

Online proctoring in higher education:

Lessons from a pandemic



Many Higher Education Institutions adopted online proctoring in response to COVID-19 in order to protect the integrity of their courses and programs, while maintaining academic continuity for students. The pace and extent of change has been enormous – and is still ongoing, but we have learned a lot. Here are some of the key takeaways from our experience of online proctoring during COVID-19.

Who is using online proctoring?

Now, many students that chose to pursue an education on a college campus are being forced into having their exams remotely proctored, when they had envisaged testing in a classroom. Faculty also were not used to teaching classes online and have been expected to adapt rapidly. Many of which will have been underprepared – especially when it comes to the interpretation of reports produced by automated or AI-assisted proctoring.



Before Covid-19

Faculty and students planned for and expected the use of online proctoring based on their decision to participate in online teaching and learning.

During Covid-19

Faculty and students were thrust into using online proctoring without much choice.



Issues raised...

What we have learned...

Faculty



Rapid introduction of online proctoring.

Despite the need for speed, the process must be managed carefully.

Less time and resource for consultation and communication.

Regular communication with faculty about the measures being put in place is essential.

Limited knowledge around the flags that AI might raise and the proportionate response.

When faculty have the final say on instances of potential academic dishonesty they must be properly trained on the flags that might be raised and what these mean.

Students



Fears about privacy and vendors using biometric identification methods with students taking exams at home.

The steps involved, what online proctoring aims to achieve, and any use of AI should be clearly explained.

Concerns about data management and potential for proctors to access personal information.

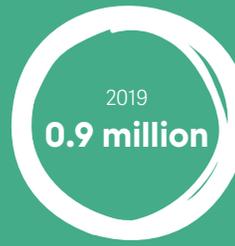
Technology that minimizes how much personal information is essential, and the highest standards of data protection, should be employed and clearly explained.

Fears about proctor access to personal devices (websites, apps, settings).

A secure lockdown browser should be used to remove the need for remote access to personal devices.

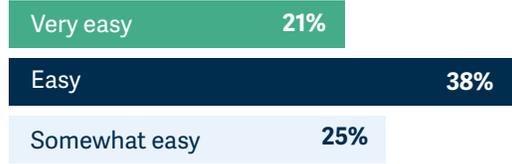


PSI remote proctored exams worldwide



Was the system easy to use?

84% said the system was easy to use



Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled online proctoring

AI can play a role in assuring exam integrity and security. However, any action identified by AI as potential academic dishonesty should always be reviewed by a trained human proctor, to prevent honest students from be accused of cheating.

	AI flags...	Human proctor finds...
ID verification	Potential inability for facial biomarkers to verify photo ID.	Student matches photo ID and is taking their own exam.
Voice recognition	There is another person in the room.	The student's child has entered the room asking for a snack.
Eye movement detector	Potential use of unauthorized resources.	Student is nervous and this has caused above average eye movement.
Physical movement	Potential collusion or use of unauthorized resources.	Student is fidgeting or stretching or has a condition that causes involuntary movement when stressed.
Absence from the desk	Potential collusion or use of unauthorized resources.	Student stood up momentarily, had an approved bathroom break, or had to deal with a pet or family member.
Unusual mouse / keyboard activity	Potential unauthorized copies / pastes.	Student is nervous and unfamiliar with the test software, no evidence of academic dishonesty.

Online proctoring can provide higher education institutions with a means to **conduct exams online** while **protecting the integrity and security of exams, qualifications and the institution**. Exams will always be stressful for students. But when using online proctoring responsibly, with the ideal blend of technology and human supervision, and adopting best practices, it's possible to address most concerns, minimize anxiety through transparency, and help to ensure a good user experience and high student satisfaction rates.



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