

Frequently Asked Questions about FERPA

RETURNING HOMEWORK, EXAMS AND LABS

All graded material should ideally be returned directly to the student. If this is not possible, graded material should be returned in a sealed envelope (a campus mail envelope is fine). Do not put graded materials in a central location for mass distribution. This is the same regardless of the size of the class.

WEBCT

Don't post this stuff to the web

EXCEL SPREADSHEETS WITH GRADES/IDS/ETC

Don't post these to the web; do not print them and put them on a door/wall/window/etc.; do not email the list to all students in the class or others; do not store these on laptops or flashdrives (these things get legs and we have to notify if there are breaches of data) – make sure there is encryption on your machine if you do; Encryption is good to have on laptops anyway

PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE DATA

Grades, graded materials, other evaluative material is private. Public data is... need to check for suppression before giving out information. Need to get students permission before being a reference or writing a letter of recommendation.

EMAILING STUDENTS

Email to students should be sent **ONLY** to their U of M assigned account. This is our way of identifying who the recipient is. Do not send

grades or other private student information to their other accounts. Other course related correspondence should take place via their U of M assigned account too. Use Bcc in mass emails to students

DISCUSSING STUDENT INFORMATION

As a TA you are an employee of the University and you have access to the student information you handle within your work capacity. You should not discuss students progress with other students who do not have a need to know (which is most of them). If you are discussing a student's progress for legitimate reasons, you should do so in an area that is private.

ACCESSING STUDENT INFORMATION

You may have access to a great deal of student information. You should only access what you need to do your job. The University's appropriate use policy regulates use of data; you should only access what you need.

TALKING TO PARENTS

You cannot talk to a parent without written permission to do so from the student.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Tina Falkner in Academic Support Resources, 612-625-1064
<rovic001@umn.edu> or Dan Delaney,
Academic Support Services, 612-625-7824
<delan021@umn.edu>