
Subject: Personal Credentials for Enterprise Electronic Services

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1. Purpose

This policy specifies that individuals affiliated with Virginia Tech and providers of Virginia Tech electronic services must use personal digital credentials issued by the university for accessing enterprise electronic systems of the university. The policy and its associated standard promote security, accountability, and appropriate levels of confidentiality in the assignment and use of these personal credentials.

2. Policy

Virginia Tech uses a personal identifier (PID) to represent students, faculty, staff, alumni, business partners, and other affiliates of the university. The PID and associated credentials provide login access to enterprise electronic services. The PID is also basic identifying information and, when used as an email identifier, is considered directory information consistent with Federal policy. The PID, in combination with a second factor of authentication, positions both centrally and locally managed services to authenticate individuals reliably and securely.

One and only one PID is provided to an individual at the time the individual initially assumes or resumes a relationship with the university for which PIDs are provided. The PID remains the property of Virginia Tech, and Virginia Tech reserves the right to change, delete, or add PIDs. Having a PID is a prerequisite for accessing centrally provided electronic services and is associated with credentials used to authenticate the individual.

Having a PID is not, however, sufficient to authorize individuals to use those services. Each service defines the criteria for service provisioning and authorizes the individual according to those criteria.

Having a PID is a prerequisite to acquiring other central login credentials. Digital credentials typically consist of a character string identifier plus one or more authentication factors.

2.1 Scope of Policy

This policy applies to the PID as the primary credential for authentication to university electronic services. The character string that constitutes the PID may take on other uses and properties than authentication credentials. This policy applies only to the uses of the character string as an authentication credential.

3. Procedures

Detailed implementation of PID lifecycle and PID uses is outlined in the associated standard, “Standard for University Enterprise Electronic Login Credentials,”

(http://it.vt.edu/content/dam/it_vt_edu/policies/PID_Procedures_Enterprise_Electronic_Login_Credentials.pdf)

4. Definitions

Authentication factors: Authentication factors are elements that are used in forming digital credentials to verify a person's identity. The number of different factors used for authentication is directly related to the level of trust a process can place in the validity of the digital credential. As the number of factors increases, so does the level of trust in the credential. An authentication factor may be something you know (for example, PID plus password, or a challenge question and answer pair), something you have (for example, a smart card or a physical token), or something you are (including biometric measures).

Digital credentials: Digital credentials provide a means to link an asserted identity in the electronic medium to evidence used to verify a person's identity.

Other affiliates: Other affiliates of the university are designated by agreements with other entities.

5. References

Administrative Data Management and Access Policy—University Policy 7100
<http://www.policies.vt.edu/7100.pdf>

Standard for Administrative Data Management
http://it.vt.edu/content/dam/it_vt_edu/policies/AdministrativeDataManagementStandard.pdf

Acceptable Use and Administration of Computer and Communication Systems—University Policy 7000
<http://www.policies.vt.edu/7000.pdf>

Acceptable Use Standard
<http://www.vt.edu/about/acceptable-use.html>

Standard for University Enterprise Electronic Login Credentials
http://it.vt.edu/content/dam/it_vt_edu/policies/PID_Procedures_Enterprise_Electronic_Login_Credentials.pdf

6. Approval and Revisions

Approved March 30, 2005 by the Vice President for Information Technology, Earving L. Blythe.

September 7, 2006: Technical revisions – (1) policy renumbered to Information Technology Policy 7040 from former General University Policy 2040; (2) – Personnel Services updated to “Human Resources”; (3) references updated.

- Revision 1

April 1, 2008: Updates to position titles and/or responsibilities due to university reorganization.

- Revision 2

August 24, 2009: Updates to (1) reflect unit name change from Information Resource Management (IRM) to Identity Management Services (IMS); (2) reflect name change from 'Acceptable Use Guidelines' to 'Acceptable Use Standard'; (3) add requirements to the treatment of PID passwords; and (4) add reference to PID Procedures.

- Revision 3

Updates to add authentication requirement, add hyperlinks, and move procedural/ implementation details to the Standard for University Enterprise Electronic Login Credentials.

Approved January 29, 2018 by Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, Scott F. Midkiff.