

UConn Early College Experience FERPA Guidance for Instructors

As a High School UConn ECE Instructor, you play a key role in providing students with challenging coursework and a college experience. With dual responsibilities between your high school and the University, it can be difficult to always know when it is permissible to access and share student records and information under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The following information is intended to guide your decisions when disclosing student records and information in your capacity as a UConn ECE Instructor.

What is FERPA?

FERPA affords certain rights regarding the access and protection of a Student's education records. The term "education record" includes any personally identifiable information, or "PII" contained in records, files, and other materials in any documented format that directly relates to a current or former Student. For example, a student's admission file, course schedule, fee bills, conduct history, and grades are all considered education records under FERPA.

Why is FERPA applied differently at UConn than your high school?

Under the law, parents/guardians typically have the right to access their student's education records and have some control over the redisclosure of such records until their student is 18 years old. However, when a student is enrolled in courses at an institution of higher education, such as UConn, FERPA transfers these rights from the parent/guardian to the student, regardless of the student's age. This means that parents/guardians do not have the right to access their student's UConn records and information. Therefore, FERPA requires you to protect the confidentiality of student records related to UConn and you generally may not share information with parents or guardians.

What should I do if a parent or guardian requests UConn ECE records or information related to their student?

If the request is related to the student's academic progress (e.g. performance in the *UConn* course), you must obtain prior written consent from the student to disclose any information that is contained in their records. FERPA consent must include: 1) what records and information may be shared; 2) to whom; and 3) for what purpose.

You may obtain this consent over email from the Student so long as you reasonably believe that it is the Student providing the consent (e.g. the consent is coming from their assigned school email account). Otherwise, please obtain consent on paper. Consent should be obtained for each matter that you speak with a parent/guardian about because students have the right to revoke their consent at any time.

Please note, you are never required to discuss a Student's records and information with a parent/guardian, even with consent. If you ever feel it is no longer appropriate to speak with a parent/guardian, please redirect them to UConn's Early College Experience Program Office.

Any inquires unrelated to academic progress should also be re-directed to the UConn ECE Program Office.

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Sample Consent Language

Dear Student,

If you would like me to speak with your parent/guardian regarding your [insert matter here], I will first need your consent in writing.

Please confirm for me that I should discuss your [insert matter here] in this course with your [parent/guardian name] for the purpose of assisting you with your studies?

What parties may I share UConn student records and information with *without* obtaining a student's prior written consent?

You may always share UConn ECE Student records and information with the UConn Early College Experience Office when there is a legitimate educational interest for the Student to do so. You may always share any records and information that directly relate to a specific Student, with that Student.