

POLICY ON STUDENT GRADE NOTIFICATION

Federal Requirements and University Policy

It is the policy of California State University, Fresno to protect the privacy of students' education records in compliance with federal law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Student grades are education records as defined by FERPA, and may not be disclosed to third parties without the student's prior written consent.

Disclosure may be made directly to an individual student, as long as the information pertains to the individual alone. Other statistical information about the course (*i.e.*, means, grade cutoffs, etc.) may be included as long as it does not identify individual students.

FERPA prohibits the posting of student grades using names, university identification numbers, or social security numbers. Absent student written consent, the practice of posting grades publicly is prohibited, even if student names are obscured, and even if only a portion of the student ID number is used.

Acceptable Methods of Early Notification

Faculty members who wish to provide students with information about their grades during the semester and/or provide students with early notice of their assigned grades before official grades are posted by the University may, but are not required to, use any of the following FERPA-compliant methods. These are, in order of preference:

1. Use secure electronic methods (e. g. Blackboard) which allow students to obtain only their own information.
2. Require students who wish to be notified of their grades to provide a self-addressed stamped envelope. The student is to write the course/section on the front of the envelope. The instructor then records the student's grade on the inside flap of the envelope, seals it, and deposits it in the mail. Postcards should not be used.
3. Email to a student's University e-mail account. This procedure is appropriate if the information sent to the student is only about that student's grade and does not contain information about any other student in the message. Other information about the course (*i.e.* means, grade cutoffs, or other course statistics) may be included as long as it does not identify an individual student.

4. The following method may be used only for classes with an enrollment of 25 students or more.
- Post students' grades using code words or randomly assigned numbers that are known only to the faculty member and individual students, or
 - Post students' grades using the last five digits of students' ID number (not the SSN or any portion of the SSN)

Obtain each student's uncoerced consent to post his/her grade. Ensure that code words, ~~or~~ assigned numbers, or last five digits of student ID number appear in random order when posting grades. Posting in alphabetical order according to student names may allow others to deduce the identity of individual students, even when using code words or randomly assigned numbers. In order for the consent to be valid, it must be signed, dated, and identify the specific information to which the student consents. Faculty members may provide students with the following form for this purpose, either on the last page of the examination or in a separate form:

I, [name] _____, request that my final grade for [specify the course] be posted at/on [specify the location, e.g., Professor So-and-so's door] using the last five digits of my student identification number.

Signature

Student ID #

Date