

PSYCHOLOGY EXAM PROCTORING GUIDELINES

SENATE REGULATIONS:

You are acting on behalf of the University when you proctor, and you must therefore conduct yourself in accordance with the university's requirements on proctoring. The Senate Regulations outline what is expected of you when you proctor. Before showing up to proctor an exam, please review the Senate regulations on 'Administration of Examinations' to found here: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/administration.pdf

SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDELINES:

The following guidelines are meant as a supplement to the Senate regulations.

Key Proctoring Duties to Prevent Academic Dishonesty

In the majority of cases, exams proceed smoothly without incident. However, there are a few students who will be attempting to achieve their grades dishonestly, and it is your job as a proctor to *prevent* this from happening. Catching dishonesty in action is second best to prevention. Preventing dishonest behavior may be as simple as follows:

- 1) Before the start of the exam, you, or the chief proctor should make clear announcements such as: 'No electronic devices of any kind are permitted; All outdoor coats and bags should be placed at the front of the room; You will not be permitted to leave the room during the first 30 minutes,' etc.
- 2) Work with your fellow proctors to come up with a clear and consistent method to fill the Nominal Roll so that seating can be recreated in the event that cheating is suspected (e.g., number rows from the front of class to the back, number seats from left to right facing the students, skip a line for an empty seat). In some large exam rooms a diagram will be provided to you, but in most cases no diagram is provided. Instead, draw a diagram of your numbering system on the back of the Nominal Roll.
- 3) Always check student ID carefully during the Nominal Roll. If a student does not appear to be who they say they are, please follow the instructions in the Q & A below.
- 4) Note any irregularities, suspected cheating, and actions followed by the proctors on the Nominal Roll. Retain any confiscated material. More on this in the Q & A below.
- 5) Be vigilant, and **be seen** to be vigilant. You are not doing your job by sitting at the desk at the front of the room, spending time on your phone, or socializing with your fellow proctors--such behavior from proctors during an exam is unprofessional and distracting. Your job as a proctor is to continually walk around the room in a random fashion, and place yourself in locations where you have a clear view of room. You should actually spend very little time sitting down or standing in one place.
- 6) In prior consultation with the chief proctor, have a plan in place for the orderly collection of papers at the end of the exam. Inform the candidates at the start of the exam: 'When you are finished, remain in your seat and raise your hand, and we will come collect your exam from you. Ensure that your name and student number are on both the scantron sheet and the exam booklet.'

Questions & Answers

Despite the availability of the Senate Regulations, a multitude of possible events can take place during an exam, for which no specific protocol is given. The following Q & A is based upon actual events, and the responses reflect the collective wisdom of several experienced individuals at Western University.

Q. A student has no student ID or any other kind of valid photo ID (e.g., driver's license, passport). Should I remove them from the exam?

- A.** The Chief Proctor *may* bar the student from the exam. However, he or she also has the discretion to allow the student to write the exam if the Chief Proctor is satisfied that the student is likely the person he or she claims to be and provided that the student provides satisfactory evidence of his or her identity after the examination.

With the student's permission, you can use a camera/cell phone to take a photo of the student to be sent to the course instructor. Inform the student that they will then need to present their student ID to the course instructor after the exam to verify that the person on the ID matches the person in your photo. If the student finishes the exam early and is able to return to you with photo ID before the exam finishes, the matter can be taken care of with no further requirements. Once the student's ID is verified, then any photo taken at the exam must be deleted/destroyed.

If the student refuses to be photographed or cannot return immediately with a photo ID, another option is to ask the student to sign the top of the exam or scantron sheet using his or her normal signature, in two places. Check that the signatures match, and if they don't ask the student to sign again.

If the student is permitted to write the exam under these circumstances, then you must document the incident carefully.

Q. The photo on the ID does not seem to match the student presenting it. What should I do?

- A.** This is a **very** serious matter. If you are certain, consult the head proctor and/or course instructor immediately.

If you are not so certain, you may request to see alternative photo ID to verify. If you are still uncertain, take the student to one side where you can have a private conversation. Ask the student several questions such as: What is the name of the instructor? Describe him/her. Which building and classroom are the lectures in, times? Which days of the week? What is the name of your TA, etc. If the student clearly has no idea, document the incident and contact the course instructor. With the student's permission, take his or her photograph to be sent to the course instructor to verify the person's identity. As above, once the identity is verified, any photo taken should be destroyed.

Q. Is there a limit to how late a student may start the exam?

- A. No student will be allowed to start if they arrive more than 30 minutes after the posted start time. Obtain the student's name and student number and forward it to the course instructor, who can pass it along to the appropriate Dean's Office. Inform the student that they will need to report to the appropriate Dean's office as soon as possible. If a student arrives late but within this 30 minute grace period, he or she should NOT be given extra time to finish the exam.

Q. Should all requests to visit the washroom be granted?

- A. During the first 30 and last 15 minutes of the exam, only **emergency** washroom visits should be permitted and **only** if the student can be accompanied to the washroom by a proctor. Other than for those periods, requests to visit the washroom should be granted, and the student should be escorted to the washroom as available resources allow. If the student is wearing a hat or a big coat or such, **require** that they remove them first. If possible, female proctors should escort female students and male proctors escort male students. That way, if any conversation about the exam is overheard or any problems are suspected, the proctor is able to enter the washroom (not the stall of course!)

Q. What if I am with a small group and on my own?

- A. You should not be entirely alone or without support when proctoring- you should have at least one other proctor or course instructor/TA with you. Senate regulations require that students can leave the room only if accompanied by a proctor. Therefore, if you are alone (for some unforeseen reason), you should ensure that you are able to contact another proctor for assistance. For this and several other reasons, proctors should have a cell phone with them, and in the case of an exam taking place over several rooms, have the numbers of all the other proctors.

Q. Can I impose a kind of 'dress code' for the exams to stop students wearing big coats with many pockets for example?

- A. To a limited extent, yes. You can for example require the removal of all hats with a peak (a common cheating tool), or at the very least have students turn the hat backwards. You can also require 'hoods down' for anyone wearing a hoodie. You can also require all large outdoor coats to be placed at the front of the room along with bags. If a student claims he or she needs to wear the coat because he/she is cold, **require** the student to sit at the front of the room. This would be about the limit of anything that you can require.

Q. Students were informed to drop their bags at the front of the room at the start of the exam. On a walk around, I notice one student has their backpack under the desk. What should I do?

- A. You may inform the student that bags need to be at the front and then take the backpack to the front. This may be an honest oversight on the part of the student or due to the student's unease over valuables in their backpack. If, however, you have reason to doubt the student's honesty or observe questionable behaviour (e.g, looking into the bag, reaching in and out, his or her exam booklet gone missing), at the end of the exam, you may

ask the student to empty the bag to your satisfaction. Do not empty the bag yourself. If they refuse to comply, document the incident and inform the chief proctor and instructor.

Q. Exams were handed out one at a time by proctors once students were seated. A student then claims that they did not receive an exam. I'm sure I gave every student an exam—what do I do?

A. If you suspect that a student has taken an exam, check around their desk for bags or big coats where they may have hidden the exam. If you are at all concerned about the student's honesty, you may ask the student to empty any bags or pockets to your satisfaction. Do not empty the bag or search the student yourself. If they refuse to comply, inform the chief proctor and course instructor. To prevent the chances of students taking exams, **do not leave extra exams at empty seats**. Best practice is to wait until students are seated to hand out exams individually to each student. Be sure to watch doors at the start of the exam, do not allow students to leave the room unaccompanied, and ask students to raise their hands to have exams collected individually by one of the proctors.

Q. I think a student is looking around a bit too much, but I'm not really sure that they are cheating. Should I just wait and see?

A. It's better to prevent cheating than catch it happening. At the start of the exam, try to leave several desks near the front vacant. If you are suspicious of this student's actions but are unsure, you can ask another proctor to take a look. If you are on your own or if both proctors are questioning the student's behaviours (e.g., looking repeatedly side to side or to the row in front), then **require** the student to move to one of the vacant desks at the front of the room. On the Nominal Roll, be sure to make note of the time, the student's original location and new location in the room, details of what you (and the other proctor) observed the student doing, and your own name and contact information for the course instructor. If the room is small and you don't have the option to move the student, inform the student of their behavior (they may genuinely be unaware that what they are doing looks suspicious) and if absolutely necessary, make a swap with another student near the front (this is not very desirable as it involves disturbing another student). Again, record any suspicious activity, actions taken, and changes made to student seating on the Nominal Roll.

Q. Now I'm absolutely sure this person is looking at another student's exam. Should I pull their paper and throw them out?

A. No. Make a careful note of the time and all the relevant details on the Nominal Roll sheet as described above. If you don't already know (you typically would already have this on the Nominal Roll), get the names of all students adjacent to the 'cheater'. If there is more than one proctor present, alert another proctor to the behavior and get them to witness the events and co-sign as noted on the Nominal Roll. Warn the student quietly that he or she has been observed using suspicious behavior, and move the student to the front of the room if a vacant desk is available. At the end of the exam, tell the student that he or she will be investigated for cheating—only say this if you are absolutely sure that cheating occurred. Inform the chief proctor and course instructor of the incident.

Q. On a routine inspection, I find that the student's calculator (or pencil case, eraser, water bottle label, etc.) has some relevant data written on it. Is that the end of the exam for this person?

A. No. Again, make a careful note of the time and the circumstances on the Nominal Roll. Confiscate the calculator (or other item, or perhaps just the removable cover of the calculator). At the end of the exam, inform the student that he or she will be investigated for cheating. **Do not give the item back to the student.** Inform the chief proctor and the course coordinator.

Q. At the end of the exam, the student who had the calculator with writing on it comes to confess and says that he/she will accept a zero on the exam if it goes no further. Should I do this to get it over with?

A. No. This student may be making a habit of this. All incidents of cheating **MUST** be reported.

Q. Electronic devices are specifically barred from our exam and it is stated so on the exam cover. A student is found with a cell phone on the desk but does not appear to be using it in any way. Should the student be reported for cheating?

A. Students will often quite innocently use a cell phone to watch the time. They are such a part of people's lives that they may have just forgotten they had it there. If you are sure that they have not been playing with the device, confiscate it and give the student a warning. Return the phone to the student at the end of the exam. A clear announcement before the start of the exam that electronic devices of any kind are forbidden is helpful.

Q. In one case, the student was observed with the device in their hand and was observed operating the device. Can I confiscate the device?

A. Yes. Confiscate the illegal device immediately. Make a note of the time and any other relevant circumstances. Look at the device and if there is anything that is apparent on the screen **without** operating the device, make a note of it. Otherwise, **do not** open files or otherwise operate the device yourself to look for incriminating evidence. If possible, contact the course instructor immediately so that they may deal with this situation while the device is in your possession.

If it is not possible to consult with the chief proctor or course instructor during the exam, at the end of the exam you may inform the student that he or she is under suspicion of cheating which will be investigated by the Chair of the department. **Do NOT give the device back to the student—but only if you are absolutely sure of what you saw.** If you cannot be certain of what you saw or if cheating tools are not visible without operating the device, return the device at the end of the exam and inform the course instructor immediately.

Q. I think I saw a student looking at some papers or cards during the exam, but when I went to the desk, I don't see them. The student is wearing a big coat. Can I search him/her?

A. No, do not put your hands on the student in any way. You can take them to one side and request that they empty their pockets to your satisfaction. If they refuse to comply, inform the chief proctor and course instructor. Document the incident and all relevant details.

Q. So, during the confrontation with this student, some cheat-sheets were found. Should the student be allowed to continue?

- A.** Yes, but again, confiscate the material and make a note of the time and any other relevant information. **Do NOT give the cheat sheets back to the student at the end of the exam.** Inform the student at the end that he or she will be reported for suspected cheating and will be contacted by the instructor or Chair of the department. Inform the course instructor immediately.

Q. Why should I let them finish? Clearly they cheated.

- A.** That's not for you to decide at that moment. It is for the Chair to investigate and decide. If the student decides to leave, let him/her.

Q. I've escorted a student for a washroom break and they are taking an unreasonable amount of time. I think the student is locked in the stall and I can hear the sound of cards or paper. Should I look over the top or call out to the student in the stall?

- A.** First, and obviously, a male proctor must not enter the ladies washroom and vice-versa under any circumstances unless you think that someone is in peril. For this reason, whenever possible, it is best for male proctors to escort male students and female proctors to escort female students. You may enter the washroom to listen for papers or conversation, but **do not look over or under the stall door.** Wait for the student to come out (do not announce yourself as this may give them the chance to flush the evidence). **Require** the person to empty their pockets to see if they had cheat sheets or a phone. You may confiscate these items as described above. As always, document the incident.

Q. When the student in question came out and saw me, they had papers in their hands, and tried to get back into the stall and lock the door (or run away). Should I try to prevent this?

- A.** No. Do not do anything that might get you into a physical confrontation with a student. That's not your job. The student will have to come out eventually, and if he or she refuses to come out, you may call campus police. When the student does come out, the papers you saw will be in one of only a few places: flushed, still on his or her person, inside the toilet paper holder, or perhaps under a ceiling tile. Gather any evidence you can, even if it's not actually in the student's possession. Make detailed notes of the event and report it to the chief proctor and course instructor or Chair.

Q. When I went into the washroom, I found the student on the cell phone or talking to another student. Is this cheating?

- A.** Yes. Either one is cheating no matter what they happen to be talking about and inform them of such. Escort the student back to his or her desk; make a note of the time and details of the circumstances. If the student was using a cell phone, confiscate it as described above, document and report the incident to the chief proctor or Chair.

Q. During the exam, the fire alarm goes off. Can students grab their stuff?

A. No. As with any fire-alarm situation, students must leave immediately. If you have a room with multiple doors, have proctors lead groups out and congregate where they can be kept under watch. The course of action to be taken at this point depends critically on several factors, and the decision as to whether the exam should start, restart, or be terminated is to be left in the hands of the chief proctor. If you are alone with a small group of candidates, and perhaps isolated from other sections of the exam in a different building, you should attempt to contact the chief proctor (by cell phone) to seek direction. In the event that the exam *may* be able to continue after the disruption, the candidates should be kept under watch at all times.

Q. During the exam, the power goes out. There are many other sections of the exam going on in other buildings, but we may have to abandon our room. How long should I wait?.

A. As long as practical, but within some reasonable limit. You should inform the chief proctor or instructor of the situation as soon as you can and seek direction. There will be emergency lights, so you should not be in the total darkness. Keep a keen watch on the room. If the power comes back on within a few minutes, resume the exam and add this time to the end (Be generous in this regard. Such events are very disruptive for the candidates, and they may need a few extra minutes to refocus their thoughts). If there is no sign of power after a few minutes, call campus police to see if they are aware of the situation and can give you an estimate of the duration of the disruption. Stay in touch with the other sections and the chief proctor if you can. At some point, you may have to abandon the exam, which should only be done if it really looks like the power will not be back for a long time. If the delay lasts longer than an hour, it is recommended that the exam be cancelled. Tell the students that information regarding the situation will be sent to them as soon as possible. Be sure to personally collect all exam materials (ensure names on everything), scrap papers, etc. before allowing the students to get up and leave.

FINAL NOTES:

As a proctor, you should always have access to another proctor or the course instructor, and—in case of emergency or in cases where a student is being extremely non-compliant or disruptive—police (911); campus police (519-661-3300). If you are ever uncertain what to do during an exam, please consult your fellow proctors and/or course instructor, and always make detailed notes of any incidents that occur as well as actions taken by proctors.

If you have further questions not answered in this document, or if you have been or are faced with any other proctoring incidents not mentioned in this document, please email: schen534@uwo.ca. These proctoring guidelines will continue to evolve with your input.

Thank you for your diligence in reviewing the Senate regulations and these supplementary guidelines, and thus preparing yourself to be an effective and responsible university-appointed proctor.