

FERPA Release of Information- Student and Parent guide

NSU follows BOR policy regarding the release of **directory information**. Directory information is information not generally considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. The following has been defined as directory information at NSU and can be released without the student's written permission:

- Student's name
- Grade level (undergraduate or graduate)
- Major field of study
- Graduation date
- Diploma or degree
- Dates of attendance
- Hometown
- Academic honors/achievements

E-mail is not considered **directory information**. The same is true for phone numbers and mail addresses. These are released only if an exception applies (found in the NSU Privacy policy).

Information NEVER released-

- Social Security Number or Student ID
- Gender, race, ethnicity, citizenship, country of origin, religious preference, grades or gpa
- Class Schedule

Students are given the opportunity to **"Withhold Information"**. If students choose this option, nothing will be released. Students should weigh this decision carefully as this means they will not be included in any publications of academic awards, nor even that they are a student.

Students who wish to permit access to their educational records or with questions should contact the NSU Registrar's Office at 605-626-2012. The complete policy along with forms to withhold or release information can be found on our website at <http://www.northern.edu/academics/registrar/Pages/privacy.aspx>.

FERPA applies to **education records** at all levels of education. Once the student reaches the age of 18 OR attends an institution of higher education, regardless of age, FERPA rights transfer from the parent to the student.

If a student signs a release, **educational records** may be shared with the person(s) specified on that release. Educational records are those records, files, documents and other materials retained in our student record system which contain information directly related to a student's academic progress or financial status. These may be obtained by contacting the Registrar's Office, Finance Office or Financial Aid Office. These offices will request confirmation of identity by:

1. Photo id
2. Knowledge of student ID number or SS#, student date of birth, and several fields of info (example: high school & year of graduation, course taken prior term and instructor name)
3. For a third party, confirmation that they are listed on a release form in the student's file. Information can be returned to the listed phone, email or mailing address.

Faculty, advisors and staff(outside the Registrar's Office, Finance Office or Financial Aid Office) are not to share personal records on student progress with third parties, even if the student has signed the release. Students are encouraged to engage directly with faculty and advisors. Parents are advised to have their student contact their faculty or advisors directly.

Counseling and medical treatment records are not typically considered education records.

FERPA permits non-consensual disclosure of education records in connection with a health or safety emergency, limited to a specific situation that presents imminent danger to a student, other students or other members of the school community, or to avert or diffuse serious threats to the safety or health of a student or other individuals.

School officials and agents acting on behalf of the institutions (contracted commencement photographers, NSU Foundation, consultants) may access student education records within the scope of performing their job duties (legitimate educational interests).

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