

## **Distance Education Privacy Summary**

**Policy Statement.** MSU takes measures to protect the integrity of educational credentials awarded to students enrolled in distance education courses by verifying student identity, protecting student privacy, and notifying students of any special meeting times/ locations or additional charges associated with student identity verification in distance education courses.

**Application of Policy:** All University.

### **Definitions.**

1. **Distance Education Courses.** “Distance education courses” means a course in which the majority of the instruction (more than 50%) occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place.
2. **On-Campus Testing Facility.** “On campus testing facility” means a unit that proctors examinations for online courses on the physical campus.
3. **Third-party Remote Proctor.** “Third-party remote proctor” means a service that allows students to take proctored exams online from anywhere using a webcam and the Internet.

### **Procedures and Responsibilities.**

I. **Student Identity Verification in Distance Education Courses.** MSU ensures that a student who registers in a distance education course is the same student who completes the coursework and receives credit, as detailed below:

A. MSU assigns students a unique student identification username upon admission to MSU. Students must create secure passwords and must use these secure credentials to access campus systems where identity verification is necessary. Students must authenticate their username and password each time they access their distance education courses hosted on MSU’s learning management system (LMS).

B. Proctored examinations are another option that faculty may employ to ensure that students enrolled in courses are the ones taking the exams.

II. Protection of Student Privacy in Distance Education Courses. MSU provides written procedures for protecting the privacy of all university students, including those enrolled in distance education courses and programs, as outlined in MSU's FERPA and Information Security policy (4.197 – Information Resources Use and Security Policy). In addition, written procedures regarding the terms of privacy for the LMS are published on MSU's website.

What is FERPA?

"FERPA is a Federal law that is administered by the Family Policy Compliance Office in the U.S. Department of Education. 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99. FERPA applies to all educational agencies and institutions (e.g., schools) that receive funding under any program administered by the Department."  
([www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov))

III. Required Notifications to Students Enrolled in Distance Education Courses.

- A. MSU will notify students of any mandatory face-to-face or synchronous meetings, including those for examinations or orientation sessions for all distance education courses. MSU will publish these meeting times and locations in the Schedule of Classes by the time courses are made available for registration to ensure students are notified of these requirements prior to enrollment.
- B. MSU will provide an on-campus testing facility that faculty may reserve for proctored exams. There are no charges to students or faculty for using this facility.
- C. If a faculty member chooses a proctor other than the on-campus testing facility or MSU's contracted vendor, faculty must notify students of any costs associated with the proctor to verify student identity. MSU will publish these costs in the Schedule of Classes by the time courses are made

available for registration to ensure students are notified of these charges prior to enrollment.