

BALTIMORE CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

Title of Procedure: Verification of Student Identity in Distance Education

Division/Unit: E-Learning / Academic Affairs

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsible Position</b>	<b>Time Frame for Task (if applicable)</b>	<b>Approval Authority</b>
1	A secure login is created for each student's access to the learning management system (LMS) (Blackboard)	Computer Programmer ITS	Prior to each registration period; for example, November for Winter and Spring sessions	ITS Chief Information Officer
2	Login information is posted in the Student Portal	Computer Programmer ITS	Prior to each registration period	ITS Chief Information Officer
3	Students receive the information to login to the Student Portal and retrieve their login information	Student Affairs – Dean of Enrollment Management	Prior to each registration period	Dean of Enrollment
4	Students can login to the LMS	Director of E-Learning and the E-Learning Staff	As needed	Director of E-Learning
5	Students are required to take proctored examinations in the Testing Center	Each online faculty member	During each semester/session	Dean of Enrollment Management
6	Online faculty receive training for using best practices in ensuring academic integrity in online courses	Director of E-Learning and Instructional Technologist provide training.	Throughout the year, scheduled and on-demand training.	Director of E-Learning
7	Research and implementation of student verification software	Director of E-Learning		Dean of Enrollment Management and ITS Chief Information Officer

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NARRATIVE OR GRAPHICS (Optional: Additional information, flowchart, forms, etc.)

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SCOPE

This standard operating procedure (SOP) applies to all credit-bearing distance learning courses and programs offered by the Baltimore City Community College, as well as for the credit-noncredit share courses offered through the English Language Institute.

PURPOSE OF SOP

The purpose of this SOP is to ensure that Baltimore City Community College is 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 learning.

All credit-bearing courses and programs offered through distance 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. One or more of the following methods would be used:

- a) An individual secure login and password (i.e. number and password)
- b) Proctored examinations (i.e. tests taken in the College's Testing Center)
- c) Other technologies and practices approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs that have been shown to be effective in verifying student identification.

- d) Pedagogical and related practices that are effective in verifying student identity (faculty training, questioning students, frequent participation in the course, etc.)

#### Secure Login and Password

Each student has his or her own assigned user ID and password to log into the learning management system (Blackboard). The user ID is automatically generated through the integration of data from the student information system to the learning management system. This user ID includes a combination of letters and numbers based on the student's name and date of birth. However, starting Spring 2014, the user ID will include a four-digit randomly generated number, unique to each student. The password used by students is a combination of numbers based on each student's date of birth. At Online Student Orientation, students are advised to change their password after initial login, as well as change their password frequently to ensure that they are secure.

#### Proctored Examinations

Many students enrolled in online courses are required to take one or more tests in the College's Testing Center, where students' picture IDs are checked. However, the College does not currently require that all students enrolled in online courses take at least one examination in the Testing Center. Individual faculty members who teach online courses may decide whether to require proctored examinations for students. This is the case for faculty teaching mostly online science courses, such as mathematics, biology, or chemistry.

#### New or Emerging Technologies

Third party vendors that provide robust identity verification software services (e.g. services similar to those used in the financial sector) could be used as an option. Currently, the E-Learning Department is looking into piloting programs such as ProctorU and BioSig-ID.

#### Pedagogical and Related Practices

Online instructors have a responsibility to identify changes in students' activity in online courses. Examples of changes could be a sudden change in academic performance, change in writing style, and odd statements by students in discussions or email. Faculty are advised to provide more than one kind of assessment type and to ask students to share important ideas learned from references.

## PRIVACY PROTECTION

All methods of verifying student identity in distance learning must protect the privacy of student information. Personally identifiable information collected by the College may be used, at the discretion of the Institution, as the basis for identity verification. For instance, students requesting that their learning management system password be reset may be asked to provide two or more pieces of information for comparison with data on file, or to come to the E-Learning Department with a photo ID.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

All users of the College's learning management system are responsible for maintaining the security of usernames, passwords, and any other access credentials assigned. The student ID (username) is not a secure credential and may be displayed at various areas in the learning management system. The password used to enter the system is a sequence of random numbers. Access passwords may not be shared or given to anyone other than the user to whom they were assigned for any reason.

In addition, at Online Student Orientation students are advised to change their password after their initial login and also change them periodically to maintain security. Users are held responsible for knowledge of the information contained within the most recent College Catalog as well as the on the Student Resources page on Blackboard. Failure to read the College's guidelines, requirements and regulations will not exempt users from responsibility. Students are responsible for providing accurate and true information about themselves in any identity verification process.

Faculty teaching courses through distance education methods have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their courses comply with the provisions of this SOP. 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 and that support academic integrity.

## TRAINING FOR FACULTY AND STUDENTS

The College provides faculty with appropriate training to use pedagogical approaches and technology to promote academic integrity. Additionally, the College provides information about the importance of maintaining academic integrity through a variety of resources. They are widely disseminated in the Student Handbook, at the Library, and on Blackboard. Syllabi and orientations include information for students on the rigors of maintaining academic integrity.

Approved by: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Director of E-Learning

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