

FERPA-Covered University of Mississippi Records Release for Research

Purpose:

Obtaining UM student records for research in compliance with FERPA

Background:

Data from UM student records are commonly requested in human subject research that is reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. This policy provides a standardized, legal procedure for obtaining student records and for retention of documented releases for FERPA-protected data.

Authorization for Release of Records:

- A signed release on paper is required in order for investigators to obtain student records from the Registrar. The release must specify exactly what student information is to be released and which investigators will have access. Undergraduate investigators cannot have access to identified student records.
- An electronic alternative to a signed release, (e.g., using student emails for identity verification), may be allowed in some cases. The email release must comply with the same requirements as a signed paper release.

Records retention:

- The investigator must retain a copy of the release for 7 years (scanned / electronic copies are acceptable).

Requesting Student Data from Registrar – Required Items:

1. Excel spreadsheet containing student ID numbers and student names – as they appear on their records. Columns must be: ID #, Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial or Middle Name.
2. For each subject, an electronic copy of the release (see model below).
3. List of specific data requested.

Email all three items to: registrar@olemiss.edu with the Subject Heading “Request for Release of Student Records for IRB-Approved Research.”

Electronic alternatives (e.g., a survey sent to a student email address where the student clicks to take the survey and then clicks to give consent for listed records) to the below Model Release Authorization will be evaluated on a case by case basis. The release, whether signed or electronic, must be included with your IRB application.

Model Release Authorization

INSTRUCTIONS TO RESEARCHER:

1. Alter only the information specific to your study [italicized and in brackets]
2. If paper release, append it to the consent form as a separate page (so you can scan it electronically)
3. If requesting electronic release, include the procedure for gaining identity verification (e.g., from valid email addresses) and the release authorization with your IRB application materials.

----- **Authorization to Release FERPA-Protected Student Records to Researchers**

[*Title of Project*]

Investigators who will have access to identified student records: [*List Names; No undergraduate experimenters permitted*]

I understand that, by signing this release, I am giving University researchers access to the FERPA-protected academic records listed below.

I consent to have only the following UM [*and high school*] academic records released from the University Registrar to the investigators listed above:

[**EXAMPLES:**]

- [*Current overall UM GPA*]
- [*UM GPA for this semester only*]
- [*High school GPA*]
- [*Standardized test scores (ACT/SAT)*]

The Researchers:

- May use the information only for purposes of the approved research project. Any new use of the information requires new approval from the participant.
- Must provide adequate protection for the information to ensure that it is not compromised or subject to unauthorized access.
- Ensure that no one outside the research team has access to the information.

This authorization expires on: [Enter a reasonable date] (Date)

Participant's Signature

Date

Full Name (as on ID Card) – Printed

Student ID Number

I understand that (1) I have the right not to consent to the release of my education records, (2) I have the right to inspect any written records released pursuant to this Consent, and (3) I have the right to revoke this Consent at any time by delivering a written or emailed revocation to the investigator & copied to the IRB office (irb@olemiss.edu).

This information is released subject to the confidentiality provisions of appropriate state and federal laws and regulations which prohibit any further disclosure of this information without the specific written consent of the person to whom it pertains, or as otherwise permitted by such regulations.