

# Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

All policies with regard to student records shall conform with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 1974. Specific policies described below are intended to supplement the rights and assure the safeguards provided by FERPA and to clarify student records policy at the SUNY College of Optometry.

## Public Records

- A. The following information related to a student is considered “directory information” and the College reserves the right to disclose it to anyone inquiring without the student’s consent unless the student, within 10 days of the beginning of each academic year, informs the Office of Student Affairs and International Programs, in writing, that this information is not to be made public. Directory information is name, permanent address and telephone, local address and telephone.
- B. Disclosure of Information
  1. The student directory information is made available to students, faculty and administrative staff of the College for their own use only. It may not be duplicated or disseminated in any way by the recipient.
  2. The Student Directory, in full or in part, is not disseminated to outside agencies, business concerns, or private individuals without the consent of the vice president for student affairs and international programs.
  3. No office maintaining an educational record of a student will disclose any personally identifiable information from that record to anyone other than the student him/herself without the written consent of the student, except as provided below.
  4. The records of the student will be disclosed without his/her written consent to academic and administrative officers within the College who have a legitimate educational interest in the information. “Legitimate educational interest” means the demonstrated need to know by those persons who act in the student’s educational interest. This includes the following persons and their professional and clerical staff acting under their instructions:
    - a. Vice president and dean for academic affairs or associate dean for graduate studies and research for the program involved,
    - b. Staff of the Office of Student Affairs and International Programs,
    - c. President,
    - d. Committees on Course & Standing,
    - e. Faculty of each class only for students under academic difficulties,
    - f. SUNY Administration in Albany for The SUNY Institutional Research Information System (SIRIS).
    - g. Someone from an outside party with a legitimate right to know as defined by the FERPA.
  5. The records of a student will be disclosed without his/her written consent to those federal and state government agencies and officials only as provided by law.
  6. The records of a student will be disclosed without his/her written consent to an agency to which the student has applied or from which he/she has received financial aid or which has made decisions concerning eligibility, amount, conditions or enforcement of terms of such aid.
  7. The records of a student will be disclosed without his/her written consent to certain educational agencies and institutions only as permitted by law.
  8. The College reserves the right to furnish to parents or guardians of financially dependent students any information relating to such students’ academic status.
  9. The records of a student will be disclosed without his/her written consent to comply with a judicial order or subpoena.
  10. The records of a student will be disclosed without his/her written consent in a health or safety emergency.

## **Confidential Records**

### A. Submission of Grades:

1. Instructors submit grades to the Registrar electronically via the mysunyopt.edu portal.
2. Supplemental grades such as completions for "I" grades or repeat courses for "F" grades must be submitted on an official Grade Change Form. Grade changes must be signed by the instructor, department chair and the vice president and dean for academic affairs before submission to the Office of the Registrar.

### B. Confidentiality of Grades

1. Grades of individual students, in any identifiable format, may not be published or posted. This prohibition includes the listing of grades by social security number. This does not preclude the posting of the grade distribution for a course by the instructor as long as grades are not identified by student
2. All persons with access to grades must not divulge individual student grades to anyone either verbally or in written form.

### C. Availability for use by faculty and Committees on Course & Standing.

1. At the request of the vice president and dean for academic affairs or associate dean for graduate studies and research, transcripts, grade reports and written instructor comments may be made available at the end of the semester faculty meetings and at meetings of the Course & Standing Committee.
2. Transcripts of grades at prior institutions attended, copies of standardized test scores and letters of recommendation may be requested by the Course & Standing Committee by majority vote of the committee members present. No other documents may be requested.
3. The registrar shall be responsible for the distribution and collection of all documents, and copies thereof, which are utilized at faculty Course & Standing meetings. All such documents and copies must be returned to the registrar.
4. The chairperson at each meeting where student records are discussed must inform all present about the maintenance of confidentiality of all student records and of the proceedings of that meeting.

### D. Availability for faculty, professional staff and outside use.

1. Student grades may only be made available to individuals and/or agencies conducting bona fide educational research.
2. Proposals for educational research involving the use of student grades or test scores must include:
  - a. a statement of the objective of the study,
  - b. the qualifications of the individual or group conducting the study,
  - c. a description of the methodology to be employed,
  - d. a signed statement assuring confidentiality of all data,
  - e. assurance that data will only be reported as group data or if published as individual data, there will be no possible way of identifying the individual,
  - f. all student data supplied must be returned at the conclusion of the project.

## **Availability of Records to Students**

### A. Inspection and Review of Records

1. Any student may inspect and review his/her education records upon written request to the registrar. The registrar will comply as soon as possible; under the law this must be done within 45 days after the request.
2. The student has the right to review and inspect all the documents in his/her folder except:
  - a. confidential evaluations and letters of recommendation filed before January 1, 1975;
  - b. evaluations and recommendations after that date if the student has waived his/her right to see them;
  - c. financial records and statements of his/her parents;
  - d. those documents classified by the law as non-educational.
3. If, after inspecting and reviewing his/her records, the student has any questions about them, he/she

may request an oral or written explanation and interpretation of them.

4. The student may also secure a copy of every document in his/her folder open to him/her. These will be made by the College under the same terms, conditions and charges as for a copy of a transcript, i.e. \$5 for each document. If an original or source document exists elsewhere (e.g. records of other schools), copies will not be sent to a third party.

B. Transcripts:

1. Students can view their term reports at the end of each term and whenever a grade change is made via the my.sunyopt.edu student portal.
2. Students with no outstanding financial obligation are entitled, upon request, to one free official transcript after graduation.
3. Students must pay the current transcript fee for each transcript ordered.
4. All requests for official transcripts must be made in writing on a Transcript Request Form, available in the Office of Student Affairs and International Programs or student portal. Transcripts will not be sent until the fee is paid.
5. Official transcripts will be mailed from the registrar. Under special circumstances, an official transcript will be given to the student in a sealed envelope stamped by the Office of the Registrar.

C. Elements of one transcript

1. The registrar maintains records of overall class standing and grade point averages and all calculations related to the student's academic standing.
2. Cumulative and term GPA, quality points, occasions on probation and other information relative to the student's academic standing are reported on the college transcript.

### **The Retention of Records**

- A. The SUNY College of Optometry adheres to the State University of New York system and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers standards for the retention of records. Detail on the length of time each document is maintained is available from the Office of the Registrar.

