

# RELAY / GSE

## STUDENT IDENTITY VERIFICATION AND PROTECTION POLICY

Relay Graduate School of Education's academic programs are designed purposefully to combine in-person and online instruction. The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) requires institutions that offer credit-bearing distance education courses to verify that students who register for such courses are the same students who actually participate in, complete, and receive academic credit for such courses. To verify student identity in distance education courses, the HEOA requires institutions to use at least one of the following methods:

- A secure login and pass code;
- Proctored examinations; and/or
- New or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identity.

Relay uses all three recommended methods in complying with the HEOA's student identity verification and protection requirements.

**Secure logins and passwords.** Relay assigns each student an individual user login to access the institution's technology systems. A student's technology account is used across all Relay courses, whether delivered through in-person or distance methods. Relay students may not share their account or allow others to use their account. The institution utilizes Okta for its online security and to validate access to its online systems. Okta is an industry-leading identity and access management (I&AM) vendor that maintains a secure identity repository and brokers connections among online software applications. Students set and manage their own passwords independently through Okta; institutional staff do not have access to student passwords. Additionally, students use Okta to access their online academic resources, including the institution's learning management system and library. By maintaining a consistent user process and a single-point-of-access for online academic systems, Relay protects student identity and academic integrity in its technology-enabled academic experiences.

**Proctored examinations and new practices in verifying student identity.** Relay's extensive use of video in its assessments provides further verification and protection of student identity. Because students must themselves appear in videos that are centerpieces of key assessments, and these videos and assessments are reviewed by the institution's teaching faculty, forging student identity in distance education courses is impractical.

Given the centrality to Relay's program design of account-based logins and security, the institution does not charge (and does not currently plan to charge) students for student identity verification. In the event that a

student identity verification were needed in the future, students would be alerted in advance through the institution's learning management system and regular communications.

Finally, student privacy is further protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Relay's FERPA policy is codified in its Student Handbook, made available to students at the start of each academic year.

This policy will be reviewed annually as part of Relay's ongoing institutional review and improvement.

**Last Updated March 31, 2017**