses authored by students; these documents are available to interested members of the public.

Detailed information pertaining to the content of and handling of students’ education records is contained in University policy Handbook of Operating Procedures, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (UTDSP5010). Students wishing more information about their rights established under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act should contact the Office of the Registrar, Student Services Building, (972) 883-2342 or visit www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa.