Administrative Policy:
Student Identity Verification in Distance Education

I. Scope

This policy applies to all fully online (distance learning) credit-bearing courses or programs offered by Rochester Institute of Technology at the Henrietta campus 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 Act (HEA), as amended, 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). According to updated guidance offered by the HEA, multiple verification methods (at least two) need to be utilized in conjunction with one another in order to be effective.

Identity Verification is also an important component of RIT's core values of integrity and honesty. These core values are reflected in all RIT educational and business practices. To ensure the security and integrity of our academic community, students are required to verify their identity. This verification ensures that the person enrolled in classes is the same person attending and participating in them, upholding RIT's core values. Student Identity verification also helps to:

- Prevent identity fraud and ensure academic honesty
- Ensure that only authorized individuals have access to university facilities, services, and coursework
- Maintain the safety and security of the campus community

The University ensures compliance with the HEA and RIT's core values as follows:

III. Student Responsibilities

Students are required to complete A and B below for verification:

A. **ID Verification**. All fully online students must submit a government-issued photo ID and upload a current photo which is used to verify identity. Student information and images are handled securely and used only for verification purposes in compliance with university privacy and data protection policies. The ID verification process is only required one time during a student's enrollment at RIT.

B. **RIT-Approved ID Photo**. In addition, the student is also required to have an RIT-approved ID Photo on file that can be used to verify their identity. This photo must be submitted separately from the photo that was submitted in Step A above. Every student must submit a photo of themselves to RIT and have it reviewed and approved within 2 weeks of the commencement of taking any class at RIT. This is only required one time during a student's enrollment at RIT.

C. **Identity Verification Process**. For each online course enrollment, the instructor will verify each student's identity by the end of week 3* of the course. Students are responsible for participating in the identity verification method specified by the faculty member, which may include a live web/video conferencing session or an externally proctored activity.

D. **Accounts and Access**. All online course activities must be completed utilizing RIT provided computer accounts. This includes secure logins with multi-factor authentication to RIT's LMS (myCourses) and use of RIT sponsored email accounts. All students must adhere to the computer use policies outlined in C08.2 Code of Conduct for Computer Use. Users must not share or disclose their account password(s) with any individual.

Failure to comply with these requirements will initiate a review process, which may result in disruptions to the student's enrollment at RIT. This includes the deactivation of the student's RIT computer account, leading to disenrollment from all enrolled online classes. If the student is dis-enrolled, there is no refund of tuition or other fees.

IV. Faculty Responsibilities

A. **Identity Verification.** By the end of week 3* of the scheduled online course, faculty teaching the online course must attempt to verify each student's identity by comparing the SIS class roster photo to the appearance of the student via a range of options such as live web/video conferencing sessions (this could be a Zoom meeting), Honorlock AI Proctoring with a myCourses Quiz, or other asynchronous online SIV options. Additional identity verification resources are available from RIT's Center for Teaching and Learning.

If faculty member is not able to complete identity verification by the end of week 3*, they are requested to continue working with "incompletes" through week 6**.

B. **Letter Designation**. After the comparison is completed, faculty are then required to post a letter designation to the SIS identity verification grade roster using the following "grading" options (please note that this designation is **NOT** a grade for the course… it is only being used for the student identity verification process):

Letter Designations	Definitions of Designations	Next Steps
A	Student has an RIT-approved photo ID, and the faculty member successfully compared this photo to the student in the online course.	The student's identity has been verified. No additional steps are needed.
I	Student identity verification process is currently incomplete. Additional verification attempts will be made.	Faculty member was unable to verify the student's identity by week 3* and will make further attempts to verify the student's identity, through week 6**.
F	Student failed to provide an RIT-approved photo ID, refused to comply with faculty request for identity verification, or the faculty member believes the provided photo does not match the student in the course.	If a student's identity cannot be verified by the end of week 6** and/or a designation of "F" is assigned by the faculty member, the student will be notified by the University and appropriate action will be taken based on University policies.

** For summer courses, this action should be completed by week 2*
*** For summer courses, this action should be completed by week 4.*

V. Related Policies

A. **Code of Conduct:** 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).
B. **Academic Integrity:** Students must read and understand RIT policies related to academic integrity. 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 RIT Student Academic Integrity Policy (D08.0).
C. **Dishonest Behavior.** Any act of dishonesty, including misrepresenting, omitting, altering, or falsifying information/identification to university officials or on university documents (e.g. applications, timekeeping records); exclusive of violations of D08.0 - Student Academic Integrity Policy.
D. **RIT Computer Account:** Students are provided an RIT Computer Account and must create secure passwords and must use these secure credentials to access campus systems where identity verification is necessary. RIT's campus wireless network, E-mail, Student Information Systems, and many, many more services. DO NOT share your login and password information with others for security and privacy reasons.
E. **RIT Computer Account Misuse.** Behaviors related to the misuse of your RIT Computer Account, including sharing computing, network, and information resources, in addition to copyright infringement. See C08.2 - Code of Conduct for Computer Use.
F. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
G. RIT Policy D15.0 Educational Records Policy.

VI. 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 stated on the bookstore website and/or communicated during admission.

VII. 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) 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. Additional information on RIT security policies and standards can be found at: https://www.rit.edu/security/content/intro-policies-standards

Responsible Office

Academic Affairs is responsible for developing and ensuring compliance with this policy in the University's various colleges and administrative units. It will inform deans and administrative officers when changes to the policy are made. Faculty who are teaching distance education (online) courses are responsible for complying with this policy.

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Policy History:
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