

POLICY FOR STUDENT IDENTITY VERIFICATION IN DISTANCE LEARNING

Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to all credit-bearing distance education courses or programs offered by Oakland City 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 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 secure login and pass code;
- Proctored examinations; and
- New or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

Compliance

Upon enrollment, all Oakland City University students are assigned a unique 11-character student identification number, as well as a username (secure login) and password (code). The usernames and passwords are required to enter courses on the University's Moodle-based E-Learning Center, and access to the Student Portal and student email. The Student Portal allows students to access grades, make course registration/schedule changes, obtain financial information, and assess their degree progress. Students can access only their own online courses, information, and services, thereby maintaining student privacy in addition to verifying their identity. This process covers all students in our Adult Professional Studies (APS) and online courses.

Correspondence students at Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC) facilities are issued an IDOC identification card upon which OCU staff uses to confirm the student's identity. Students submit their assignments to an Oakland City University staff member at the facility. Identification is verified using the IDOC identification card. The OCU staff member will scan and electronically submit the assignments to an instructor or who will submit the hardcopy of the assignment to the Correspondence Program staff in the Office of Academic Affairs. OCU staff will then scan the assignments and submit them to the instructor.

Students are responsible for providing their complete and true identity information in any identification verification process. It is against university policy for a user to give someone his or her password or to allow others to use his or her account. Oakland City University does not use the student's social security number or any other personal identifier that would reveal the student's identity to any unauthorized party.

Oakland City University uses Moodle as its learning management system. The Moodle system integrates with university authentication services to ensure appropriate and secure student access to courses and other student information. All users of the university's learning management system are responsible for maintaining the security of usernames 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.

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.

Oakland City University complies fully with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g. 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.

Review

The Provost's Office and the Office of Compliance are responsible for developing and ensuring compliance with this policy. The Provost's Office will inform deans and administrative officers when changes to the policy are made.