

12.E Faculty Handling of Student Records/References

FERPA directly affects faculty in their handling of information related to students. For instance, FERPA prohibits the posting of grades by the student's name or the student's ID number. Grades can be posted by using randomly assigned numbers known only by the faculty and the individual student or by using the last four digits of the student ID numbers in such a way that individual privacy is protected (e.g., not listing the students in alphabetical order). In addition, test, papers, and other materials must be returned to the students in a way that prevents access and/or release to anyone other than the student.

Faculty provide an important service for students when they write letters of recommendation on request by the student. In writing these letters, however, faculty members should take care to provide information based on personal observation or knowledge. In addition, faculty should not respond to a third party's request for a reference for a student without that student's prior consent. The Career Center publishes a guidebook for faculty, Graduate Student Instructors, and staff, that provides additional information. It is entitled [Guidelines for Writing Letters of Reference](#), and is available at no cost from that office or their website.