



**IDENTITY VERIFICATION AND PRIVACY POLICY FOR
DISTANCE EDUCATION**

Responsible Official: Chief Information Officer

Responsible Office: Information Technology
Services

Policy Purpose

This policy specifies the information technology resources and processes East Tennessee State University (ETSU) has in place to ensure compliance with the student identity verification and privacy requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

Policy Statement

I. Verification of Student Identity

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

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.

ETSU meets these requirements by assigning a secure login and pass code to each student. All students registering for a course through our administrative system are assigned unique identification numbers that correspond with a specific username for each student. These usernames or accounts use multi-factor authentication to verify the user through Microsoft Entra ID. Each student establishes their own password in accordance with the Strong Password Policy.

II. Privacy Protection

ETSU complies fully with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which 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. ETSU also implements strong password and electronic mail policies, learning management system login procedures, and confidentiality agreements for administrators of the learning management system

III. No Fee Assessment

ETSU assesses no fees or charges related to the verification of student identity in distance education courses or programs

Authority: The Focus Act: TCA § 49-8-203 et. seq; The Higher Education Opportunity Act (Public Law 110-315); 34 CFR §§ 602.17(g) and(h); Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g; SACSCOC Standard 10.6 (Distance and correspondence education).

Previous Policy: HEOA Compliance in Online Courses 3/24/2017.

Defined Terms

A defined term has a special meaning within the context of this policy.

N/A

Policy History

Effective Date

- a. Initial: 04/08/24
- b. Revised:

Procedure History

Effective Date

- a. Initial: N/A
- b. Revised:

Related Form(s), Policies, & Information

[HEOA 34 CFR §§ 602.17\(g\) and 602.17 \(h\)](#)

[ETSU Distance Education Policy](#)

[Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)

[SACSCOC Distance Education and Correspondence Courses
Policy Statement](#)