

# Verification of Student Identity

## ROWAN UNIVERSITY POLICY

**Title:** Verification of Student Identity

**Subject:** *Academic Affairs*

**Policy No:** AA 2018:01

**Applies:** *University-Wide*

**Issuing Authority:** *Provost / Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Senior Vice President for Student Affairs*

**Responsible Officers:** *Deans, Department Chairs, and Department Heads*

**Adopted:** July 2013

**Last Revision:** January 3, 2019

**Last Reviewed:** July 2018

### I. PURPOSE

To ensure University compliance with the provisions of the United States Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act (602.17(g)) concerning the verification of student identity in distance learning.

To provide students, faculty, and staff with direction regarding the use of examination integrity technology for the purpose of preventing potentially fraudulent behavior during examinations in online courses.

### II. ACCOUNTABILITY

Under direction of the Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs, Deans, Department Chairs, and Department Heads will ensure compliance with the policy.

### III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all students, faculty, and staff of Rowan University involved in credit-bearing distance learning courses and programs offered through Rowan Online, beginning with application for admission and continuing through to a student's graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from study.

### IV. DEFINITIONS

1. *Examination Integrity Software:* A system that collects environmental data via a student's computer system, web camera, and microphone while the student takes an examination in a private, secured location. The system is automated such that students are not monitored in real time by a human proctor. It employs a variety of security protocols, such as biometric facial recognition and voice monitoring for the purpose of student identity verification throughout the examination. Other processes, including computer operating system monitoring, computer screen capture, and environmental video scans are employed to detect any actions that could be considered as academic integrity violations.
2. *Biometric Facial Recognition:* Measures and compares the unique facial features of an individual for the purposes of identification or authentication. The student first establishes an initial profile or series of digital photos that serve as a baseline for the purposes of comparison. During an examination, the

exam integrity technology uses facial recognition algorithms to compare images of the student's face captured during the examination period with the previously established profile to verify the identity of the student.

3. *Environmental Video Scans*: Records video of the student's surroundings by employing a 'room-and-desk' scan using the student's webcam to ensure unauthorized materials, devices, or unauthorized assistance from other individuals are employed.
4. *Screen Capture*: The process of recording an image of a computer desktop that can be saved as a graphics file. A series of images may be taken over time and used to produce a video representation of the student's screen.
5. *Voice Monitoring*: Records ambient audio from the student's microphone throughout the examination period and flags any unusual peaks in the audio level in an effort to detect unusual activity (e.g., the test-taker engages in a phone call or speaks with another individual during the examination).

## V. POLICY

It must be verified that a student who registers for a course or program offered through distance learning methods is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program. In addition to secure login to the student information system and learning management systems, to improve online examination integrity, Rowan University employs a technology-based examination integrity software system. Faculty utilizing online exams that constitute a significant percentage of the course grade (i.e., major exams such as a mid-term or final) can arrange for students enrolled in online courses to complete exams while using the University-approved examination integrity software system. This policy outlines requirements and responsibilities that ensure verification of student identity and examination integrity while also maintaining student privacy.

### 1. Requirements

- a. Each student is assigned a student ID number and student-generated PIN to access the Banner student information system for the purpose of registration, enrollment management, and management of personal data (birth date, address, SSN, transcript of grades, etc.). Each student is also assigned a Rowan Network Account username and student-generated password. Network Accounts are required to gain access to learning management systems, University issued email, and related services and systems.
- b. All methods of verifying student identity in distance learning must protect the privacy of the student. Personally identifiable information collected by the University may be used, at the discretion of the institution, as the basis for identity verification. For example, students asking to reset their Rowan Network Account passwords may be asked to provide two or more pieces of personal information for comparison with the data on file. In some cases, the student may be asked to come to the Rowan University Main Campus technology support offices in person with a photo ID for verification.
- c. Data collected by the system during the examination is securely transmitted, stored, and managed to ensure student privacy is maintained in compliance with FERPA regulations (see Attachment 1). All student data are purged from the system within 1 year from the last day of the course section in which the system was used. Data may be kept longer in the event of a suspected integrity violation. Student data are not sold or shared.
- d. Faculty will review and interpret flagged incidents. Suspected academic integrity violations must be reported in accordance with the Rowan University Academic Integrity Policy.
- e. Faculty employing the examination integrity software must inform their students of this policy and of any additional examination requirements in the course syllabus.
- f. Students must be notified in writing at the time of course registration or enrollment of fees associated with the use of the software system. In the event that there will be additional costs for students as a result of the use of services and technologies to ensure verification and/or exam security technologies, a notification is posted in the student information system under the required materials section for the given course. In addition, information about additional costs must be added to the required materials section of the course syllabus.
- g. Students have the right to request an alternative examination integrity option in consultation with their course instructor.

### 2. Responsibilities

- i. Students are responsible for maintaining the security of their usernames, passwords, Student ID numbers, and PINs. Students are responsible for changing passwords and PINs periodically to maintain security. Students are held responsible for knowledge of the information contained in the prevailing policies of Rowan Online and Rowan University Information Resources and Technology (IRT) with regards to use of Rowan Network Accounts, Rowan Student IDs, and all related systems and protocols.
- ii. All members of the Rowan University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity standards as per the Academic Integrity Policy (Attachment 2). Specifically, faculty who suspect identity fraud in a distance learning course are required to investigate it and report it if there is reasonable doubt.

#### **Attachment 1**

Rowan University complies fully with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g. This act 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 FERPA and student record access can be found at: <https://sites.rowan.edu/registrar/services-resources/ferpa.html>.

#### **Attachment 2**

Academic Integrity Policy <https://confluence.rowan.edu/display/POLICY/Academic+Integrity+Policy>