

## MFT Program Policy on FERPA

### Policy Availability

The Policy on FERPA is available to the public via the [MFT Homepage](#) > [Accreditation](#) > [Policies and Handbook](#).

### FERPA: Student Confidentiality of Educational Records and Materials

FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), concerns itself with students' rights to confidentiality of certain educational records and materials.

### Purpose

This policy outlines the University Graduate Family Therapy Program's adherence to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), ensuring students' rights to privacy and confidentiality regarding their educational records and materials.

### Overview of FERPA

FERPA is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Under FERPA, students are granted specific rights regarding their educational records, including the right to access, inspect, and request the correction of those records, as well as the right to control the disclosure of their records to third parties.

### Rights of Students Under FERPA

- **Right to Confidentiality:** All educational records and materials relating to a student's participation in the Family Therapy Program at Valdosta State University, including but not limited to academic performance, clinical hours, evaluations, and personal information shared in the context of the program, will be kept confidential.
- **Right to Access and Inspect Records:** Students have the right to request and inspect their educational records, which are maintained by the program. This includes academic transcripts, clinical records, evaluations, and any other materials that are part of the student's official records.
- **Right to Request Corrections:** If a student believes that any of the educational records maintained by the program are inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of their privacy rights, they have the right to request amendments to those records.
- **Right to Control Disclosure:** No educational records or materials related to the student will be disclosed to any third party, including family members, other institutions, or external organizations, without the student's prior written consent, except where disclosure is required by law or in situations where FERPA allows for disclosure without consent.

### Disclosure of Records

- **Internal Disclosure:** Records will only be shared within the Family Therapy Program and the University as necessary for the academic and clinical functions of the program. These include faculty members, clinical supervisors, and administrative staff who require access to these records for the student's education or evaluation.

- **External Disclosure:** No records will be shared outside of the program or the University unless the student provides explicit, written consent for the release of their records to a specific third party. This includes, but is not limited to, prospective employers, licensing boards, or other educational institutions.
- Written consent must be signed by the student, specifying:
  - The records to be disclosed
  - The purpose of the disclosure
  - The recipient(s) of the disclosure
- **Exceptions to Disclosure Without Consent:** In certain circumstances, FERPA allows the disclosure of records without consent, including:
  - To comply with a judicial order or subpoena
  - To authorized representatives of the U.S. Department of Education, state and local education authorities, or accrediting organizations
  - In emergency situations to protect the health or safety of the student or others

### Clinical and Supervisory Confidentiality

The Family Therapy Program places a strong emphasis on confidentiality, particularly with respect to clinical records and supervisory evaluations. Any records related to a student's clinical practice, therapy sessions, case notes, and supervisor evaluations and feedback, will be kept confidential and shared only with program faculty and supervisors on a need-to-know basis.

**Student's Permission:** Should a student wish to share clinical records with an outside party (e.g., prospective employer, licensing board), they must provide explicit, written consent.

### Compliance and Enforcement

All faculty, staff, and supervisors within the Family Therapy Graduate Program are required to comply with FERPA regulations. Any violation of this policy, including unauthorized disclosure of student records, will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action.

### Questions and Concerns

Students who need forms or have questions or concerns regarding FERPA or their rights may contact [VSU's Office of the Registrar](#) for further assistance.

An additional VSU link that address FERPA is [Student Rights to Educational Records and Privacy \(FERPA\)](#)