Guiding Principles for Online Proctoring

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Scope of Use: Remote Proctoring Software

Remote proctoring tools (i.e. Respondus Monitor) should only be used where they are absolutely required and after careful consideration of alternative assessment and delivery approaches. Remote proctoring tools should be used with the intention of ensuring that learning outcomes are met, and that academic quality and integrity are maintained. The following conditions apply for the use of remote proctoring tools in academic delivery at the Mohawk College.

Remote proctoring software tools are authorized for use in courses or programs that:

1. require proctoring of assessments by accrediting or regulating bodies; examples include, but are not limited to:
    a. Technical Standards & Safety Authority (TSSA, 2017),
    b. Ontario Paralegal Association (n.d.),
2. are purpose-built for online or hybrid delivery, where students opt to learn remotely;
3. are pre-approved under these guidelines by the Associate Dean for your area; or
4. fall outside of scenarios 1, 2, & 3, including where courses are being delivered virtually due to extenuating circumstances, in which case the faculty member should consult with their Associate Dean in partnership with the Centre for Teaching and Learning Innovation (CTLI) to make informed decisions for use of remote proctoring.

When remote proctoring tools are used, it is strongly recommended that:

- they be used for summative assessments only, rather than all/multiple formative assessments throughout the term;

- a practice test is provided to ensure students are familiar with the remote proctoring software/environment; and
- faculty import the online proctoring module associated with their chosen software from MyCanvas Commons to their MyCanvas course shell (e.g., "Online Proctoring with Respondus LockDown Browser & Monitor"). These modules include the following items:
  - Online Proctoring Statement of Use,
  - Student Guide for Online Proctoring,
  - Software specific details (i.e. Respondus)
  - Faculty Guide for Online Proctoring,
  - Practice Quiz (for Respondus), and
  - Vendor Guides and Resources.
- students are informed of remote proctoring requirements in the course and information is published in the MyCanvas course shell during the first week of the semester. Additionally, provide students with the Student Guide for Online Proctoring (included in the MyCanvas module).

The use and collection of data associated with remote proctoring tools align with Mohawk College's Privacy and Legal Statements.

Considerations for Using Online Proctoring

1. Take students' concerns about remote proctoring seriously and weigh them carefully when deciding whether to use these tools, which tools to use, and how they are implemented (e.g., through instructor-controlled settings).

   ☐ Consider how remote proctoring tools may create additional barriers and introduce inequities for students in the context of online learning. Algorithmic remote proctoring software may disproportionately flag students with disabilities, those with invisible, physical, and mental health needs that may not have been discussed with the instructor, and students with dependents. In addition, students in rural communities with limited internet access and/or connectivity, connecting from international locations, and students of ethnic backgrounds that differ from the data set the algorithm is based off may face difficulties entering exams. Take students' concerns in good faith to ensure the equitable and accessible implementation of assessment methods.

   ☐ Having cameras (and sometimes microphones) on during an exam while students are in their personal living spaces also raises privacy concerns, as instructors and other students would not otherwise be able to see these spaces or hear what is happening in them. Furthermore, there is an added risk related to religious and cultural beliefs, related to family members being seen in the background without full religious attire.

   ☐ Remote proctoring tools can lead to added stress for students beyond what they might otherwise experience in an in-person exam, which can affect their performance. For example, when using tools which record students and flag certain behaviours, students may worry about being 'flagged' for behaviours that may be acceptable in an in-person exam (e.g., looking away to think, going to the washroom, etc.), or that aren't under one's control (e.g., others making noise in the background, technical problems during timed exams, etc.). These can add significant additional stress during an exam.

   ☐ It is best to address student concerns about remote proctoring at the course level (e.g., by the instructor). Consider having a

'virtual open door' practice, in which you encourage students to reach out early with concerns. Be open to listening carefully so that students will not be afraid to raise them. Addressing and attempting to resolve issues early can help avoid further complications that could be more difficult to resolve later.

2. Take a balanced approach to maintaining academic integrity rather than only focusing on enforcement, including:

   ☐ Having meaningful conversations with students around the importance of academic integrity, recognizing that terms such as "academic integrity," "plagiarism" and "cheating" may be taught and understood differently in educational systems across the world.
   ☐ Always assume that students' key goal is learning, rather than assuming that students will make every attempt to engage in academic misconduct when they can.
   ☐ Learning about ways to re-design courses and assessments to promote integrity and reduce or eliminate the need for remote invigilation tools. CTLI's Curriculum & Program Quality Consultants can provide suggestions and advice for redesigning assessments for specific courses and are available for one-on-one consultations by request. See also:
      i. Mohawk College – Academic Integrity for Employees

3. Carefully consider whether any alternatives for promoting academic integrity can meet the needs of your course before deciding to use tools for remote proctoring. These include:

   ☐ Redesigning assessments to require students to synthesize and apply information rather than only recall it; this may allow for exams to be "open book"
   ☐ Reducing reliance on high-stakes exams in favour of multiple low-stakes assessments
   ☐ Discussing with students why academic integrity is important, how it works in your discipline, and how Mohawk College is guided by integrity principles
   ☐ Sharing the Plagiarism Tutorial in your MyCanvas course shell (available for import from the MyCanvas Commons), linking to the Library's Plagiarism Guide in your course and/or inviting a Librarian to speak to your class about how to avoid plagiarism.

4. The course faculty/instructor(s), program coordinator(s), Associate Dean, Program Manager, or others responsible for the design and/or delivery of the course are responsible for the decision to use remote proctoring tools, communicating the rationale for doing so, and sharing how they work.
   ☐ Please remember that remote proctoring should only be used after careful consideration of alternate assessment approaches.
   ☐ Consider the degree to which external College accreditation may or may not necessitate the use of remote proctoring tools.

Requirements for Implementing Online Proctoring

5. Since Fall 2021, an online proctoring statement like the one below is automatically populated into all course outlines.

   Paragraph included in Course Outline:
   This course may use online proctoring software for one or more assessment(s) to uphold academic quality and maintain academic integrity where deemed required by the academic area. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins. Additional information will be provided by your professor/instructor at the beginning of the term in your MyCanvas course if a remote proctoring tool is being used. To learn more, please refer to Mohawk College's Student Online Proctoring Guide.

6. Provide students with rationale for using remote proctoring and why the tool was chosen. Return to this rationale in communications to students throughout the term, particularly shortly before exams.

7. Schedule a practice quiz using remote proctoring to allow students to test whether they have the necessary equipment and network capability and to get familiar with the process.

☐ See the Respondus [Instructor Quick Start Guide on LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor](#) (Canvas Edition) for more suggestions on practice exams using Respondus.

☐ CTLI's [Instructional Designers](#) can provide suggestions and advice for implementing remote proctoring software in your course(s) and are available for one-on-one consultations.

8. Schedule enough time for setup and possible technical issues during an exam using remote proctoring tools. Let students know that you will be providing additional time to the "time limit" setting (the amount of time students will have to complete the exam once they start), and at least 30 minutes to the "available from/until" setting (the amount of time the exam will be open until it auto-submits).

☐ Include detailed explanations about how students can get real-time faculty support outside of Respondus Lockdown Browser or Respondus Monitor (e.g., questions about interpretation of exam content, impactful typo in a test question, etc.). Who should they contact and how quickly can they get an answer?

9. For remote proctoring through videoconference (e.g., Zoom or MS Teams), students must not be asked to show their ID card with their full student number in a session with other students present, although this could be done in a private breakout room with only an instructor present. Explain what the tool does and what that means for them before, during, and after an exam. Focus on providing information to reduce stress where possible. For example, for Respondus LockDown Browser:

☐ Share the [Respondus Student Guide](#) (MyCanvas Edition) with students, with information and instructions from the [Respondus Instructor Quick Start Guide](#) (which covers some of the suggestions below).

□ Respondus offers a range of settings; choose the **least restrictive settings** that will fulfill the needs of the course. Follow the recommendations in the Respondus Instructor Guide for settings to disable, as enabling these settings can cause technical issues for students during exams.
NB: Ensure "Re-entry" is allowed in settings. If technical or connectivity issues disrupt a student's ability to complete the exam (e.g., connection drops, computer shuts down, etc.), only the instructor (and only if "re-entry with agent" has been selected by the instructor) can reset the exam and allow a new attempt. Prepare to provide support if a student encounters difficulty re-entering the exam and be sure to let students know whom to contact and how to help them re-enter if needed.

□ Explain to students:

    i. Mohawk College has reviewed Respondus' security and privacy documentation, and their privacy and security controls meet our quality of standards. All recordings are encrypted and stored in the United States and will be deleted after 120 days.

    ii. "Only users with instructor credentials for the LMS course (e.g., instructors, teaching assistants, LMS administrators) are able to view video sessions in conjunction with student identifiable information" (Respondus, March 16, 2021).

    iii. A "flag" on a Respondus video recording is a behaviour or other factor on a student's video which indicates that they **might** have been focused on something other than the quiz/test. A flag does not automatically mean that academic conduct has occurred. Reassure students that all flags will be reviewed and interpreted by an instructor or invigilator. **Just because Respondus flags something does not mean the student cheated.**

        1. If the instructor suspects that there is sufficient information to suggest academic misconduct (e.g., using prohibited materials, discussing the exam with others, etc.), the normal Mohawk College policies apply, and an investigation will be initiated before any determination is made.

iv. Behaviours like looking around the room, using scratch paper, stretching, fidgeting, and taking washroom breaks are likely to be flagged, even if allowed by the instructor**. It is important to share your expectations** around these behaviours and clarify procedures related to them.

1. Many students are understandably worried that they will be flagged for behaviours that appear suspicious, but are part of the exam (e.g., using scratch paper) or occur without their conscious control (e.g., fidgeting). It is important that you explain how the software works and reassure them by explaining the post-exam review process (see above).

v. When students log into the remote proctoring software, they may see messaging that is not necessarily aligned with what their instructor has told them about what they can and cannot do during the exam. Explain to students that where there is conflicting guidance between the instructions provided by the instructor and software, the instructor's instructions/requirements take precedence.

10. Import the online proctoring module associated with your remote proctoring software to your MyCanvas course shell (e.g., "Online Proctoring with Respondus LockDown Browser & Monitor") and inform students during the first week of the semester that remote proctoring software will be required in the course. These modules are available in MyCanvas Commons and include the following items:

☐ Online Proctoring Statement of Use,
☐ Student Guide for Online Proctoring,
☐ Faculty Guide for Online Proctoring,
☐ Practice Quiz (for Respondus), and
☐ Vendor Guides and Resources.

Providing Options for Students

11. Ensure that students know what to do if they cannot use a remote proctoring tool because of technical, geographical,

accessibility, or other reasons. Pay attention to the technical and other requirements for using these tools.

☐ When possible, students should only take online proctored exams in private settings or locations to reduce the risk of disclosing any personal information or that of others in their immediate environment

☐ Students should ensure their physical background is appropriate for a classroom (virtual backgrounds are not permitted). They may wish to remove any personal belongings or items that may be in view while taking online proctored examinations

☐ Students who have trouble meeting the hardware (e.g., webcam, microphone, etc.) or network requirements for the proctoring tool should discuss possible alternative assessment options with their instructor(s)

☐ Students experiencing financial barriers that make it difficult to meet the requirements can contact Financial Assistance for support in exploring available Awards, Scholarships and Bursaries, or apply for Mohawk's Emergency Help Fund

☐ Students with disabilities should contact Accessible Learning Services to find out if they are eligible for accommodations or to review their current eligibility for accommodations

☐ Students needing some assistance or support in communicating with their instructors/college or in understanding college policies/procedures can contact the Student Rights and Responsibilities Office

☐ Tool-specific help resources:

   i. Digital Skills Toolkit: Online Proctoring
   ii. Zoom: Mohawk's Zoom Web Portal and Zoom Tech Guide for Students; see also Mohawk's instructions for Using Zoom for Online Proctoring

Considerations for Reviewing Proctor Videos

12. Those who will be reviewing online proctoring videos should be aware of best practices for doing so, such as recognizing that some students may be disproportionately

flagged for a variety of reasons, such as their home environments (e.g., living with young children) or health considerations (e.g., needing to use the washroom often). Strategies to support and implement these best practices will vary and may be informed by local expertise (faculty/staff who have used online proctoring), faculty-based or central support, and/or policies or resources, such as the Student Rights and Responsibilities Office and Accessible Learning Services.

References

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Acknowledgements

This document is modified from 'Principles for appropriate use of remote invigilation tools' by UBC, used under CC BY.