DISTANCE STUDENTS

Verification of Student Identity

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) requires institutions that offer distance education courses or programs to have processes in place to ensure that the student registering for the course is the same student who submits work, participates, and/or receives course credit. At Wentworth Institute of Technology, all students registering for a course utilize their WIT ID, which corresponds with the specific username of each student. Each student is given a temporary password to login for one-time use, and upon successful login, is immediately required to change the password. Students can change the password thereafter at any time, but are required to change the password every 180 days. The logins utilize Microsoft Active Directory to authenticate the user. The password must be a minimum of eight characters using an alpha numeric combination.

While no one method can ensure students taking an online course are completing the coursework themselves, WIT learning and teaching practices help to promote academic honesty. Every WIT student must adhere to the Student Code of Conduct, (as published in the Student Handbook (https://wit.edu/student-life/student-affairs/student-handbook/)), the Wentworth Creed, and all published Wentworth policies and procedures about they/them/theirs character. In addition, online faculty work closely with instructional designers to develop and implement a variety of assessment tools/methods in their courses. Where appropriate, these include research and writing assignments, discussion board participation, independent and group projects, and quizzes.

Notice of New Student Complaint Procedures for Online (Distance) Students

Wentworth Institute of Technology adheres to the Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education established by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC). To that end, Wentworth has in place effective procedures through which to ensure that the student who enrolls in an online (distance) education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit.

Online Student Complaint Procedures

- Online Programs Complaint Processes (https://catalog.wit.edu/academic-policies-procedures/ug/complaint-procedures/Online_Complaint_Recommendation_01_2019.pdf)
- Compliant Agencies for Students Outside of Massachusetts (https://catalog.wit.edu/academic-policies-procedures/ug/complaint-procedures/complain-to-state-agencies-for-website.pdf)
- Compliance Hotline (https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/43864/)

If you have any questions, please contact complianceandrisk@wit.edu.

Online (Distance) Education & State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)

The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE), in its capacity as the SARA portal entity for Massachusetts, reviews and evaluates student complaints regarding distance learning programs offered by Massachusetts-based institutions that are members of SARA in accordance with 610 CMR 12.07. Complaints that should be filed as a SARA Complaint are those that pertain to distance (online) education provided by Massachusetts-based SARA institutions to students residing in other states pursuant to SARA only. Complaints about a SARA institution's operations or activities can be filed to the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (https://www.mass.edu/forstufam/complaints/complaints.asp) and will be resolved pursuant to 610 CMR 2.00 or otherwise in accordance with the institution's policies.

The SARA complaint process is as follows:

1. Students must first attempt to resolve their complaint using internal administrative procedures offered by the SARA institution.
2. After all administrative remedies have been exhausted with the MA-SARA institution, the student may submit a SARA Complaint. (http://www.mass.edu/foradmin/sara/complaints.asp)
3. The DHE shall send a copy of the complaint to the institution that is the subject of the complaint.
4. Within 30 days of the date that the DHE sends a copy of the complaint to the institution, the institution must provide a written response to the student and the DHE.
5. Within 30 days of the date the DHE received the institution's response, or if the DHE receives no response, the Commissioner or his or her designee shall issue a notice to the institution containing the Commissioner's findings regarding the complaint; any corrective actions that the institution shall take; and that, should the institution fail to take those corrective actions, the complaint shall be referred to the Office of the Attorney General for review and, if the Office of the Attorney General deems it appropriate, enforcement action.

Academic Activity and Participation Requirements

Given the asynchronous format of online and hybrid courses, students have the opportunity to take part in the class at multiple times during each weekly module. It is recommended that students login to their online/hybrid course, at minimum, 2-3 times per week to participate in discussion boards, read materials, take assessments, and submit assignments. Active participation in online/hybrid courses is required and is often graded by the instructor.

To be considered active, students will be expected to login to their online or hybrid course(s) in the Bright Space Learning Management System (LMS) and participate in at least two (2) "Academic Activities" each week:

- At least one Academic Activity by midnight ET Wednesday (or by Day 3) each week.
- At least one additional Academic Activity by midnight ET Sunday (or by Day 7) each week.

"Academic activities" includes any combination of the following:

- Posting to discussion boards within the online course.
- Turning in an assignment within the online course.
- Taking a quiz, test, or other assessment within the online course.

A student who is unable to take part in a given week's activities must contact the instructor prior to any assignment deadlines. Makeup work is accepted at the discretion of the instructor. Students should plan accordingly and make sure to read the schedule of deadlines listed in the course syllabus.