Student Identity Verification for Online Classes

Accreditation standard 2.D.14: “The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in the distance education course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy and that students are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.”

What’s required for compliance: One proctored/supervised exam or experience per course where students are required to present photo identification upon signing in for the proctored experience or test. This system allows the instructor to know that the student mastering the material is the same student receiving credit for the course.

Proctored Exams/Experiences

Face-to-Face

Proctor exams in a face-to-face (f2f) setting where students show a photo ID (driver’s license, passport, or UNR student ID card) before they take their test.*

Online with Examity

“Examity offers live online proctoring for academic institutions and universities by using a webcam to monitor students taking exams online.”

Fees are either paid by the department or the student directly to Examity. If students are responsible for paying the fee, the cost must be published in MyNEVADA so they’re aware of the fee upon registration. For details on using Examity, please contact the Instructional Design Team (IDT) at idt@unr.edu.

Alternatives to Proctored Exams

Presentations

Presentations give students the opportunity to display knowledge gained in the course and present that information to their classmates. This serves the dual purpose of giving students in-depth knowledge on the topic they present on and giving the entire class a “fresh” presentation of material (in other words, lecture material does not only have to come from the instructor). Instructors should check student identity by verifying IDs in a one-on-one online or f2f meeting prior to the presentation.

To protect student privacy, instructors should perform identity checks one on one and not in front of other students. This is especially important in an online environment, where a student should only be required to present identification directly to the instructor and not in a setting where classmates can see private information.

Video Presentations (Prerecorded): Students could create video presentations in which their voices must be heard and faces must be seen as they cover important information from the course.

BigBlueButton: Using the online conferencing tool BigBlueButton, instructors could require students to lead presentations and discussion sessions with their classmates. This method requires students to present information and “think on their feet” to answer discussion questions in real time.

Face-to-Face Class Meetings: Instructors could organize once-a-semester meetings to allow for student presentations and whole-group discussions.*

Individual or Small Group Interviews

Individual or small group interviews between students and instructors/teaching assistants provide the opportunity to truly test a student’s understanding of the course materials. Instructors could also spot-check that the interviewed students have complete knowledge of their own work from throughout the term, ensuring that the students have actually completed all work that was turned in. This method requires students to present information and “think on their feet” to answer questions in real time.

BigBlueButton: Instructors can interview students using private sessions. In these sessions, both the instructor and student can have video broadcast of each other, view and use an interactive whiteboard, and access uploaded documents. Instructors should check student identity by verifying IDs at the beginning of the session.

Face-to-Face Individual Meetings: Instructors could organize once-a-semester individual appointments, during which they interview students on the work that they have done over the course of the term and their understanding of the material. Instructors would then have to check the ID of each participant to verify identity. Requiring a one-on-one meeting between students and instructors also provides an opportunity for instructors to check in on student understanding or for students to ask specific questions about the course assignments or learning materials.*

Proctored Written Assignments

Many instructors require end-of-term projects or major writing assignments instead of final exams. This can translate into a proctored setting easily. Depending on the size and nature of the end-of-term project, it could either be completed entirely within a proctored setting (as in the case of an essay) or partially within a proctored setting. For example, while students may do most of the work on a larger project on their own, they could complete a supplementary written assignment related to that major work under proctored conditions.*

* If students are required to be on campus at a certain time, this information must be published in MyNEVADA as well as in the syllabus.
Proctored written assignments require that students have an intimate knowledge of the course materials, the major work completed (if applicable), and what the course aimed to achieve.

**Essays:** Students could complete an assigned essay entirely within a proctored setting. Responding to either specific or general prompts provided by the instructor, students would demonstrate their in-depth knowledge of the course materials.

**Summary Assignments:** For larger projects, students could write a summary of the work they completed and how it was undertaken. In outlining exactly what steps they took to write the major paper, or create the project, they demonstrate that they actually participated in the process.

**Reimagining Assignments:** Students could reimagine the major research paper or project in a different genre or presentation style. For example, a student has written a research paper on the tie between women’s suffrage and the abolitionist movement. In this proctored writing assignment, the student would describe how he would present that information to an audience in the South in 1860. This is a little more on the creative side but would work well in writing classes.

**Critique-of-Work Assignments:** Students could write a critique of their work, outlining the strengths and weaknesses and giving an overall reaction to their major papers or projects. They could also be asked to outline how their work aligns with course materials or course objectives.

**Considerations**

- If students are required to be on campus at a certain time, this information must be published in MyNEVADA as well as in the syllabus.
- If special equipment is required (webcam, speakers, etc.), this information must be published in MyNEVADA as well as in the syllabus.
- If Examity is used and students are responsible for paying the testing fee, the cost must be published in MyNEVADA as well as in the syllabus.
- It is recommended that for exams proctored online, students have a week to test (Monday through Sunday).
- To maintain exam security, instructors should not release the exam after students take it unless they plan on revising the test every semester.