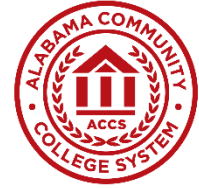




## DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSE PRIVACY STATEMENT



Marion Military Institute (MMI) recognizes distance education as a delivery system for instruction. Distance education is a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Distance learning focuses on utilizing technology and teaching methods to provide instruction to students outside the regular classroom and thereby increase flexibility and scheduling options.

Marion Military Institute (MMI) is committed to protecting the privacy of all students using our Learning Management System, Blackboard. This Privacy Statement describes what information is collected on the Blackboard server, how the information is protected, who has access to the information, and how the information might be used. The Statement is in accordance with the U. S. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

### **1. Collection of Student Information**

When students enroll in Marion Military Institute online course, a username, login identification, and password are generated by the College's administrative software. Students are encouraged to change their passwords after the initial login. Student login information is linked to their MMI email address. The student's first and last names are visible to the instructor and students in many areas of Blackboard, such as the discussion board, chat room, groups, and course mail (message) list. The username is only visible to the instructor and Blackboard system managers which include system administrators and technical support personnel. After a student logs into Blackboard and accesses their course, much of their activity will be tracked. For example, instructors can see how many times students entered the course, how many times students clicked within the course, and how many times students clicked in specific areas of the course. Tracking is accomplished with a cookie, a small data file that many websites write to hard drives when the website is accessed. The cookie stores a unique, random user ID that links users to their Blackboard accounts, giving the cookie the ability to track. Cookies will not help track discussion board posts and chat room archives, but cookies will track how often students clicked within those areas. Information posted in the discussion board or chat room becomes available to the instructor and to all students. Therefore, students should exercise caution when posting personal information. Instructors have the ability to delete posts as they see fit. Typically, Blackboard courses include links to external websites. Aside from links to Marion Military

Institute affiliated sites, MMI is not responsible for the privacy practices of those sites.

## **2. Protection of Student Information**

Since Blackboard is password-protected, the only students who have access to online courses are those students who are officially enrolled in an online course. The work that students submit through Blackboard will remain in the course until the course is deleted from the server. Information is not stored on MMI's campus since modern software, including most LMS systems, is moving to a Software as a Service (SaaS) model, under which software is hosted in central servers in the "cloud". All information stored in Blackboard Learn is stored and backed up in secure data centers run by Amazon Web Services (AWS) in the United States. The AWS system is secure because all data flowing across the global network that interconnects AWS datacenters and regions is automatically encrypted at the physical layer before it leaves the AWS secured facilities. Additional encrypting layers also exist at the WCC site. This is a secure system used by many public institutions.

## **3. Integrity of Student Privacy**

Students should not post private information, such as telephone numbers, into discussion boards or chat rooms. Additionally, to ensure student privacy, students are to follow the policies below:

- a. Students are to never allow anyone to log in using their usernames and passwords. After logging in, students are not to give anyone access to their courses. MMI authenticates each student as an enrolled student in a Blackboard course through a secure login process. Each password is encrypted by Blackboard, and the log in page is secured by SSL technology. However, in order to maintain the integrity of students' privacy and academic integrity, students must ensure that all work completed in their courses are completed by themselves. Please view MMI's Academic Integrity Policy located in the Academic Catalog.
- b. Each time students finish using Blackboard, they are to click the "Log Out" button and exit the web browser. Closing the web browser is especially important if students share a computer or are using a computer in a lab.

## **4. Access of Student Information**

Only authorized individuals of Blackboard and Marion Military Institute have complete access to students' usernames and work posted on Blackboard. Authorized individuals are system managers, academic officers, and the instructor(s) of the course. Students have the ability to change their passwords

whenever they choose in Blackboard. Students have access to past courses until the courses are either deleted from the server or the instructor or system administrator makes the courses unavailable to students, which is standard practice at the end of each semester.

**5. Modification to this Statement**

Depending upon changes in technology and institutional policies, MMI reserves the right to update and revise this Privacy Statement.