



## Vermont State Colleges Social Security Usage Policy

### **Purpose**

Social Security numbers are highly confidential and legally protected data. The Vermont State Colleges are committed to protecting the privacy of VSC employees and students, to the proper handling of Social Security numbers and to the overall reduction in the use of Social Security numbers for business processes.

### **Policy**

The VSC will assign all students, employees and vendors a unique identification number associated with the electronic administrative information system currently in use. Whenever possible, the unique identification number will be used to identify, track and service individuals associated with the VSC. Generally, the last four digits of the Social Security number will be used only to verify identity.

The VSC will collect and release social security numbers only as required by law or as required by an external entity for administrative purposes. The VSC is required by federal law to report to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) the name, address and Social Security number of any person from whom tuition and related expenses are received. Federal law also requires the VSC to report to the IRS the income and Social Security number of any person to whom compensation is paid. Other business processes such as benefits administration, awarding student financial aid, and paying non-corporate vendors may require the release of Social Security numbers. In order to comply with federal law, the VSC requires all students who are U.S. citizens to provide their Social Security numbers prior to being registered for classes for the first time, except for those students in contract courses that are paid for by an external entity.

The VSC will regularly monitor and minimize the use of Social Security numbers. The VSC will maintain a list of allowable uses of Social Security numbers, including acceptable forms. The VSC maintains consistent and secure methods for distributing, storing and disposing of sensitive information, as detailed in the VSC Information Sensitivity Policy.

### **References**

- VSC FERPA Policy
- VSC Information Sensitivity Policy
- VSC Records Retention Policy
- VSC Computer Hardware Security Policy
- Vermont S.284: An Act Relating to the Protection of Personal Information