

Verification of Student Identity in Online/Distance Learning Policy

In compliance with the provisions of the United States Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008, Public Law 110-315, concerning the verification of student identity in distance learning, Keystone College has established and will periodically evaluate its process to confirm that a person who has registered for a distance education course is the same student who participates in and receives academic credit for the course. This policy applies to all programs beginning with the application for admission and continuing through a student's graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from the College.

According to the HEOA, one or more of the following methods must be used:

1. An individual secure login and password issued by the College
2. Proctored examinations and/or
3. Other technologies or practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

Any online student work, assessments or activities that are graded or contribute to a student's grade must be submitted via a system that verifies the student's identity as noted above.

All methods of verifying student identity in distance education must protect the privacy of student information in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and any other applicable laws or regulations regarding the confidentiality of personally identifiable information. Personally identifiable information collected by the College may be used as the basis for identity verification. This information may include a combination of the following:

1. Student ID number
2. Last 4 digits of the student's Social Security Number
3. At least 2 other pieces of information such as the student's email address on file, date of birth, address, or user name.

During the application and admission process, student identity is vetted in accordance with standard practices. Students are responsible for providing their complete and true identity information in any identification verification process. Upon application, each student receives a unique and secure Keystone College user account. This user account allows the student to authenticate into nearly all Keystone College systems, including the Learning Management Systems Canvas and Moodle, email, student portal (MyKC), grades, etc. Students have the ability to change their password and are encouraged to do so periodically. All systems are secured in accordance with industry best practices. The College's Information Technology department is responsible for creating user accounts using a FERPA compliant procedure.

Responsibilities:

All users of the College's Learning Management System (LMS) and Student Information System (SIS) are responsible for maintaining the security of their login credentials. Credentials may not be shared or given to anyone other than the user to whom they were assigned for any reason. Users are responsible for any and all uses of their account. Users are held responsible for knowledge of the information contained within the most recent Student and Employee Handbooks and the Acceptable Use of Technology policy displayed and agreed to by the user when logging on to any College computer. Failure to read College guidelines, requirements and regulations will not exempt users from responsibility.

Faculty teaching courses through distance education methods hold primary responsibility for ensuring that students comply with the College's identity verification policy. As technology and personal accountability are not absolute in determining a student's identity, faculty members are encouraged to design courses that use assignments and evaluations that support academic integrity.

The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and that department chairs and program coordinators are informed of any change in the policy in a timely fashion. Department chairs are expected to ensure that faculty within their departments remain in compliance. Instructors teaching courses through distance education methods are responsible to ensure that their individual courses comply. If necessary, the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs may address non-compliance through established methods.

Both the College's Office of Admissions and the Office of the Registrar maintain student biographic, demographic, admission, and enrollment records in the College's SIS. Access to this information requires valid College network credentials, in addition to authorization controls within the LMS and/or SIS.

All students participating in distance education courses offered by Keystone College must log in to their course sites using their Keystone College account credentials. This secure login is a student's only means of access to the LMS. Students are registered in their courses through the SIS, which transmits registration information directly into the LMS without any action on the part of students, faculty, or staff beyond the regular registration process. Only duly registered students and the instructor of record appear on the roster of any distance education course. Furthermore, every action within a course site registers on the extensive tracking features of the LMS, which track each user in terms of time and duration of the action and part of the site involved, even if there is no posting by the students. In the LMS, the email system, and other applicable systems, students can associate a photo with their account, allowing for visual identification of the student. Technology for live audio and/or visual communication, which can be helpful in verifying student identity, is also available for faculty, staff, and students. Faculty can view official ID photo images of students as part of their class rosters in the SIS.

Plagiarism detection tools are available to help determine the identity of those who submit the work. Exams can require a passcode as offered to students by the instructor. Users may not create their own courses or accounts, ensuring that only those with valid user accounts may access the system and that users may only access resources designated to their user accounts.

Keystone College does not charge a fee for student identity verification.

Sources consulted in developing this policy:

<https://www.strose.edu/campus-offices/its/about-its/policies/verification-of-student-identity-in-online-learning/>

https://www.nyit.edu/policies/verification_of_student_identity_for_online_distance_learning

<https://www.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/academics/accreditation-support/Student-Identity-Verification-in-Distance-and-Correspondence-Education.pdf>

<https://www.excelsior.edu/policy/student-identity-verification/>

<https://www.camdencc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Distance-Education-Student-Identity-Verification.pdf>

<https://www.mckendree.edu/policies/verificationofstudentidentity.pdf>

Approved by: Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs, November 2020