

Administrative Policy for Student Identity Verification in Distance Learning

I. Scope:

This policy applies to all credit-bearing distance learning courses or programs offered by Rochester Institute of Technology from application for admission, to a student's graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from the university.

II. Policy Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Rochester Institute of Technology complies with the provisions of the United States Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), which requires colleges and universities to have processes in place to ensure that the student registered for a credit-bearing course(s) is the student participating in the course(s), completing the course(s), and receiving academic credit for the course(s).

III. Procedures:

The university ensures compliance with the HEOA as follows.

A. Confirmation of distance student identification within RIT systems

1. Students must submit a RIT-approved photo¹ to the Office of the Registrar within two weeks of the commencement of their first class at RIT.
2. A student identification photo shall be included in the class roster within the Student Information System (SIS).
3. RIT will issue RIT Computer Accounts to all students for access to RIT systems, including RIT's learning management system. All users of RIT's computing and network facilities are required to comply with the policies of RIT's Code of Conduct for Computer Use (C08.2)².

B. Faculty must confirm student identity throughout individual courses and verify identity upon submission of final grades using one of the following methods:

1. Comparing the SIS class roster photo to the appearance of the student via live web/video conferencing sessions; or
2. Through an externally proctored activity provided by an external proctoring service.

C. Faculty are responsible for identifying changes in student behavior and coursework, such as changes in writing styles, academic performance, or different behavior in group assignments. Such changes may merit an investigation by the faculty member to determine whether the student is in violation of the Student Academic Integrity Policy (D08.0)³.

D. Faculty will follow the procedure outlined in the Student Academic Integrity Policy (D08.0)³ when a student violates this policy.

IV. Fees:

All fees associated with distance education courses and programs, including any fees relating to identity verification (such as webcam requirements for webcam-based identity verification methods), must be posted on the course registration site.

V. Student Privacy:

All Rochester Institute of Technology policies regarding student privacy and information security apply to distance education courses and faculty who are teaching these courses are expected to follow these policies. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)⁴ 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 records⁵. Additional information on RIT security policies and standards can be found at: <https://www.rit.edu/security/content/intro-policies-standards>

Responsible Office:

The Provost's Office, or the office designated by the Provost, is responsible for developing and ensuring compliance with this policy in the University's various colleges and administrative units. The Provost's Office, or the office designated by the Provost, will inform deans and administrative officers when changes to the policy are made. Faculty who are teaching distance education courses are responsible for complying with this policy.

Effective Date: February 17, 2016

Policy History:

Approved by the Provost February 17, 2016

Revised February 2, 2018

¹ RIT Photo Submission: <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/registrar/id-photo>

² C08.2 Code of Conduct for Computer Use: <http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/c082-code-conduct-computer-use>

³ D08.0 Student Academic Integrity Policy: <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d080>

⁴ Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/registrar/student-privacy>

⁵ D15.0 Educational Records Policy: <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d150>