

## Confidentiality of Student Records

The University policy on student records is found in the Academic Information section of the various University catalogs. You are encouraged to review the materials carefully and to contact your Registrar's Office if you have any questions concerning your rights and/or responsibilities regarding the confidentiality of student records.

### The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)

- permits students to inspect their education records
- limits disclosure to others of personally identifiable information from education records without the student's prior written consent to such disclosure
- provides students the opportunity to seek correction of their education records where appropriate.

According to FERPA, educational records are defined as those records directly related to a student and maintained by the institution or by a party acting for or authorized to keep records for the institution. They may be handwritten or in the form of print, magnetic tape, disks, film, on-line computer access files, or some other medium contained in records, files, documents, and all other data directly related to students.

All employees of Mercer University, to include administrators, faculty, and staff, are required to abide by the policies governing the review and release of student educational records. Access to the student record system (CampusVUE) will be granted only to those University employees who have been determined by the nature of their job to have a "legitimate educational interest" also defined as a "need to know".

#### **If given access to student records it is your responsibility to never**

- **disclose your personal password to another individual**
- **sign onto a computer terminal and let anyone else access data from it**
- **leave screens (or reports) containing confidential student information in view of others who do not have a legitimate educational interest in the data**
- **leave the computer terminal unattended (always lock your session whenever you are going to be away from your desk for short periods of time and sign off whenever you are going to be away for an extended period)**
- **improperly store or dispose of printed student record reports.**

In order to maintain a high level of system security it is essential that supervisors notify the Registrar's Office of any changes in departmental personnel that would affect an employee's need to access the student record system (e.g., termination of employment, change of assignment). In some instances, under close supervision, it may be appropriate for student workers to view non-sensitive student data in order to conduct the normal business of the office. In such cases, student employees must be given their own access codes. However, they should never be allowed access to any screens containing sensitive data (e.g. grades, GPAs, test scores).

## The Release of Student Record Information

An employee of the University must never disclose confidential information (e.g., academic data such as grades, test scores, and class schedules) contained in a student's record to a third party without the written consent of the student.

By definition, a "third party" includes parents or guardians, spouse, other students, agencies, organizations, the media, and all other individuals who are not part of the University. Sensitive student data should never be shared with another employee who does not have a legitimate educational "need to know" and is therefore not authorized to receive such information.

Mercer students may sign a form that authorizes University personnel to release and/or discuss with the student's parents or guardians information contained in the student's academic record. Once signed, the authorization remains in effect until a request for a change is submitted in writing to the Office of the Registrar. The forms are provided to all new students prior to summer orientation or may be obtained from the Registrar's Office.

If a student has notified the University to restrict information or allow special release, a red **[F]** appears in the toolbar at the top of the screen to the right of the student's name. On the Student Master beside **FERPA** the field will show if a student has requested that certain information not be released outside the University, as well as if they do not want to be published in the campus directory. If special access has been granted, that will also appear there. If blank, this indicates permission has NOT been given. To check to whom students are allowing release of information, select Contact Manager>Addresses and scroll to find address type of FERPA in the addresses folder.

## Directory Information

The only exception to the non-disclosure regulations pertaining to the release of student records is "directory information", as defined and published by the University. Directory information may be released at the discretion of the University without the written consent of the student. However, Mercer does not generally release directory information. The list of Directory Information is in the University catalogs, Academic Information section, under "Student Rights Pertaining to Educational Records."

Currently enrolled students may, however, request that directory information concerning them not be released. A request for non-disclosure must be filed with the Registrar's Office. Once submitted the non-disclosure will become part of the on-line student record system.

Please keep in mind that the Office of the Registrar is responsible for official verification of enrollment and academic information (transcripts, degrees earned) for students. All such requests should be referred that office.



OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

# FERPA FORM

## CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

In the conduct of its normal business, Mercer University collects, maintains and archives confidential academic information on students. The University, under the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** of 1974, as amended, is responsible for maintaining and protecting the confidentiality of student records and is specifically prohibited from releasing non-directory information to third parties without the student's written consent. The act, however, permits University officials access to confidential information on a legitimate "need to know" basis.

Access to confidential student records information is granted to assist you in conducting your business on behalf of the University and its students. Accepting this access makes you responsible and liable for maintaining this confidentiality. Under no circumstances should you share student information, disclose any of your Mercer University password(s), or allow anyone to use your access.

**Persons who violate the confidentiality of student records may be subject to disciplinary action.**

<i>Please check all that apply.</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> I <b>DO NOT</b> require access (provide name and signature ONLY)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Faculty	<input type="checkbox"/> Academic Advisor	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrator / Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Employee
Name (please print):			
<b>I have read the above statements and understand my responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of student records information.</b>			
Signature:		Date:	
Mercer University ID:			
Mercer E-mail Address/ Help Desk Ticket Number:			
Job Title:			
College/ Department:		Phone Ext.:	
Signature of Supervisor or Department Chair(required):			

Please send completed form to the Office of Registrar, Macon Campus, Langdale 108  
or fax to (478) 301-2455