

**EXCERPT FROM THE PRELIMINARY REPORT
OF THE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE**

Statement Regarding the Report

The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is responsible for making the final determination on reaffirmation of accreditation based on the findings contained in this committee report, the institution's response to issues contained in the report, other assessments relevant to the review, and application of the Commission's policies and procedures. Final interpretation of the Principles of Accreditation and final action on the accreditation status of the institution rest with SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

Name of the Institution: **University of South Carolina - Columbia**

Date of the Review: **November 3-4, 2020**

SACSCOC Staff Member: **Dr. Linda Thomas-Glover**

Chair of the Committee: **Dr. Timothy S. Brophy**
Director, Institutional Assessment
and Professor, Music Education
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32606

10.6.a Distance and Correspondence Education: Student Identity Verification

10.6 An institution that offers distance or correspondence education:

- (a) ensures that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit.
- (b) has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs.
- (c) ensures that students are notified, in writing at the time of registration or enrollment, of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity.

(Distance and correspondence education) [Off-Site/On-Site Review]

Compliance

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee found support for the institution's case for compliance.

The institution's identification credential is a password-protected, unique, secure identifier for the institution's systems, requiring two-factor authentication through Duo. Policies are in place and published regarding password security, and appropriate steps are authorized if password security is violated. Identity verification for newly admitted students is required prior to receiving an identification, with security aided through an account claiming process via the my.sc.edu portal. The initial verification of the identity of students enrolled as distance education students follows this same process.

Multifactor Authentication on core applications and systems provides an additional level of security. Verification of identify is a share responsibility among multiple offices. Blackboard, the platform used by the institution to deliver course content material, follows standard mass notification security requirements. Optional test proctoring for distance education courses through Proctor U; a fee of \$8-14 per exam was approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2018. Respondus for Monitor is an alternative tool available at no cost to students, instructors, and departments.

The institution's four main systems for secure data management assure network security through Duo, a multifactor authentication.

Privacy policies apply to distance education students as well as face-to-face students, and this is documented in written policy. The institution complies with FERPA and other relevant state privacy policies and procedures. The University Information Security Office is authorized to administer security measures to safeguard data and IT assets.

The institution currently does not levy a charge for verification of identity. Any new charges would need to be approved by the institution's Board of Trustees.