



Policy and Procedures for Validation of the Identity of a Student Registered in an Online or Hybrid Course

Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico (PCUPR) herein presents the procedure for validation of the identity of a student registered in an online course. This complies with the Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of the United States of America, Public Law 110-315.

At the institutional level, every officially registered student is assigned an account in the Moodle platform to access his or her courses, and this is regulated according to what is established in the *Policies and Norms Concerning Security, Acceptable Use, and Privacy of the University Web of Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico*. The account includes a username unique to each student and a password which the student can change whenever desired. The username and password assigned are provided in compliance with the norms of FERPA¹. Privacy of students registered in online courses of PCUPR is protected by the Institutional policies concerning student privacy, confidentiality, and fraud; stipulations of FERPA², and by the Social Security Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579).

For the purpose of guaranteeing that students registered in online courses are the same as those taking the course, PCUPR requires them to validate their identity at the beginning of the course and when examinations and tests are administered. The procedure for verification of the identity of a student registered in an online course will validate his or her identity and will guarantee compliance with the norms to avoid fraud during student participation in examinations and tests. The procedure shall include the administration of evaluations kept in internal and remote centers authorized by the institution. What follows describes the procedure.

¹ The FERPA Law of 1974, known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, is also known as the Buckley Amendment.

² FERPA PCUPR: http://website.pucpr.edu/?page_id=2268

PROCEDURE FOR VERIFICATION OF STUDENT IDENTITY

1. Validation of the identity of a student taking an examination or test in an online course

For the purpose of validating the identity of a student who takes evaluations in his or her distance learning courses (examinations and tests, etc.), the PCUPR requires the administration of examinations and tests protected at technology centers of the PCUPR, certified computer laboratories at the branch campuses, and at remote centers outside of the institution which are certified by it. The requirement to take protected examinations and tests in online courses shall be included in the registration program in order that the student may be made aware of this requirement prior to registering in the course. It should also be included in the syllabus and course calendar along with the date of administration or access to the examination or test. The professor of the online course may opt to administer a written examination requiring actual presence of the student. The student should present his or her institutional identification or a valid official identification with a photograph and proof of registration duly certified in order to take the examination. Among the options provided by the PCUPR to the student in order to take examinations are:

1. Students who can attend the Ponce Campus and the branch campuses of Arecibo and Mayagüez should take the examinations at the location specified by the course's Professor. The Ponce Campus has the Virtual Education Center of the Institute of Virtual Education located in the Encarnación Valdés Library and the laboratories corresponding to the various Colleges. The branch campuses of Arecibo and Mayagüez each have a computer centers which may be reserved by faculty members to administer protected examinations.
2. Students who, because of their geographical location cannot come to any of the campuses of the PCUPR or the certified centers the Institution already possesses, should locate a nearby external or remote center near their location and submit its credentials to the Office of the Institute of Virtual Education (IEV, for its initials in Spanish) of the PCUPR for its certification. The IEV will provide the faculty with a list of qualified remote centers and supervisors. If the student proposes a custodian not on the list, the custodian should fill out the *Application for the Qualification as Qualified Supervisor*, for its evaluation and eventual approval by the IEV.

1.1. Validation of the identity of the student at the start of a distance learning course (for online and hybrid courses)

- During the first week of class, the professor or facilitator of the course shall conduct a first interview, either in person or by virtual means (web cam) to learn the student's identity. The student should provide his or her validated registration along with an official identification with a photograph. Once the professor has gotten to know the student registered in the online course, the student can access the course platform remotely using the username and password provided.

1.2. Validation of the identity of an online student attending a technological center of the PCUPR.

- The student shall identify the Technology Center (CT, for its initials in Spanish) at one of the three campuses of the PCUPR. He or she should verify the days and hours of operation in order to attend and comply with the requirements of the course.
- Qualified Supervisors (SC, for its initials in Spanish) shall be in charge of the Technology Centers, and they shall verify the identity of the student before the examination or course activity commences.
- The student shall show the SC the validated student ID card and copy of the registration form.
 - The student may present other current valid forms of identification such as: driver's license, passport, permanent resident visa, or military identification. The identification should be an original, not a copy.
- The Qualified Supervisor shall verify that the student appears on the list of students registered in the course and shall ensure that he or she signs the attendance sheet.
- Once identity has been verified, the Qualified Supervisor shall verify that the student accesses the course using his or her username and password.

1.3. Validation of the identity of a student attending a technology center outside the PCUPR.

- The student shall identify the External Technology Center (CTE) qualified by the PCUPR. He or she shall notify the professor of the course at which CTE the activity will be performed.
- The student shall present to the SC the validated identification card of the PCUPR and copy of the registration form.
 - The student may present other current valid forms of identification such as: driver's license, passport, permanent resident visa, or military identification. The identification should be an original, not a copy.

- The Qualified Supervisor shall verify that the student appears on the list of students registered in the course and shall ensure that he or she signs the attendance sheet.
- Once identity has been verified, the Qualified Supervisor shall verify that the student accesses the course with his or her username and password.

2. Qualified Supervisors (SC, for its initials in Spanish) to monitor examinations and tests

2.1 The following personnel may monitor the examination at the qualified Technology Centers (CT) located throughout the campuses of the Institution:

- Faculty giving the courses
- Department Directors
- Technicians authorized by the Institute of Virtual Education
- Laboratory technicians at the branch campuses and Colleges, authorized by the IEV.

2.2 If the students must take the examinations outside the Institution due to their geographic location, the following personnel may monitor the examinations as long as they are qualified by the PCUPR to carry out this function. To these effects, the person interested in becoming a Qualified Supervisor should complete and submit to the offices of the Institute for Virtual Education the corresponding application.

- Department Directors of Universities
- Directors of correctional institutions
- Supervisors of the armed forces
- Librarians certified in supervisory positions
- Officials of testing centers at universities

RESPONSABILITIES IN THE IDENTITY VERIFICATION PROCESS

1. Responsibility of the online student

- Provide the documents proving his or her identity as stipulated in the Manual and Student Rules and the Policies and Norms of the University Web of the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico.
- Take examinations and tests at qualified centers or those assigned by the professor giving the course.
- Maintain the security and confidentiality of his or her access credentials (username and password) and use the account assigned appropriately.
- If, due to his or her geographical location, the student is unable to attend any of the campuses of the PCUPR or a previously qualified external center, a custodian to be qualified and approved by the Institute for Virtual Education (IEV) should be

identified. The IEV will provide the faculty with a list of certified Qualified Supervisors

2. Responsibility of the Institution at which the online course originates.

- Ensure that all methods utilized to verify the identity of students enrolled in online courses protects the privacy of their information.
- Ensure that the privacy of the student's identity be protected under the basic rules of FERPA and the policies of privacy, confidentiality, and fraud and the Social Security Privacy Act of 1974.

3. Responsibility of the professor of the online course

- Provide evidence of compliance with the procedures for verification of student identity. The Vice-President for Academic Affairs shall, when necessary, intervene in cases in which procedures are not complied with.

4. Responsibility of the Qualified Supervisor

Comply with the duties and responsibilities corresponding to his or her function as custodian, described in detail in the *Application for Qualification as Supervisor*, which are summarized below.

- Verify identity of the students before beginning the examination
- Ensure that each student signs the attendance list
- Ensure that each student has on his or her desk only those materials authorized by the professor teaching the course
- Verify that each student uses his or her username to access the online course platform and that the corresponding course and examination is accessed
- Enter the password to access the examination. This password shall not be divulged to any student at any time
- Monitor the student taking the examination
- Ensure that the surroundings are safe and appropriate for taking the examination so the student may concentrate while taking it
- Report any irregularity noticed while the student took the examination
- Guarantee the security and integrity of the process and the confidentiality of the examination

5. Responsibility of the Institute for Virtual Education

- Orientate new professors participating in the administration of the courses
- Guarantee that the procedures for verification of student identity be applied consistently
- Ensure compliance with the procedures for verification of the identity of online students

- Promptly inform Deans and Directors concerning changes of procedure or irregularities
- Maintain up to date lists of qualified centers
- Identify and qualify centers according to the geographical location of students requesting them
- Provide the faculty with a list of certified external or remote technology centers and Qualified Supervisors

6. Responsibility of Academic Deans

- The Deans are responsible for ensuring that the Faculty of their College who teach distance learning courses comply with these procedures.

FEES ASSOCIATED WITH STUDENT IDENTITY VERIFICATION

The PCUPR does not currently charge students for identity verification, since it utilizes its own technology centers to protect examinations and evaluations. The University may qualify external technology centers to protect online examinations and evaluations, and these centers may charge for their use. If because of his or her geographical location a student needs to attend an external or remote technology center in order to take protected examinations and evaluations, and this center charges a fee for its use, the student shall pay the fee for this service. This information shall be published in the Registration Program of the PCUPR for the information of students desiring to register in an online course.

If the Institution uses alternative methods of identity verification such as remote proctor or programming, it may assess an additional fee for using this service. If this is the case, the student shall be notified in writing prior to the registration process. The additional charges for registration in online courses shall be informed of through the Registration Program of the PCUPR which is published every semester and trimester, the Undergraduate Catalog and the Graduate Catalog, or the Institution's web page and student electronic mail, etc.

Approved November 5, 2013 by the Academic Council

NOTE: This document was written by the Advisory Committee on Policies for the Institute of Virtual Education

Definitions

1. ***Online course*** // is an educational modality using information and communication technologies as a means by which learning is produced, such that it employs synchronous and asynchronous recourses, permitting the student to interact and communicate with the professor and fellow students of the course, as well as access its content by means of chats, debates, examinations, lessons, etc., through the internet.
2. ***Hybrid course***// is an educational modality of a partially face-to-face course which employs various technological information and communication tools as a means by which learning is produced, such that it employs synchronous and asynchronous online communication resources with a minimum of 30% and a maximum of 70% of the courses contact hours, with the remaining time carried out in person, permitting the student to interact and communicate with the professor and fellow students, as well as access content, through chats, debates, examinations, lessons, etc. through the internet. Virtual assignments are not a substitute for the face-to-face hours of the course.
3. ***Online student*** // a student who voluntarily registers in an online or hybrid course, responsible for possessing the qualities required to take online or distance courses.
4. ***Online professor*** // a facilitator or professor in charge of offering the online or hybrid course. Should possess a professional certification from Distance Education accrediting him or her to offer online courses.
5. ***Protected examination or evaluation*** // are the evaluations (examinations and short tests) in the online learning modality, administered by personnel authorized by the institution who may or may not be the course professor. Administration of the evaluation should take place at a center authorized by the Institution. In online courses, it may be required that students take protected examinations at centers approved by the Institution, for purposes of preventing fraud (copying) and to guarantee that the student registered is the one taking the examination.
6. ***Online examinations*** // are the evaluations (examinations and short tests) administered through the online course.
7. ***Authorized Technology Center (CT, for its initials in Spanish)*** // computer laboratory or technology center at any of the PCUPR campuses which is certified to offer online evaluation to students registered in these courses.
8. ***External Technology Center (CTE, for its initials in Spanish)***// computer laboratory or technology center at any qualified institution outside of the PCUPR. These may be

computer laboratories at Catholic schools, correctional institutions, libraries, technology centers of the Armed Forces, examination centers, etc., which are certified to offer online evaluations to students registered in such courses.

9. ***Student identity*** // is the credential utilized by the Institution for the identification and certification of a registered student. Every student should possess a validated identification card and a copy of the semester's registration when he or she arrives at the computer laboratory or technology center at any of the PCUPR campuses which is certified to offer online evaluations to students registered in such courses.

10. ***Qualified Supervisor (SC, for its initials in Spanish)*** // An employee of an educational and/or formative institution certified by the PCUPR, residing in any part of the world who is also endorsed by the highest immediate supervisor at the institution at which he or she is employed. This is the person responsible for supervision of the student while taking a protected examination. The SC cannot be related to the student, and must be impartial, so that any conflict of interest with the student be avoided and the security and integrity of the examination process be guaranteed

11. ***Director of the Institute for Virtual Education (IEV, for its initials in Spanish)*** // An empathetic, dynamic, and highly qualified academic in the diverse modalities of distance learning; who possesses first-hand experience of the evaluation processes of a distance course. Should possess highly developed communication skills, as well as be an assertive listener; possess up to date knowledge of areas pertaining to his or her function; be available face-to-face and virtually to attend to the needs of the program, professors, and students. Facilitator of administrative processes; direct link with Deans, Academic Directors, and Faculty in the performance of the operations of the Institute for Virtual Education.

12. ***Distance education or learning*** // A modality attuned to the diverse learning styles and needs of the students of the Twenty-First Century which enables, through online courses, videoconferences, video links, etc., that students can generate knowledge with the support of an academic facilitator and synchronous or asynchronous technological support.

Approved November 5, 2013 by the Academic Council of the PCUPR

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