



ASK THE **FERPA** PROFESSORS

Expert answers to your **FERPA** questions.

JANUARY 23, 2023

DEAR FERPA PROFESSORS,

We are a law school and like many law schools when students take their final exam, we assign blind grading IDs to prevent instructor grading bias. Recently there has been a discussion as to whether this blind ID is subject to the same FERPA regulations as the student ID.

1. When students come to sit for their final exam, they are asked to sign a roster that lists their name and blind grading ID. Each name and blind ID number is visible to every student in the class at that time.
2. Once the exam has been graded some instructors believe they should be able to post the final grades for the entire class by using the blind ID numbers. They believe that since it's not the student ID that is tied to the primary education record that there isn't a problem.

FERPA professor, wouldn't both of these be a FERPA violation? The blind grading ID is a unique number that is assigned each semester to a student. So, their blind grading ID is different in the spring than the fall. However, when the students sit for their final exam and can see the blind IDs of other students on the roster, and then the instructor posts those same IDs wouldn't this be problematic? The registrar in me is having a panic attack, but there are others that don't see a problem.

Ms. Erie

DEAR MS. ERIE,

The registrar in you should be concerned. Any information that is directly related to the student and maintained by the institution would be an education record as defined by FERPA unless it meets one of the five exceptions found at § 99.3 "Education Records." None of those exceptions would apply in this instance, so the blind grading ID would be an education record on the student to whom it is linked. Any posting of grades would not be permitted using the ID unless the signed consent requirements of § 99.30 are met.

I hope this is helpful in responding to your inquiry. You can find the above-cited FERPA regulations on pages 154 and 159 of the 2012 AACRAO FERPA Guide.

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www.aacrao.org/FERPA50