Verification of Student Identity in Distance Education Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Salisbury University operates in compliance with the provisions of the United States Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), Public Law 110-315 concerning the verification of student identity in distance education.

All credit-bearing courses and programs offered through distance education methods must verify that the student who registers for a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives academic credit. According to the HEOA, one or more of the following methods must be used:

a) An individual secure login and password,
b) Proctored examinations, and/or
c) Other technologies or practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

Salisbury University further recommends:

- Misconduct Policy Statement provided in the Syllabus
- Honesty Pledge within the course
- Visual ID verification

All methods of verifying student identity in distance learning must protect the privacy of student information. If any fees associated with the verification of student identity will be charged to students, they must be notified of these charges in writing at the time of registration or enrollment.

Methods of Verification

Initial Verification

During the Admission's process, each student receives a unique student ID number. Upon matriculation, each student receives a unique and secure network account to authenticate into SU enterprise systems (i.e. GullNet, Email, MyClasses).

The Office of the Registrar provides student verification for non-degree seeking students.

Secure Login and Password

Each Salisbury University student is assigned a unique student username and has a student-generated password to log into SU's learning management system. Students are responsible for providing their complete and true identity information in any identification verification process. Use of this account is in accordance to the Acceptable Use of Computing and Electronic Resources Policy.

LMS and Interactive Video Network

Students are required to authenticate each time they log into the MyClasses learning management system to access their course(s) and complete course activities. All online course work that is graded or contributes to a student's grade is submitted via this authentication.

For courses delivered through interactive video, the identity of the students is verified visually by the instructor. The instructor can reference information in the Class Roster feature of GullNet to assist in verification of the student.

Proctored examinations

Salisbury University approves two flexible proctoring options:

- a standard proctor, who is chosen by the student and approved by the University, or
- a virtual proctor, which offers students the ability to sit for their exam at an appropriate location that is convenient to them.

An approved proctor is defined as a credentialed organization, center, or individual, who verifies student identity and supervises examination integrity. The instructor, department chair, or designee should approve the student's choice of proctor in advance of the assessment.

Students in courses that utilize the Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor virtual proctor must have an operational webcam, audio capabilities, a high-speed internet connection, and appropriate system rights required to download and install software. Faculty must include any hardware and software requirements in their course syllabus and materials.

Other technologies or practices that are effective in verifying student identification

Salisbury University values authentic authorship to the extent that the University contracts with Turnitin for plagiarism detection and deterrence in support of The Salisbury Promise and academic integrity policy. Consequently, any assignments submitted to Salisbury University may be subject to a textual similarity review and plagiarism detection through Turnitin. Any assignments submitted to Turnitin will be included as source documents in the Turnitin reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism consistent with fair use principles under federal copyright law. If the faculty determines an instance of plagiarism, it will be reported as per Salisbury University's Academic Integrity Policy. For more explanation of the policy, visit
http://www.salisbury.edu/provost/AcademicMisconductPolicy.html

Responsibilities

All users of the university's learning management systems are responsible for maintaining the security of usernames, passwords and any other access credentials assigned. Access credentials may not be shared or given to anyone other than the user to whom they were assigned to for any reason. Users are responsible for any and all uses of their account. Users are responsible for changing passwords periodically to maintain security. Users are held responsible for knowledge of the information contained within the most recent University Catalog. Failure to read university guidelines, requirements and regulations will not exempt users from responsibility.

Students are responsible for providing complete and true information about themselves in any identity verification process, in accordance with the student code of conduct. Students are responsible for knowledge of the information contained in the Student Handbook and Course Syllabi. Failure to read university/college/program/course guidelines, requirements, procedures, and policies will not exempt users from responsibility.

Faculty teaching courses through distance education methods hold primary responsibility for ensuring that their individual 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 as well as online assessment strategies that support academic integrity.

Deans and directors of college-level units are responsible for ensuring that faculty are aware of this policy and comply with its provisions. Deans and directors are also responsible for ensuring that academic awards and degree programs within their units comply with the provisions of this policy.

The Office of the Provost is responsible for ensuring university-wide compliance with the provisions of this policy and that deans and directors are informed of any changes in a timely fashion. The Office of the Provost is responsible for publishing university-wide information on how identity verification processes protect student privacy. 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 Instructional Design & Delivery is responsible for having an up-to-date Learning Management System policy. The Office of Information Technology (OIT) is responsible for having an up-to-date Network Security, robust Password Management protocols, and stringent IT Help Desk procedures.

Related Policies and Guidelines

- Student Academic Misconduct Policy
- Online Learning Policy
- Online Assessment Proctoring Guidelines
- Acceptable Use of Computing and Electronic Resources

Document History

Date	Individual or Organization	Action
May 8, 2014	Special Task Force	First Draft
March 3, 2017	Melissa Thomas, ID&D	Second Draft
May 2, 2018	Distance Learning Advisory Committee	Third Draft