

## FERPA Guidance for Online Advising Sessions

In a virtual advising environment, it's important to take steps to ensure the privacy of your advising sessions. FERPA restricts the sharing of student educational records (i.e., records in any medium that contain personally identifiable student information) without permission, except as allowed under certain exemptions.

We recommend taking the following steps when scheduling an online advising session:

- Utilize Buff Portal Advising user preferences (or other school/college applicable appointment system) to indicate the Zoom link you will be using for meeting with students.
- Ask the student to schedule their appointment through Buff Portal Advising (or other school/college applicable appointment system).
- Utilize the waiting room feature for all Zoom advising appointments, and admit only one student at a time.
- In the meeting invitation, tell the student to join the session from a private location, away from roommates, family members or others. When the meeting begins, confirm with the student that no one can overhear your conversation.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **If I want to record and/or share a recorded advising session, do I need the student's consent to do so?**

Yes. Before you begin recording an advising session, you must tell the student the purpose of the recording and with whom you intend to share it. You must obtain the student's consent (written or recorded) prior to recording the session and/or sharing the recording with others.

#### **How long can I retain an advising session recording for the purpose of staff coaching or feedback?**

FERPA does not directly address retention policies; however, the Office of the Registrar recommends deleting advising session recordings within one year of the session.

#### **If parents, siblings or other individuals are trying to listen in and/or ask questions during an advising session, what should I do?**

The student should be in a private location during the advising session. If you see that someone else is listening in or trying to speak during the call, ask the student whether they've authorized FERPA consent to release for that individual.

- If the student says "yes," follow the steps on our [FERPA consent to release page](#) to verify that individual's identity before discussing any non-directory information.
- If the student says "no" but is okay with that individual listening in, tell the student they have to [establish FERPA consent to release](#) for that individual, then follow the steps on our [FERPA consent to release page](#) to verify that individual's identity before discussing any non-directory information.
- If the student says "no" and can't move to a more private location, you must not discuss any non-directory information while that individual is on the call. Instead, speak in general terms and limit the discussion to academic policies and processes.

#### **Do students have a right to request to review and inspect the recording of their advising session?**

Yes. Records of advising sessions that include any type of personally identifiable information about the student are considered education records as long as they are maintained by the university. If a student submits a formal request to review and inspect their education record, the record custodian must respond within 45 days of receiving the request.

#### **Where can I find further information about FERPA?**

The Office of the Registrar maintains FERPA webpages for both [students](#) and [faculty/staff](#), and produce a two-page [faculty/staff FERPA quick reference PDF](#). Two SkillsSoft courses are also available: a general course for staff members (CU: FERPA) and a course tailored to faculty and instructors (CU: FERPA for Faculty).