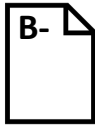


Essential University of Toronto Policies for TAs

RESPECTING CONFIDENTIALITY

In your work as a TA, protect the privacy of your students by sharing their personal information with people who are authorized to see it and keeping it safe from those who are not authorized to see it. The University is governed by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).



I am giving back an assignment. How do I hand back the paper copies and post the grades?



A student's parent emails me to ask about her daughter's grade on the final exam. How do I respond to the request?

@utoronto.ca

A student complains that he has emailed me several times from his Gmail account but has not received a response? What should I do?

RELEVANT UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO POLICIES & OFFICES

- [Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Office at the University of Toronto](#)
- [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#) – full document
- [Privacy Basics for new Faculty and Staff](#) – a Tip sheet of essential information
- [Three Key Access and Privacy Principles](#) – a tip sheet of three principles around privacy
- [Emergency Disclosure of Personal Information at the University of Toronto](#) – a Guideline Published Jointly by the Freedom of Information and Protection and Privacy Office, and the Crisis Manager
- [Protecting Students' Privacy in Class](#) – guidelines for teaching staff at U of T
- [Privacy and Access Tips for Staff](#) – offers tips on privacy and access/record management

GENERAL POLICIES, PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES

There are three areas with confidentiality concerns:

- (1) handling assignments and grades;
- (2) communication with students; and
- (3) record keeping and disclosure.

The practices set out below will help you to reasonably protect privacy, consistent with FIPPA. If you become aware of a privacy breach/issue, immediately contact the FIPP Office at 416.946.7303.

Categories		Don't Do This: What to Avoid	Do This: Best Practices
Handling of Assignments & Grades	Handling of Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't write student grades on the front page of their assignment/test <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't leave graded assignments/tests unattended for pick up, in your class or outside your work area <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't allow anyone to collect the work of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> write grades and comments inside assignment/test books, so they are not visible to others when materials are returned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> return work in controlled, supervised conditions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> permit individuals to pick up only their own work <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> retain unclaimed student work for one year <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> arrange for secure destruction of unclaimed work
	Posting of Student Grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't post grades outside of Portal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> avoid posting student grades in public places (and if you do, don't include their full names and student number) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't verbally tell students their grades in class <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't reveal a student's grade to a third party (e.g., their friends, siblings or parents) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't use a student's work as example in class without the student's consent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't share grade files via non-U of T email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> post grades on Portal so individuals see only their own grade <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> announce how grades will be posted at the start of the tutorials <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> disclose grades only to the student to whom they pertain <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> only release academic/personal information to a third party (e.g., a parent), with the written consent of the student <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> if you must email grades, only use your @utoronto.ca email <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> if it is necessary to post grades with student numbers, only use the last four digits (use this practice each time you have to include student numbers)
Communicating with Students	Taking Student Attendance and Group Work Signup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't take attendance by passing around a sheet where students record their full names and student numbers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't get students to write their student numbers next to their full names <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't allow class lists with personal information to circulate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> inform students at the start of the tutorial/lab how personal information, including attendance, will be collected and used <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> student's full name and complete student number should not be visible to others when collecting attendance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> take attendance yourself (e.g., calling roll is proper practice) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> for group work, collect personal information necessary to conduct the class so that group work scheduled can be developed but be clear on how this information is to be used <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> set up groups, seminars, etc., with group sign-up in Portal
	E-mail Correspondence With and About Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't share student emails (addresses and content) unless needed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't forward student emails to persons not involved in administering the course <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't use the "reply-all" when communicating with a student <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't communicate with students who use non-U of T accounts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> advise students at the start of the course what e-mail practices you will follow <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> tell your students that you are expected to correspond with students only through their official U of T e-mail account <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> avoid "reply all" responses where practical—use "bcc" to avoid disclosing recipient identities to the whole group <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> write e-mails in a professional manner
Record Keeping & Disclosure	Students' Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't access student records unless there is a need to do so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> only collect personal information that you need to do your job <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> if a student wishes to access their records, speak with the CI, Registrar or FOI Liaison
	Reference Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't disclose to a third party what you write in a reference letter on behalf of a student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> confidential academic references are generally protected and are not given to the individual to whom they pertain
	Record Keeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't delete/destroy correspondence you're your students <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't keep student records and/or correspondence in public and/or easily accessible areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> retain e-mails from and to students for at least one year if they contain personal information which you have used <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> all records fall under FIPPA and can be requested and released (and so they have to withstand public scrutiny) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> create excellent, professional records <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> destroy personal information no longer needed for your work
	Disclosure of Student Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't disclose student information unless there is a need to do so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> emergencies, health and safety trump privacy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> personal information can be shared within U of T on a need-to-know basis and/or with a student's consent