

# **Mount Mercy University Student Identity Policy**

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Mount Mercy University operates in compliance with the provisions of the United States Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), Public Law 110-315, and the requirements of the Higher Learning Commission concerning the verification of student identity in distance learning.

Mount Mercy University offers online courses which fall under the definition of distance education. The University needs to establish and periodically review a process to determine that a student registered for an online course is the same student that participates in, completes, and receives credit for the course. Students seeking registration in online courses will be required to provide appropriate identification to establish their identity.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all credit-bearing distance or online education courses and programs offered by Mount Mercy University, beginning with the application for admission and continuing through a student's graduation, transfer or withdrawal from the university.

## **Practices for Verification of Student Identity**

The following institutional practices are identified by the aforementioned HEOA/HLC guidelines as acceptable practices for verifying student identity:

- An individual secure login and password issued by Mount Mercy,
- Other technologies or practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

The verification of a student's identity begins at the time of the application and admission process; student identity is vetted in accordance with standard practices. Upon enrollment, each student receives a unique and secure Mount Mercy University network user account. This network user account allows the student to authenticate into nearly all Mount Mercy systems, including the learning management system (Brightspace), email, student

portal (MyMountMercy), etc. All systems are secured in accordance with industry best practices.

The network system allows for self-service of network user account functions such as password resets and setting up security questions. Security features of network user accounts include locking of the account after multiple unsuccessful login attempts (i.e. incorrect password), security questions set up by the user, and available two-factor authentication. These policies and features of network user accounts, while not absolute in verification of student identity, offer reasonable assurance that the appropriate user is authenticating to university.

All methods of verifying student identity in distance/online learning courses, protect the privacy of student information under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

### **User Responsibilities**

An account is given to an individual for the exclusive use by that individual. Attempting to discover another user's password or attempts to gain unauthorized access to another person's files or mail is prohibited. It is against University policy for a user to give someone his or her password or allow others to use his or her account. Users are responsible for any and all users of their account. Users are responsible for all activity on their accounts.

### **Fees**

There are no student fees relating to verification of student identity.

### **Privacy**

Mount Mercy University is compliant with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g, which protects the privacy of student educational records. Further information is available in the Student FERPA Policy.

Approved by University Leadership Team 12/14/21