

4.8.1

Verification of Student Identity in Distance or Correspondence Education

An institution that offers distance or correspondence education demonstrates that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completed the course or program and receives the credit by verifying the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the option of the institution, methods such as (a) a secure login and pass code, (b) proctored examinations, or (c) new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

Judgment

Compliance Partial Compliance Non-Compliance Not Applicable

Narrative

Tennessee Technological University (TTU) ensures that the student who registers and enrolls in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by using the following methods. The TTU Distance Education Policy covers the procedures and practices pertaining to distance education courses and programs originating from TTU [1].

Unique/Secure Username and Password

The University has a policy on the creation, use, and maintenance of account credentials and passwords used to access TTU's information technology facilities and resources [2]. This policy applies to all persons and organizations using the information technology facilities and resources owned, leased, or administered by the University, including all persons employed (either as full-time, part-time, or temporary employees, or as independent contractors) by the University or Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), and to all students enrolled at the University, and alumni. This policy replaces all previous TTU password policies. The TTU policy complements and supports the compliance of TBR Policy 1:08:00:00, Section 7.1.A [3] and the State of Tennessee Enterprise Information Security Policies.

All TTU students are assigned a unique username created from the first initial of their first name, the first initial of their middle name, the first eight letters of their last name, and a two-digit number. Their initial password is a combination of their T# and characters, which is their UUID for TTU [4]. This is a sequential number assigned to the student at the time of admission to the institution. This account accesses the student's email, lab, and checkout computers, TTU's online learning environment, wireless network, and Library resources.

Students taking TTU's Regents Online Degree Program (RODP) courses/programs log in to the eLearn server with their unique username that is comprised of their first initial, entire last name, and the numbers of the month and day of their birth date. Their initial password is the six-digits of their birth date, which must be changed immediately upon entering the system [5].

Proctoring

The University has a license for Respondus Monitor that works with Respondus LockDown Browser and the campus online learning environment [6]. Currently, TTU has a contract for 200 seats (one student per course with no limit on exams). Faculty members have access to this software at no extra cost to the department or the students. The University has the option to upgrade the license or convert to the student-pay model if necessary. Students use their own computers and webcam to record themselves

taking a quiz. Faculty can then review the recorded videos for discrepancies in the assessment sessions.

There is also another product that has been tested, Remote Proctor Now, which TTU also recommends. This software provides a reviewing service, but at a cost per student per test.

TTU's RODP office provides a secure proctor setting for the online instructors to use for proctored testing [7]. The office's testing center proctors between 160 – 180 exams for students during the week of midterms and finals. Students must make an appointment with the testing center by sending their information and information regarding the course name, number, instructor's name, email address, and date and time for the exam. The central RODP office at the TBR keeps a database for the instructors to input their password information and directions for proctoring their exam. The TTU proctor has access to this secure database to retrieve this information when the students come in for their proctored exam.

The students must bring their photo ID for their scheduled appointment. The students log in to their course with their credentials and pull up the exam. Many students have their picture in their course, which is another verification for student ID. Once the students log in to their exam, they must move and allow the proctor to put in the password provided by the instructor to allow the exam to begin. The exam has a timer so it is not necessary for the proctor to time the exam. The exam cuts off when the time expires, and the exam is submitted automatically if the students have not finished.








The proctor monitors and watches for any unusual activity – looking at others, phone, textbook, notes, viewing other sites, etc. If the proctor suspects anything, he or she will ask the student to stop and report the activity to the student's instructor.

If a student presents a false ID, or if the proctor suspects the student may be falsely representing someone else, the procedure is to contact the campus Safety and Security Office and allow that unit to handle the situation.

Conclusion

TTU enforces policies on the creation, use, and maintenance of account credentials and passwords used to access information technology facilities and resources. These policies are reviewed and updated as necessary, and the University is continually monitoring ways of improving the proctoring of exams to implement new technologies as they become available so that the University is in compliance with the Federal Requirement 4.8.1.

Sources

-  [1] Distance Education Policy 223_04_20_2015
-  [2] TTU Password Management Policy 852
-  [3] Information Technology Resources
-  [4] TTU_Accounts_Username_and_Password_Information
-  [5] RODP Secure Username and Password Information
-  [6] Respondus Software
-  [7] RODP_Test_Proctoring