



Title:	Verification of Student Identity in Distance Education
Effective Date:	Reviewed August 2, 2021
Approved By:	President's Council
Responsible Party:	Technology and Library Services
History:	1/1/17

I. Purpose:

This policy applies to all credit-bearing distance education courses or programs offered by Salus University, beginning with the application for admission and continuing through to a student's graduation, transfer or withdrawal from study. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Salus University operates in compliance with the provisions of the United States Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) concerning the verification of student identity in distance education.

The HEOA requires that institutions offering distance education or correspondence courses or programs have processes in place to ensure that the student registering for a course is the same student who participates in the course or receives course credit. The Act requires that institutions use one of the following three methods:

- A. A secure login and pass code;
- B. Proctored examinations, and
- C. New or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

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.

II. Definitions:

N/A

III. Policy:

It is the policy of Salus University that all credit-bearing courses and program offerings through distant learning 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.

IV. Procedures:

Salus distance students must login to a secure Blackboard (LMS) Website with a unique username and password to complete distance courses. This login is sent to them from Technology and Library Services

(TLS) to the personal e-mail account listed on their application. After this initial e-mail, all future correspondence is required to be completed through the Salus University e-mail system.

All users of the University's learning management systems are responsible for maintaining the security of usernames, passwords and any other personal information. Access credentials to any Salus University system or course publisher sites may not be shared or given to anyone other than the student to whom they were assigned for any reason. Students are responsible for any and all uses of their account. Students utilizing Blackboard are prompted and required to change their password every 90 days to maintain security. Students are held responsible for knowledge of the information contained within the most recent Use of Electronic Communications policy as well as the Student Handbook. Failure to read the Salus University guidelines, requirements and regulations will not exempt students from responsibility and can result in the disabling of the student's Salus University user account.

The Blackboard system integrates with University authentication services to ensure appropriate and secure student access to courses and other Student Information Systems. All users of the University's learning management system are responsible for maintaining the security of their user id and passwords, or any other access credentials as required. Attempting to discover another user's password or attempts to gain unauthorized access to another person's files or email is prohibited.

In addition, the University's Student Information System provides instructors access to class rosters. As technology and personal accountability are not absolute in determining a student's identity, faculty members are encouraged to use these technologies and to design courses that use assignments and evaluations that support academic integrity.

When a distance student calls in to the Salus University Help Desk for assistance in resetting their Blackboard LMS or active directory password, they are prompted to change their password by visiting the "Reset Password" link on the Reset Password Website where they are required to follow and answer the verification prompts. This ensures they are entering their credentials directly into the system so that Technology and Library Services (TLS) does not give out specific username and email information. Thus, the student verifies who they are by following the prompts on the password reset form, which sends an email with a verification code to their Salus University email address; the student has to enter the verification code provided within the email message in order to reset their password. Campus students registered for on-line instruction can also visit the TLS Help Desk in person and provide their University photo ID card to directly reset the password. When off-campus verification of distance education student accounts is required, it is performed by the Registrar's office who will ask the student specific identifying questions. Once verified by the Registrar the TLS Help Desk is approved to reset the student's password.

Most Salus University distance courses make use of student-centered, authentic assessments requiring students to perform work unique to the student, the student's workplace and to the course itself. In rare instances distance courses utilize traditional assessments facilitated with the use of a proctor. Proctors secured by the student are to be reported back to the instructor.

At this time there are no additional student fees associated with student verification. In the event any verification fee is needed, it will be posted on the course registration site to provide an advance alert to students.

Salus University complies fully with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

(FERPA). This act protects the privacy of student information in distance education by requiring, with certain limited exceptions, that the student's consent must be obtained before disclosing any personally identifiable information in the student's education records. Additional information on FERPA and student record access can be found at: [http://www.salus.edu/getattachment/About/University-Policies/University-Policies/FERPA_Policy-\(1\).pdf.aspx](http://www.salus.edu/getattachment/About/University-Policies/University-Policies/FERPA_Policy-(1).pdf.aspx).

Technology and Library Services (TLS) is responsible for developing and ensuring compliance with this policy in the University's various Schools and administrative units. TLS will inform School Deans and Administrative Officers when changes to the policy are made.