

# FERPA and You: What You Need to Know



**ERIN WEBB**  
**UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR**  
**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED**

**SSHA NEW INSTRUCTOR ORIENTATION**  
**JULY 23, 2020**

# True or False?



**A student's parent calls asking how the student is doing in class, you may give that information.**

# FALSE!



*Even though the person inquiring may be the student's parent, FERPA recognizes students in higher education as adults, regardless of age. Therefore, you may not give out grade or any other performance-related information. The student is an adult who is entitled to privacy, even from parents, relatives, spouses, etc.*

# True or False?



**The local police call saying that they are trying to determine whether a particular student attended class on a specific day. Since they are in the middle of an investigation and need the information as soon as possible, you are allowed to give them information.**

# FALSE!



*The police should be directed to the Office of the Registrar. Depending on information requested, the Registrar may require police to produce a subpoena.*

# True or False?



**It's okay for faculty members or TAs to post grades using only a part of students' names or IDs.**

# False!



*This is a violation of FERPA! If you must post grades, assign individual numbers to students at random. Only the student and the faculty/TA who assigned the number should know the number. The order of posting should NEVER be alphabetic by student name!*

# True or False?



**It's wrong for faculty members or TAs to leave graded exams, papers, etc., outside their office for students to pick up—or in the front of a lecture hall to pick up.**



# True!



- *You may not leave personally identifiable materials in a public place.*
- *Some alternatives: e-mail, Canvas, or Box.*

# True or False?



**An unauthorized person retrieves grade information from a computer screen that was left unattended. UC Merced is responsible for this violation under FERPA.**

# True!



*Information on a computer screen should be treated the same as printed reports. The medium in which the information is held is unimportant. No information should be left accessible or unattended, including computer displays. Protect student data like you would protect a purse or wallet. Do not leave these items out in open areas, but store them out of sight, preferably in a locked cabinet or drawer when not in use.*

# True or False?



**When a student asks you to write a letter of recommendation, you may include grades he/she earned in the letter you write.**

# False!



*Unless you receive a signed release from the student to do so, you may not include this information. You may, however, include information about the student's "general" performance.*

# ***WHEN IN DOUBT, DON'T GIVE IT OUT!***



*Contact ERIN WEBB with questions and concerns*

- *ewebb2@ucmerced.edu*

*Want to read more?* [registrar.ucmerced.edu/faculty](https://registrar.ucmerced.edu/faculty)

- *Academic Calendar*
- *FERPA*
- *Grades, including how to change a student grade*
- *Dates and Deadlines*