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Student Authentication in Distance and Electronic Courses

-- Select One --

As a result of new regulations stemming from the federal reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 2008, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) has requested its member institutions to address student authentication for all distance and correspondence courses. To be in compliance with this regulation, *SACSCOC requires that the institution must demonstrate that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by verifying the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the option of the institution, methods such as (1) a secure login and pass code, (2) proctored examinations, and (3) new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.*

Thus, the University has instituted the following policies to address student authentication:

Identity Management

All students enrolled in UL Lafayette courses will receive individual secure login and pass codes to the learning management system (LMS).

1. Faculty accounts are issued by Information Systems. Student accounts are automatically generated by Information Systems through the ULink student portal and accounts are activated by students. Instructions for student login are posted on the ULink website. Students can contact the Help Desk for assistance.
2. Upon submission and approval of an online course, the Registrar's Office will enter the course into the Student Information System, and Information Systems will upload the course into the Course Management System. Student enrollments will be uploaded but the student will not have access to coursework prior to the first class day of the semester/session in which a course is being offered.

Additionally, student identity may be verified through use of at least one additional measure.

Additional Measures

UL Lafayette has adopted additional student authentication measures based on a course-by-course philosophy for hybrid and online courses to be implemented by its trained faculty members:

1. The syllabus prepared for hybrid and online courses will identify additional student authentication measures.
2. At least one additional authentication measure may be implemented by course instructors and professors. The Office of Distance Learning will be active in providing assistance in establishing these and other measures in collaboration with College and Departments.
3. College and Departments are ultimately charged with enforcement of additional measures.
4. Additional measures should be consistent among multiple sections of the same course with different course instructors.

Additional Measures to be selected by departments and colleges may include:

1. **Proctored examinations.** Students enrolled in electronic courses may be required to take proctored exams. The Instructor is responsible for providing the details of the exam process to the students.

Instructors should provide test dates and proctor requirements to the students in the course syllabus. Instructors must accommodate students who are in a separate geographic location for proctor requirements. An appropriate alternate proctor within their region must be authorized.

- Physical proctoring centers for exam delivery. If a course is designed with a high stakes exam, then physical proctoring may be appropriate and required. Provisions would need to be made by the instructor to allow multiple approved proctoring sites. The Office of Distance Learning will provide procedures for securing and managing off-site physical proctoring.
- Remote proctoring devices. Hybrid and online students may be required to purchase a monitoring device or live monitoring service that connects to their computer and "watches" them take an exam. These approaches may require periodic finger-print scanning, and turning on a microphone and 360 degree camera if noise or movement thresholds are reached.
- NOTE: The Distance Learning Leadership Council has adopted the following guidelines to assist faculty using any form of proctoring in their hybrid and online courses: **Faculty Guidelines for Proctoring in Distance Learning Courses**

2. **Use of Learning Management System Tools.** Reporting functions that exist within the learning management system can be used to detect possible cases of academic dishonesty.
3. **Other student identity technologies.** Large companies that provide data security for the banking industry have data mining systems that are being used with distance learning students. Students are presented with multiple choice questions about their personal history, such as last street address, name of elementary school, or mother's maiden name. The student must answer the personal question in order to proceed with an assessment, and such questions also may appear randomly during an exam.

Student Privacy

The University's regional accreditor, SACSCOC, requires that institutions must have a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs. Students can view this policy at <http://www.louisiana.edu/node/79>.

Cost to Student for Student Authentication

the University's regional accreditor, SACSCOC, requires the University to *have a written procedure distributed at the time of registration or enrollment that notifies students of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity.*

In order to make a good faith effort to inform students and to be in compliance with this policy, the University requires a standard note to be posted in the registration system for all courses coded hybrid (HY) and online (OL). This note alerts students that the class has additional costs and directs the students to a website explaining the additional costs, including, but not limited to, additional costs for student authentication.



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