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FERPA

**[TRANSCRIPTS
& RECORDS
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RECORDS\)](#)**

What you need to know

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is a federal law that pertains to the release of and access to student education records. FERPA affords you the right to have access to your education records, the right to seek to have your records amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under applicable programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

What follows is a summary of MIT's policy. Read the [full, official policy](https://policies.mit.edu/policies-procedures/110-privacy-and-disclosure-personal-information/113-privacy-student-records) (<https://policies.mit.edu/policies-procedures/110-privacy-and-disclosure-personal-information/113-privacy-student-records>).

WHAT EDUCATIONAL RECORDS ARE

Under FERPA, education records are defined as records that are directly related to a student and are maintained by an educational agency or institution, or by a party acting for the agency or institution. They can exist in any medium, including: typed,

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Transcripts, +
Academic Calendar (calendar) Guide Me ▾

Trar
handwritten, digital, computer generated, videotape,
audiotape, film, microfilm, microfiche, and email,
& letters among others.

Digital
diplomas

REGISTRATION &
ACADEMICS

Replacement
diplomas
(/transcripts-
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diplomas)

Records
privacy &
access

FER
- FERPA

Suppressing
directory
information
(/transcripts-
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privacy-
access/ferpa/suppressing-
directory-
information)

Advisor
access
(/transcripts-
records/records-
privacy-
access/advisor-
access)

Heads
of
House
access
(/transcripts-
records/records-
privacy-
access/heads-
house-
access)

Personal
information

WHAT EDUCATIONAL RECORDS ARE NOT

As described more fully in FERPA, records that are kept in the sole possession of the maker and not shared with others, certain medical treatment records, law enforcement unit records, certain employment records, and records created or received after an individual is no longer a student and which are not directly related to the individual's attendance as a student are not education records and therefore are not governed by FERPA.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

In accordance with FERPA, MIT may disclose directory information without your consent and without a record being made of these disclosures. MIT acknowledges that date of birth, while directory information, may be considered somewhat more sensitive to some community members and therefore reasonable efforts should be made to release date of birth to those who have a legitimate need to obtain such information.

MIT defines directory information as the following:

- Name
- Address (term and permanent)
- MIT office address
- Term phone number
- Term email address
- Date of birth
- Course
- Year and registration type
- Degrees received
- Dates of attendance
- Any honors and awards received

CLASSE
GRADES
EVALUATI

- Height and weight for an intercollegiate athletic team member

SUPPRESSING YOUR DIRECTORY INFORMATION

You may choose to withhold your directory information (/transcripts-records/records-privacy-access/ferpa/suppressing-directory-information) from disclosure.

DISCLOSURE OF EDUCATION RECORDS

In general, MIT may not disclose personally identifiable information from your education records without your prior consent. However, FERPA allows the Institute to disclose such information under the following conditions, among others:

- To Institute officials, staff, and others engaged in activities on behalf of the Institute with a legitimate educational interest
- In connection with a health or safety emergency
- In compliance with a subpoena, provided certain conditions are met
- To officials of other academic institutions to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which they are concurrently enrolled
- To authorized representatives of certain federal, state, and local government agencies

MIT does not usually disclose information from education records to a student's parents or guardians unless the student requests or consents to the disclosure. In certain situations, appropriate MIT officials may disclose information when such disclosure seems important for the well-being of the student or others (e.g., in a health or safety emergency).

Schools, academic departments, laboratories, and centers that have long-standing traditions of public disclosure of student work for pedagogical purposes (e.g., products of design studios, collaborative/team class work, and graduate research results and reports) may make such work publicly available, but

should bring this to their students' attention in advance, and give them the opportunity to opt out of the disclosure if it will not otherwise constrain the educational process.

Unless otherwise required by law, MIT will not share library circulation records and other records that identify the intellectual pursuits of a student, even within the Institute.

INSPECTION OF EDUCATION RECORDS

You have the right to inspect and review your education records. Requests to inspect records can be submitted to the Registrar's Office (<mailto:records@mit.edu?subject=Inspection%20of%20Education%20Records>).

MIT does not maintain education records in any one central office, but the Registrar's Office will provide contact details of the appropriate official in each office to the requesting student. Requests for access will receive a response within forty-five days, and you will be notified of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

Unless otherwise permitted or required by law, you may only inspect, review, or be informed of information directly related to yourself. You do not have the right to access certain records, such as:

- confidential letters of recommendation if you have waived the right of access in writing;
- records of Institute faculty and staff members that are made for, and restricted to, their personal use;
- your parents' financial records; and
- records that also contain information on other students.

AMENDING EDUCATION RECORDS

You have the right to have your education records maintained accurately and may request amendment of records that they believe are inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of their rights under FERPA. Requests for amendment should be submitted to the

custodian of the record or through the Registrar's Office (<mailto:records@mit.edu?subject=Amendment%20of%20Education%20Records>).

If the office to which the request is presented decides not to amend the record, you may request a hearing. If, after such a hearing, the record is not amended, you may submit a statement to be included with the record commenting on the information and stating disagreement with the decision not to amend the record as requested.

The process of amending records or requesting hearings applies only to information that has been recorded inaccurately, incorrectly, or that violates the student's rights under FERPA. It is not a process to appeal grades or other subjective judgments with which you disagree, but that have been recorded correctly.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

You have the right to file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Institute to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Complaints must be submitted within 180 days of the date of the alleged violation or of the date that you knew or reasonably should have known of the alleged violation, and must contain specific factual allegations giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation of FERPA has occurred. Complaints may be sent to:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C.
20202-4605

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Registrar's Office (<mailto:records@mit.edu?subject=Education%20Record>).

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

Office of the Vice Chancellor
Accessibility

Room 5-117
Service modes & hours
registrar-www@mit.edu
([mailto:registrar-
www@mit.edu](mailto:registrar-www@mit.edu))

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