

Policy for Student Information and Privacy in Online Education

This policy applies to all credit-bearing online learning courses and programs offered by the University of Mississippi, beginning with the application for admission and continuing through to a student's graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from study.

Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the University of Mississippi operates in compliance with the provisions of the United States Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) [20 U.S.C. 1099b, July 1, 2009], concerning the verification of student identity and the student's right to privacy in online and distance learning. All credit-bearing courses and programs offered through online learning methods must verify that the student who registers for an online education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives academic credit. At the same time ensuring that all stakeholders, both internal and external, actively protect the student's privacy rights.

Verification of Student Identity

One or more of the following methods will be used to verify student identity:

- a) An individual secure login and password provided by the University of Mississippi.
- b) Proctored assessments (i.e. Distance Education Testing Lab)
- c) Other emerging technologies and practices shown to be effective in verifying student identification and that are approved by the University of Mississippi.
- d) Pedagogical and related practices that are effective in verifying student identity (faculty review, questions students, Attendance Policy for Online Education, etc.)

Secure Login and Password

Each student has their own assigned UM WebID and student-generated password to log into the learning management system.

Proctored Assessments

The University's Policy for Proctored Assessments in Online Education will be used for proctored assessments.

New or Emerging Technologies

Third party vendors that provide robust identity verification software services (e.g., services similar to those used in the financial sector) could be used as an option by the Colleges and Schools.

Pedagogical and Related Practices

Online faculty will reference Section II of the University of Mississippi M-Book regarding Academic Policies, Standards and Regulations for Academic Conduct and Discipline as well as Procedures Related to Academic Misconduct Charges.

Additional Information

Online faculty will also follow the University of Mississippi's Attendance Policy for Online Education.

Students will be notified in writing at the time of registration or enrollment of any fees associated with the verification of student identity.

Privacy Protection and Student's Rights to Privacy

The University of Mississippi protects the privacy of all students, including online and distance learning students, through adherence to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) ([UM Policy DSA.DA. 100.002 - Right of Privacy – Personal Information](#)), through compliance with other institutional policies and procedures governing the management and security of protected information of faculty, staff, and students ([UM Policy ACA.IT.400.030 Information Confidentiality/Security](#)), and by outlining the expectations of privacy for the university community as regards to electronic information ([UM Policy ACA.IT.400.010 Privacy in the Electronic Environment](#)).

Personally identifiable information collected by the university may be used, at the discretion of the institution, as the basis for identity verification. For example, a student requesting that their learning management system password be reset may be asked to provide two or more pieces of information for comparison with data on file, or to come to the IT Helpdesk in person with a photo ID for verification.

All methods of verifying student identity in online learning must protect the privacy of student information. All outside vendors and remote proctoring providers must comply with the university's information privacy policies as outlined in this document.

In circumstances where physical exams are administered to University of Mississippi students, return transfer of completed student exams is restricted to secured institutional resources (ex:

email or fax) and/or overnight carrier sent directly from the remote site administrator to the appropriate university representative or faculty member.

Responsibilities

All users of the university's learning management system are responsible for maintaining the security of usernames, passwords and any other access credentials assigned. The password used to enter university systems **IS** a secure credential. Passwords may not be shared or given to anyone other than the user to whom they were assigned for any reason. See the University of Mississippi's IT Appropriate Use Policy for more information.

Faculty teaching courses through online education methods have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their courses comply with the provisions of this policy. Because technology and personal accountability may not verify identity absolutely or ensure academic integrity completely, faculty are encouraged, when feasible and pedagogically sound, to design courses that employ assignments and evaluations unique to the course and that support academic integrity and protect student privacy rights.

Any new technologies or vendors used to verify student identity or that might jeopardize student privacy rights must be approved by the University of Mississippi, so that published information on student privacy can be maintained appropriately.

The Office of the Provost is responsible for ensuring university-wide compliance with the provisions of this policy and that deans and chairs are informed of any changes in a timely fashion. The Office of the Provost is responsible for publishing university-wide information on information security. The Office of the Provost is also responsible for coordinating and promoting efficient use of university resources and services, and for ensuring that university level processes (e.g., admissions or registration) also remain in compliance with this policy.

The Office of the Provost will work with the Office of Information Technology to notify students at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity.

Compliance

In accordance with the responsibilities outlined above, deans and chairs of college-level units are expected to ensure that all faculty and staff within their units remain in compliance with

this policy. Those policies on academic integrity and student information security should be widely disseminated throughout the university.

Training for Faculty and Students

The university provides faculty with appropriate training to use current and emerging pedagogical approaches and technologies to promote academic integrity and privacy. Additionally, the university provides information to students regarding academic integrity and privacy. Syllabi and course orientations will include information for students to understand issues for each online course and the university as a whole. Information about Student Privacy Rights, FERPA and UM's processes for complying with its provisions is also published in the student handbook (M-Book Student Policy - <http://dos.olemiss.edu/>)

Frequency of Review and Update

This policy will be reviewed by the Office of the Provost for continued alignment with the appropriate federal regulations and policies and revised every two years.

