

ONLINE IDENTITY VERIFICATION POLICY

The policies and procedures below are designed to comply with the Higher Education Opportunity Act, specifically Public Law 110-35, stipulating that accrediting agencies require postsecondary institutions that “offer distance education or correspondence education to have processes through which the institution establishes that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives the academic credit.”

SUNY New Paltz policies and procedures for addressing identity verification of online students is an integral part of its policies on [academic integrity](#). The New Paltz policy on academic integrity defines cheating, plagiarism, and forgery and delineates the consequences of violating the policy. Submitting another student’s work or having another individual complete assignments, assessment, or tests in either online or seated courses is a violation of the academic integrity policy.

The Office of Information Technology Services has been proactive in development of measures to insure that our online learning environment is secure. First, all students taking courses through Blackboard, our course management system, have secure usernames and passwords. This follows the standards set by EDUCAUSE, the postsecondary instructional technology organization. In addition, challenge questions have been implemented that require that registered students, before they begin an online course, provide a question and answer for changing passwords and select among a choice of challenge questions for further identity confirmation. These identity markers are stored in databases and are used to verify identity.

All policies related to computer and Internet access and usage at SUNY New Paltz are posted on [Information Technology Services’ website](#), including the [Acceptable Uses and Privacy Policy](#), which states: *You are responsible for the safeguarding of your computer account. Your account and network connection are for your individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. You are responsible for all actions originating through your account or network connection. You must not misrepresent or conceal your identity in electronic messages and actions.*