

Distance Education Policy and Procedure for Protecting Student Privacy

The SACSCOC (2024) *Resource Manual for The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* states, “Effective academic policies related to an institution’s educational programs are developed in concert with the appropriate input and participation of the constituencies affected by the policies, conform to commonly accepted practices and policies in higher education, accurately portray the institution’s programs and services, and are disseminated to those benefiting from such practices. These academic policies lead to a teaching and learning environment that enhances the achievement of student outcomes and success.

To advance learning, all coursework taken for academic credit has rigor, substance, and standards connected to established learning outcomes. To protect the integrity of degrees offered, the institution is responsible for the quality of all coursework transcribed as if it were credit earned from the institution” (p. 92).

SACSCOC (2024) Standard 10.6 Section B states, “An institution that offers distance or correspondence education has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs” (p. 100).

Policy

It is the policy of Lincoln Memorial University (LMU) to ensure that the privacy of students enrolled in distance education courses or programs shall be protected.

Procedures

1. Privacy of student records will be maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Lincoln Memorial University will ensure that it is in compliance with all FERPA guidelines. Should the University use any service provider for the delivery of online courses, that provider will be contractually obligated to meet FERPA guidelines.
2. Students will submit course assignments within the password/passcode-protected, multi-factor-authenticated learning management system designated for the course in which they are enrolled.
3. Student postings to discussion boards, chat rooms, and class forums shall be accessible only to members of the class, the course instructor(s), and anyone specifically authorized by a course instructor if such authorization is for pedagogical/assessment purposes. (The President, a Vice President, Academic School/College Deans, and Program Directors may

access discussion boards, chat rooms, and class forums for evaluation/assessment purposes.)

4. Grades for discussion board participation and written assignments are confidential and are only accessible by the individual student and the course instructor(s), and anyone specifically authorized by a course instructor if such authorization is for pedagogical/assessment purposes. (The President, a Vice President, Academic School/College Deans, and Program Directors may access grades for evaluation/assessment purposes.)
5. Online student examinations shall be accessible only to course instructor(s) and anyone specifically authorized by a course instructor if such authorization is for pedagogical purposes. (The President, a Vice President, Academic School/College Deans, and Program Directors may access examinations for evaluation/assessment purposes.)
6. Material from online courses used for curriculum/course/program assessment/evaluation purposes will be reviewed by course instructors and Academic School/College Deans to ensure that it does not include the identity of individual students.
7. Personally identifiable information of students, regardless of whether it is kept by LMU or a service provider, shall be kept in an encrypted format with at least 128kb encryption methods.

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References

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). (2024). *Resource manual for the principles of accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement*. <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2024/02/2024-POA-Resource-Manual.pdf>