

NORTHWEST VISTA COLLEGE
PROCEDURE

Procedure Number:	SS 2.1.7
Procedure Title:	Student Identity Verification for Distance Education Courses

PURPOSE

Distance education has become an integral part of the academic landscape, providing students with the flexibility to pursue their studies remotely. At Northwest Vista College, we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity, which includes verifying the identity of students who enroll in our distance education courses and programs.

This procedure outlines the comprehensive system we have in place to ensure that the student who registers for a distance education course or program is indeed the same individual who actively participates and completes their coursework, ultimately receiving the credit they deserve.

1. INITIAL VERIFICATION PROCESS

Northwest Vista College’s online system uses the same methods and has the same requirements for verifying student identity and protecting privacy of student records at all of its sites. These policies and procedures apply to all students regardless of location or mode of delivery. NVC students engage in distance learning through internet-based online and hybrid courses and follow the National Council (NC) for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), a national initiative to provide more access to online courses while maintaining compliance standards with state regulatory agencies <https://www.alamo.edu/nvc/academics/nc-sara/>.

- 1.1. Each student is assigned a unique Student Information System (SIS – Banner) identification number and an Alamo Colleges District Education Services (ACES) ID.

2. CONTINUED VERIFICATION

- 2.1. NVC utilizes an enterprise-wide Luminis portal branded as “ACES” for students at NVC and all colleges within the Alamo Colleges District.
- 2.2. Students and employees utilize the portal to access protected and secure information, processes, and applications using a single login.
- 2.3. ACES is the same secure portal through which students register for classes, pay tuition via credit card, maintain personal information, view transcripts and grades, accept financial aid awards, view email, and access library resources and online courses via Canvas, the secure Learning Management System (LMS).
- 2.4. NVC's primary means of ensuring verification of student identity is a secure login and passcode.

3. ADDITIONAL SECURITY MEASURES

- 3.1. Once in the Canvas LMS, the students may be required to utilize further identity verification software like BioSig-ID, which is a biometric signature gesture system that is used to authenticate a student’s identity.

NORTHWEST VISTA COLLEGE
PROCEDURE

4. PROCTORED EXAMS

4.1. In alignment with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) Principles of Good Practice for Academic Degree and Certificate Programs and Credit Courses Offered at a Distance, some NVC faculty may require students in online courses to come to an on-site location for supervised proctored exams in an area designated for testing in order to verify student identity and maintain the integrity of the exam.

4.2. Proctors in areas designated for testing adhere to make-up exam procedures to ensure that the registered student is the same student completing the exam.

5. ONLINE PROCTORING

5.1. NVC faculty may also utilize technologies such as Respondus Monitor for online proctoring.

5.2. As required by such technologies, students may be required to verify their identity with a school or government issued ID scan before the test is administered.

6. POLICY COMPLIANCE

6.1. The Alamo Colleges District Board of Trustees policies and procedures prohibit the inappropriate use of information technology and the falsification of information, especially identifying information (C.1.9.1)

6.2. Misrepresentation of identity is specified as an academic integrity violation.

By following this procedure, NVC maintains the integrity of our courses and verifies that the students who enroll in distance education courses are the same individuals who actively participate and complete their coursework. Our commitment to identity verification encompasses multiple layers of security, from secure logins to proctored exams and policy compliance, all aimed at upholding the principles of academic honesty and accountability in the digital age.

Relevant Board Policy:	C.1.9.1
Relevant SACSCOC Documents:	10.6
Originating Unit:	Academic Success
Maintenance Unit:	Academic Success
Implementation Date:	
Revision Date:	Fall 2024