

Bates College Passphrase Policy

1. Purpose

To establish secure passphrase requirements aligned with best practices and current National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) guidelines, ensuring the protection of Bates College's information systems and data.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, contractors, vendors, and other authorized users who have access to Bates College information systems, including systems hosted or maintained by third-party service providers that store, process, or access Bates College data.

3. Passphrase Requirements:

- Minimum length: 18 characters
 - Bates College requires passphrases to be at least 18 characters long for accounts used to access Bates College systems, services, or data.
 - For legacy or third-party systems that do not support 18-character passwords, the longest allowable password must be used.
 - System owners are expected to work with ILS to identify and phase out systems that cannot support minimum password standards.

Encouraged (Do this)	Avoid (Don't do this)
Unrelated words: Use 4+ random non-sentence words that don't relate to each other (e.g., pencil truck garden window).	Natural Sentences: Avoid phrases that follow grammar or express a single idea (e.g., I love my green pumpkin).
Personally meaningful: Use words that are easy for <i>you</i> to visualize but hard for others to guess.	Common Quotes: Do not use song lyrics, passages from books, movie quotes, or other well-known phrases.
Random sequence: Ensure the words don't form a sentence, follow normal grammar, or express a single idea or theme	Predictable Patterns: Avoid keyboard paths (e.g., qawsed12345) or sequential numbers.
Unique to you: Create something that cannot be found in a dictionary or a list of common phrases online.	Public References: Avoid using "Bates College," your username, or easily discoverable personal info.

- Examples:
 - candle velvet train tab – 23 characters
 - cable boppie collar lamp – 24 characters
 - Measurepurple carbide so – 24 characters
 - teapot glacier orbit violin – 27 characters

Note: While you can use capital letters, numbers, or symbols, they are not required. Focus on randomness and length.

4. Password Expiration and Reset

- Routine password resets (e.g., annual resets) are no longer required unless there is evidence of compromise or suspected compromise.
- System or shared account passwords must be changed when an employee with access to those credentials leaves the College.
- Passwords must be changed immediately if a security incident or unauthorized use is suspected.
- Bates College may periodically perform checks against known compromised credentials to proactively identify vulnerable passwords.
- Some third-party systems or services may enforce fixed password reset intervals due to their own compliance or technical requirements. In these cases, users are expected to follow the system-specific password change prompts while still complying with the overall principles of this policy.

5. Protection and Handling of Passwords

- Passwords must be treated as restricted data.
- Sharing of user credentials for individual user accounts is strictly prohibited.
- Storing of passwords in a web browser is strictly prohibited.
- Users should avoid writing down passwords. If necessary, passwords may be securely stored in a password manager. The only ILS-approved password manager is 1Password. 1Password accounts are provisioned by ILS, and the cost of the license(s) is charged to the requesting department.

6. Account Lockout

- User accounts may lock in some cases after 5 failed login attempts to prevent unauthorized access. Accounts must be unlocked by contacting the IT Help Desk or through an approved automated process.
- Systems may implement progressive delays or throttling after failed login attempts to minimize the risk of denial-of-service scenarios.

7. Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)

MFA is required for all users, as well as for users accessing critical or sensitive Bates College systems or third-party systems that hold Bates data.