

See also Senate *Course Management Policy* (#145)

The logo for Ryerson University, featuring the text "RYERSON UNIVERSITY" in white capital letters on a dark blue rectangular background. To the right of the blue rectangle is a vertical yellow bar.

Office of the Vice Provost and Vice President Academic

MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Planning Group and Department school chairs/directors

From: Dr. Errol Aspevig

cc: Julia Hanigsberg, General Counsel and Secretary to the Board of Governors; and
Rachael Mendicino, Special Assistant to the General Counsel and Secretary to the Board of Governors

Subject: Posting of and/or Emailing Grades to Students

Date: January 15, 2007

Ryerson University has a legal obligation to protect the personal information of its students under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA).

When emails or electronic postings from faculty to students include personal information such as student names, student numbers and corresponding grades, FIPPA has been seriously breached. Students' ability to view personal information of other students gives rise to such a breach.

Although students frequently request results of their tests, exams and assignments electronically from faculty, providing grades electronically to students is a courtesy.

FIPPA breaches have occurred recently with respect to electronic disclosure of student personal information.

To reduce the risk of subsequent FIPPA breaches, please adhere to the following interim best practices:

1. When posting grades, remember that student identifiers, including student numbers, student names and student grades are personal information and

cannot be disclosed without consent. For example, an email sent to a class attaching a spreadsheet containing student names, numbers and corresponding grades **is a FIPPA breach**.

2. Post results in hardcopy using truncated student numbers by removing the first two digits of student numbers to reduce the ability of students to identify one another's grades. Do not post the names of any students.

3. If grades **must** be posted electronically, ensure that **secure** electronic media is used (such as Blackboard) so individuals see only their own grades. Email is not a secure means of communication. Do not include the names of students and ensure that a truncated student number is used for identifying purposes.

4. Grades and/or other evaluations of tests and assignments should only be revealed to the student to whom they pertain.

5. If you are posting grades in any format, carefully review what you are posting to ensure that no personal information is inadvertently disclosed. Specifically, print and review a hard copy of any materials that will be posted. This is particularly important if you are modifying a document to remove personal information.

6. Remember that in order to release academic and personal information about a student to a third party (e.g. a parent), the student must provide written consent. The consent of students is also required when their work is to be published or used as an example in class.

If you have any question or concerns regarding the foregoing, please contact the Freedom of Information Coordinator, Rachael Mendicino, at 416.979.5000 extension 4676.

Kindly forward this memorandum to all faculty and instructors.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Dr. Errol Aspevig
Provost and Vice President Academic