

## Proctors for Online Exams

For an online, closed-book exam, proctoring will verify the identity of the student and can ensure the integrity and security of the exam process. There are two basic options for proctoring an online, closed-book exam:

1. Volunteer proctors (recommended)
2. Commercial proctoring services

### Volunteer Proctors

Online courses at the school have been using the volunteer proctor system for over twenty years with very good success.

Volunteer proctors are unbiased individuals selected by a student who donate their time to proctor an online exam. CoursePlus includes tools whereby a student can identify an individual as a volunteer proctor for an online exam. The volunteer proctor is listed in the Quiz Generator as the proctor for the exam, and faculty and course TAs can see the name and contact information of each proctor. Faculty and TAs can send email instructions about the exam to the proctor, and only the proctor, prior to the exam. When it comes time for students to take the exam, the course faculty or TAs send the proctor a password to unlock the exam for the student. The proctor enters the password when prompted, and the exam is unlocked for the student. The student takes the exam under the volunteer proctor's supervision, and the volunteer proctor is expected to supervise until the student submits their answers to the exam.

When students select volunteer proctors in CoursePlus, they are given the following prompt as to who is accepted as a volunteer proctor:

“If an examination is to be proctored, it is your responsibility to arrange with your proctor the date and location of the examination per the guidelines distributed in the online course which requires the proctor. The person you identify can be used for all courses requiring a proctored examination, unless you wish to specify otherwise.

Your proctor may be any of the following:

- Full-time faculty member or administrator of a nearby college or university
- Testing officer employed by a university, college, or community college
- Head librarian
- Corporate education director
- Your office supervisor or manager
- Member of the clergy

Proctors may not include your spouse, relatives, or friends.

Individual course faculty and the Center for Teaching and Learning reserve the right to reject any proctor. Proctor information may also be subject to random verification.”

Course faculty are welcome to perform spot checks on volunteer proctors specified by students who take proctored online exams, as the full set of proctor contact information is available in each CoursePlus site where proctors are used.

### Commercial Proctoring Services

In cases where a student cannot secure a volunteer proctor, a commercial proctoring service can be a suitable alternative.

Commercial proctoring services today are fully online services. Students do not go to a testing center to take their exam. Instead, students sign up with the commercial proctoring service and schedule the exact date and time on which they will take the exam well in advance of the exam date. Students must pay for the cost of the commercial proctoring service on their own. The school does not cover the costs of commercial proctoring services.

At the time of the exam, students must sign in to the commercial proctoring service, and enable the webcam on their desktop or laptop computer. Commercial proctoring services have two kinds of basic proctoring services: real-time and recorded. Real-time proctoring involves an individual watching a student live, in real time, taking an exam. Recorded services work by having a recording of the student during the entirety of taking an exam, and then using artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms to determine if there may have been instances where a student cheated after the exam is complete. Some services also require that student download and run an application to record their desktop while they take the exam. Most of these services rely on eye tracking of students either in real time or in an algorithmic review of a recording of a student to flag instances where a student may be cheating by “looking off the screen” or other behaviors which, to these systems, indicate cheating.

If a commercial proctoring service thinks that a student may have cheated, they simply notify the faculty that a student may have cheated. They can provide the evidence of their suspicion, highlighting specific moments in a recording when a student looked off the screen, for example. It is still up to the faculty to review this data and determine if the student cheated.

The major barrier to using commercial proctoring services is the cost that the student must bear. The cost is dependent on two factors:

1. The length of the exam. The longer the exam, the higher the cost.
2. The use of live proctoring or post-exam algorithmic examination of a recording. Live proctoring costs more.

Additionally, if the student must make any changes to a pre-scheduled exam, they will incur additional charges.

The average cost of live proctoring at the time of the last update for this document is between \$35-50 for a two hour exam. Exam services invariably charge by the hour, so a 90-minute exam would be considered a two hour exam. The student must bear this cost for each and every exam that they take using a commercial proctoring service.

Additional barriers include:

- For an exam that is proctored live, a significant lead time is needed to set up the live proctoring service. This lead time can be days or weeks, depending on the service. Any change to the scheduling of the exam once initially scheduled may not be possible or may come with a cost to the student.
- For an exam that is recorded and examined later, results are often not available for several business days after the student takes the exam. In the case of pending graduates, the school may not be able to wait several business days to learn of the results.
- Technical problems downloading and installing software the commercial proctoring service may require that students use. Some students use work-issued laptops where they do not have permission to install software.
- Bandwidth (data transfer) constraints on low-speed connections. As commercial proctoring services require that students broadcast video from their computers in real time, the student's Internet connection must be sufficiently fast to support this activity. Many students in resource-poor areas do not have Internet connections fast enough to support this.

Due to the cost of the exam borne by the student, the additional technical barriers, and the fact that faculty must still review the data to determine if a student cheated during an online exam, we strongly recommend the volunteer proctor system instead.

Commercial proctor services may, however, be an appropriate option for students who simply cannot find a volunteer proctor. If you have students in this situation who need to use a commercial proctor service, please contact the Center for Teaching and Learning. They can advise you on the appropriate companies to work with.