

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Confidentiality and Security of Grade Records

This SOP establishes protocols for the **confidentiality and security of grade records**, detailing procedures for protecting sensitive student information, ensuring authorized access only, maintaining data integrity, complying with institutional and legal privacy requirements, and outlining steps for secure storage, transmission, and disposal of grade documents. The purpose is to safeguard academic records against unauthorized disclosure, alteration, or loss, thereby upholding student privacy and institutional trust.

1. Scope

This SOP applies to all faculty, staff, and administrative personnel handling grade records, whether in physical or electronic form, within the institution.

2. Definitions

- **Grade Records:** Any documents or digital data containing student grades, assessments, or academic evaluations.
- **Authorized Personnel:** Individuals approved by the institution to access, manage, or handle grade records.
- **Sensitive Information:** Personally identifiable student data or any academic information protected by law or institutional policy.

3. Responsibilities

- **Faculty/Staff:** Ensure compliance with this SOP and report any security concerns or breaches.
- **IT Department:** Implement and monitor digital security protocols.
- **Academic Administration:** Oversee SOP enforcement and periodic review.

4. Procedures

4.1 Access Control

- Only authorized personnel are granted access to grade records.
- Utilize password-protected systems for digital records and lockable cabinets for physical records.
- Access permissions must be reviewed and updated regularly.

4.2 Data Protection

- Encrypt electronic grade records both in transit and at rest.
- Do not share grade records via unsecured methods (e.g., unencrypted email, unauthorized cloud services).
- Physical records should be stored in secure, access-controlled areas.

4.3 Data Integrity

- Maintain backup copies of grade records in a secure, separate location.
- Record any changes or corrections to grade data, noting date, time, and the individual making changes.

4.4 Compliance

- Comply with all applicable institutional policies and legal standards (e.g., FERPA, GDPR).
- Participate in regular training on data privacy and security.

4.5 Secure Transmission

- Transmit grade records only through secure, institution-approved platforms.
- Verify recipient identity before sharing sensitive data.

4.6 Secure Storage & Disposal

- Store records only in approved, secure locations.

- Dispose of grade records using secure methods (e.g., shredding physical documents, securely deleting digital files).

5. Incident Response

1. Immediately report any suspected or actual breaches to the designated data protection officer or IT department.
2. Follow institutional protocols for breach investigation, notification, and remediation.

6. Review and Training

- This SOP shall be reviewed annually and updated as needed.
- Mandatory training on grade record confidentiality and security will be provided to all relevant personnel annually.