



National Student
Clearinghouse®

FTP Account Password Policy

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define acceptable password standards and account management practices for the National Student Clearinghouse Secure File Transfer Protocol (FTP) system accounts.

Background

The National Student Clearinghouse maintains FTP accounts for thousands of users, most of whom use the account for purposes of compliance reporting. The Clearinghouse utilizes a leading FTP platform that provides proven security capabilities including Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) approved encryption, hardened protocols and strong sender and receiver authentication. This FTP password policy is designed to enhance the overall security of the FTP system by ensuring that users change their passwords on a regular basis.

Password Policy

In compliance with the Clearinghouse Security Policy, FTP account passwords must be changed every 90 days. Users with automated FTP processes utilizing a stored Secure Shell (SSH) or Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) key are not required to create a new key every 90 days. The validity period for SSH and SSL keys is established by the user. However, these users are required to meet the password change policy for accessing their FTP accounts via a Web browser. This policy is enforced by the FTP system and applies to all users.

Password Requirements

All passwords must comply with the following criteria to ensure strong passwords:

- Be at least 8 characters in length
- Not contain a "dictionary word"
- Contain both upper-case and lower-case letters
- Contain at least one alphabetical and one numerical character
- Contain at least one special character (such as \$ or !)
- Not resemble your user name
- Not contain sequential or repeating letters or number (AAA or ABC, 111 or 123)
- Passwords will expire every 90 days

Inactive Accounts

FTP accounts that are inactive or not accessed for 18 consecutive months will be disabled by the Clearinghouse. Clients can request their accounts be re-enabled by emailing:

secureftp@studentclearinghouse.org.

Accounts that are inactive for 24 consecutive months will be deleted or terminated by the Clearinghouse. Any deviations, such as opting-out of password renewal requirements, must be done in writing to secureftp@studentclearinghouse.org.

Account Lockout

FTP accounts will be locked after five unsuccessful attempts that occur within two minutes. The account will unlock after 15 minutes. If there are 15 unsuccessful attempts to login within five minutes, the IP address used for these attempts will be blocked. At this point, the account will only be unlocked by contacting: secureftp@studentclearinghouse.org.