



## Policy for Student Identity verification in Distance and Correspondence Education

### Purpose and Scope

The policy and procedures below are designed to comply with the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), concerning verification of student identity in distance or correspondence online learning. The Act requires that institutions use one or more of the following methods:

- A secure username and password;
- Proctored examinations; and
- Other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

This Policy applies to all credit-bearing distance education courses or programs offered by the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), Medical Sciences Campus (MSC), beginning with submission of the application for admission process, and continuing through to a student's graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from the institution.

### Compliance

The Medical Sciences Campus is committed to the academic honesty and integrity of its entire community. The MSC uses secure login and complex password to ensure that the student who registers for a course is the same student who participates in the course.

During the admission process, each student receives a unique Student ID Number. After a student has been through the admission process and is accepted to attend, MSC-ISO Information Systems Office is responsible for creating secure, unique login and password for the "Active Directory" (AD) and email address account for the accepted student. The AD account is used to authenticate into computers and wireless networks at the campus local area network.

New Students claim their AD username and email address through a secured web application after providing unique information such as date of birth. As part of the setup process to access their email account, they must establish their identity by visiting a web portal to set up a complex password, security questions, and answers. Student can manage their password resets and update his profile through a web portal. To enforce security measures of student's email accounts, since May of 2021 the UPR System it is recommending or requiring a multifactor authentication before accessing their email accounts.

The MSC uses Blackboard as its learning management system(LMS). Students registered for online courses in the LMS have secure and unique credentials (username and password) assigned by the University's LMS administrator. A security certificate encrypts all data and communication during any connection of a student, professor, or administrator to the LMS. The LMS provides the student and opportunity to change their password at any time through an online portal. The Blackboard system ensures appropriate and secure student access to the course and his or her information, through a local authentication service in the LMS.

**Proctored Examinations:** In the event that an exam for a distance course must be proctored, the instructor is required to make arrangements in advance with student's. Additionally, departments and programs can choose to use third-party vendors who use web-based means to verify and proctor examinations.

**Fees associated with the new technologies:** The Medical Science Campus does not charge a fee for new technologies related to student identity verification. Students would be notified of additional fees, if any, prior to and during the registration process through MSC website or admissions office.

**Student Privacy Protection:** UPR-Medical Sciences Campus methods of verifying student identity in distance or correspondence education, protect the privacy and sensitive student information.

The privacy of students who enroll in online courses at MSC is protected under the University policy regarding *Privacy and Security Awareness*, in "System-Wide Policy for the Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources throughout the University of Puerto Rico, Certification Number 35 (2007-2008)" and by "Standards for the Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources" published in the MSC website at : <https://rcm2.rcm.upr.edu/policies-and-laws/>

## FERPA & Student Records Access

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student educational records. All credits bearing course and programs offered through distance & correspondence education must assure compliance with FERPA.

The Medical Sciences Campus does not allow access to or release of any confidential student education information to any third parties without written consent of the student. FERPA allows schools to disclose those records without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31)

- School officials with legitimate education interest;
- Other Schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile system, pursuant to specific State law

Every user with access to student records (faculty, staff, and students), shares the responsibility of no disclosure any student record information without a written consent or under applicable conditions of the Federal law.

## Responsible Parties

All users are responsible to provide their complete and true identity information in any identity verification process, and responsible for maintaining the security of their usernames, passwords, and other access credentials as required, and may not be shared or given to anyone other than the user to whom they were assigned for any reason.

UPR-MSC - Deanship of Academic affairs is the responsible for ensuring that campus-level processes remain in compliance with this policy (registrar, admissions, library among others) and are informed of any change in a timely fashion.

UPR-MSC - Medical School, associate deanship of academic affair for student development is responsible to ensuring students identity verification are consistently applied.

Students have the responsibility of maintaining the security of their usernames, passwords, and personally identifiable information.

The “División RCM Online” is responsible for having an up-to-date Learning Management System, robust Password Management protocols, and rigorous IT Help Desk procedures. They are also responsible for providing instruction and support to Students and Faculty on MSC Teaching protocols and practices.

Faculty members are encouraged to use these technologies and to design courses that use assignments and evaluations that support academic integrity at MSC.