



August 18, 2020  
Academic and Student Affairs  
Office of General Counsel

## FAQ Regarding Remote Proctoring

### What Is Remote Proctoring?

Remote proctoring is software that allows students to take exams from an off-site location, while ensuring the integrity of the exam. Generally, the software will confirm a student's identity and either live-monitor or record a student using a webcam during the exam, looking for behavior that indicates cheating (e.g., looking at a calculator or receiving assistance from another student). The monitoring may be done by a human proctor or by artificial intelligence. The monitoring software may be accompanied by additional software that locks down a student's web browser to prevent the access of other windows or applications.

### What are the concerns with Remote Proctoring?

Online or remote-proctored exams have multiple drawbacks.

- Students report that they are often even more stressful than in-person proctored exams, which can negatively impact student performance.
- They require substantial planning and setup on the part of the instructor and the student, and the software may generate many "false positive" flags that must be reviewed by an instructor after the exam.
- Not all students have access to the appropriate technology to use remote proctoring software; instructors will have to make accommodations for such students. Please keep in mind that not all remote proctoring software products support multiple devices (e.g., Android phones, iPhones, Chromebooks, iPads). Some types of remote proctoring software require students to use two devices for a 360-degree view of the workspace. This may not be possible for some students. Students may have poorly performing computers or internet connections and that can hamper their ability to successfully complete an exam online. Using a different computer or taking the exam at an alternate location may be necessary for students with more serious problems.
- The technical infrastructure of most remote proctoring software has not been utilized at this scale before, so planning must include what to do if the proctoring service crashes during the exam.
- Students may have privacy concerns about third-party recorded remote proctoring, especially if students do not have a clean, quiet, solitary space for test-taking.

## What are the alternatives to Remote Proctoring?

Remote or virtual proctoring software is best used as a deterrent against and a documentation mechanism for academic misconduct in test-taking. It is not fool proof. Since the transition to remote instruction, there have been documented reports that students find remote proctoring systems relatively easy to circumvent.

The most effective way to safeguard academic integrity is to deploy forms of assessment that are less susceptible to cheating than written exams: oral exams, papers, group projects, poster sessions, discussion boards, etc. For these reasons, while in-person exams are not practical, we recommend using alternatives to timed, proctored exams wherever possible. Other options include:

- Do not curve exams – Students who cheat may still get their A’s, but in the absence of a curve, their “success” will not reduce the chances for other students to get A’s as well.
- Make all exams open-book, so that students who consult notes and books do not gain an unfair advantage over students who adhere to closed-book rules.
- Schedule multiple, short, low-stakes tests, rather than one or two lengthy, high-stakes exams. This approach is shown to be superior for promoting learning. In addition, students may be less tempted to cheat if the stakes of the exam are relatively low and less able to cheat if the exams are of short duration.
- Do not use imported test banks from textbook publishers, as these questions are often available on the internet with the answers shown.
- Use question pools to deliver a subset of questions to help prevent students from sharing answers to a fixed list of questions.
- Randomize the order of the questions and the order of multiple-choice answers in each quiz to prevent all students from seeing the questions in the same sequence.

## Available Remote Proctoring Software

### What do I need to do to use Remote Proctoring software?

- **Select from the approved options.** Only remote proctoring software that has been reviewed by system legal counsel (OGC or AGO) and determined that it satisfies FERPA and other contractual requirements of Minnesota State can be used. Please visit the [product page](#) for further information. If there are additional questions contact Tim Anderson, System Director for Student Success Technologies, [tim.anderson@minnstate.edu](mailto:tim.anderson@minnstate.edu), for the current list of approved platforms.
- We recognize that online test proctoring can be uncomfortable for some students and we use contracts with the vendors to best protect student’s privacy. If you wish to use another software or service not listed above, please have your Dean contact Tim Anderson, System Director for Student Success Technologies.

- **Include notice on your syllabus:** You must include that you plan to use remote proctoring on your syllabus. In addition, you should provide information about equipment requirements, opt-out procedures, expectations, and proctoring service details in your syllabus.
- **Assign a practice test:** To use virtual proctoring, you must agree to include a practice quiz, due before the end of the add/drop period in your course. A practice test should provide students a low-stakes opportunity to test their equipment, gain confidence, and decide whether to seek a proctoring alternative. Leave the quiz available for the duration of the course, with unlimited attempts, so students can access it again if they use a different computer. Remote proctoring software can interact in unexpected ways with students' various operating systems, ad-blockers, and malware detection software. Make sure students are aware of the potential problems and have practiced with the browser beforehand to ensure they will be able to use the browser properly in class during a test
- **Only assign practice and low-stakes tests during add/drop:** You must wait until the add/drop period has ended to use remote proctoring for assessments that will significantly affect student grades. This gives students time to complete your practice test and decide whether to opt-out.
- **Communicate.** Communicate your expectations for student behavior before an exam. Become familiar with the policies for academic misconduct in your department and/or college. Add clear directions within your online exams that address technical requirements, behavior expectations, and materials allowed, in addition to any general content directions.
- **Prepare for opt-out arrangements:** Except for select programs with accreditation requirements that mandate virtual proctoring, you must allow students to opt out of remote proctoring and have a plan in place to accommodate a small number of students who do not wish to use the software. Coordinate with those students to work out acceptable alternative proctoring arrangements. These arrangements may include:
  - An option for in person, social-distance proctoring.
  - Live (non-recorded) proctoring via Zoom or Teams
  - Alternate assignments including papers, video or oral presentations, or oral exam via Zoom or Teams.
- **Make a backup plan:** Before your course starts, plan what you will do in various scenarios related to the proctoring tool. For example, how will you handle a student who needs to contact support and loses exam time? Be available online the day of the exam. Your students may have questions about exam rules or expectations. Provide them with a way to contact you. Be flexible with student technical problems, within reason.

### When should I not use remote-proctoring software?

- For low-stakes or frequent examinations or quizzes. Due to the additional stress created by remote proctoring, consider only using remote proctoring for mid-terms and/or final exams.

- Online proctoring cannot match the reliability of in-person proctoring. For certain high-stakes examinations, socially distant, in-person proctoring may be preferable.
- When students can easily come to campus. Once Minnesota’s Peacetime Emergency has ended, reconsider use of remote proctoring entirely.

### **What if a student does not have the required device(s) or sufficient internet service? What if a student does not want to install or run the software on their personally owned device?**

This will vary by school. Some schools can provide loaner devices and/or internet hotspots. Faculty requiring proctored exams should be prepared to provide students the available alternative options for their institution.

### **Should we offer in-person proctoring as an option?**

Yes. Campuses should be prepared to offer alternatives, including the possibility of socially distant, in-person proctoring.

### **What if a student needs an accessibility accommodation?**

Some users of disability-related adaptive technologies (e.g., screen reading software) may experience remote proctoring as inaccessible or the software may “false flag” a student for misconduct. In these cases, instructors would be advised to exempt those students from using remote proctoring software and seek an alternative solution.

### **What should I include on my syllabus?**

*This course requires the use of \_\_\_\_\_ for online exams. Please visit this site \_\_\_\_\_ to get a basic understanding of how to use \_\_\_\_\_.*

*In order to take the exam remotely, you will need to install \_\_\_\_ software on your computer, and your device must meet these minimum system requirements: **LIST THEM HERE or LINK to them**. The software will lock down your browser and control your web camera, among other things. In addition, you must personally agree to the software’s Terms and Conditions here **[INSERT THE LINK THAT THEY HAVE TO AGREE TO]**.*

*If you do not have the technology to use this software, please contact \_\_\_\_\_. If you believe you will need an accommodation to use this software, please contact \_\_\_\_\_. If you otherwise wish to opt-out of remote proctoring, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ for alternate arrangements.*

*Finally, when taking a remote-proctored exam, follow these guidelines (Note these will depend upon the remote proctoring solution that was chosen.):*

- *On the day of testing, you will need to have an approved ID available. Those include [LIST HERE].*
- *Select a location where you won't be interrupted.*
- *Before starting the test, know how much time is available for it, and that you've allotted enough time to complete it.*
- *Turn off all mobile devices, phones, etc. and don't have them within reach.*
- *Clear your area of all external materials — books, papers, other computers, or devices.*
- *Remain at your desk or workstation for the duration of the test.*
- *\_\_\_\_\_ will prevent you from accessing other websites or applications; you will be unable to exit the test until all questions are completed and submitted.*
- *Avoid wearing baseball caps or hats that extend beyond the forehead.*
- *If using a notebook computer, place it on a firm surface like a desk or table, not your lap.*
- *If the webcam is built into the screen, avoid making screen adjustments after the exam starts. A common mistake is to push the screen back, resulting in only the top portion of the face being recorded.*
- *Don't lie down on a couch or bed while taking an exam. There is a greater chance you'll move out of the video frame or change your relative position to the webcam.*
- *Don't take an exam in a dark room. If the details of your face don't show clearly during the webcam check, the automated video analysis is more likely to flag you as missing.*
- *Avoid backlighting situations, such as sitting with your back to a window. The general rule is to have light in front of your face, not behind your head.*
- *Select a distraction-free environment for the exam. Televisions and other people in the room can draw your attention away from the screen. Other people that come into view of the webcam may also trigger flags by the automated system.*

## **Who can I contact if I have additional questions?**

### **Academic and Student Affairs**

Tim Anderson

System Director for Student Success Technologies

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### **Office of General Counsel**

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