

ROLE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ASSESSMENT PROCTORING SYSTEMS

Learning Unit 3: Quality Assurance

Quality assurance refers to the policies, processes and actions through which the quality of a system is developed and maintained.

The issue of quality assuring the work of a remote learner has been a long-standing challenge to Distance and Open Universities. Most of these organizations still place an emphasis on summative exams in a controlled physical proctored location. A human proctor in a physical exam center manually checks the learner identity paperwork before the learner is invited to complete a short time length ‘hidden paper’ examination.

Ensuring that a student has been exposed to the offered teaching material does not assure that anything has been learned. The value of any certificate or learning must rest on several quality assurance issues. Thus, many proctoring centers and technologies are now commercially available. Their aim is to add a quality assurance element in ‘observing and recording’ the student during the exam on a ‘locked down’ computer via a webcam to reduce the temptation to cheat during the hidden paper test.

It can be difficult to really know what is happening behind the screens when it comes to online proctoring. Quality assurance of examinations and assessments carves a window into the user experience, stakeholder behavior, seeing the bigger picture, quality assurance (QA) check, support issues and personal data collection.

- **The User Experience:** Gain valuable insight into your proctor, administrator, and test-taker experiences by monitoring the entire remote testing process. By stepping into their shoes, you truly know whether your policies and procedures flow just the way you planned them to—smoothly. Does what you expect to see line up with what the auditors see?
- **Stakeholder Behavior:** Everyone needs at least some level of confidence in the integrity of their proctors, test administrators, and exam participants. That’s hard enough when test takers are all right in front of you, let alone remote. Auditing remote test administrations is the best way to confirm no one is subverting your rules and your policies are keeping your tests secure.
- **See the Bigger Picture:** When you conduct quality assurance for exams delivered remotely, you’ll be able to view a bigger picture, gathering both the high-level and granular information necessary to validate that your test security policies and procedures are working as planned.
- **QA Check:** Don’t let your security policies become irrelevant. Conduct a QA check on your remote testing program to gain actionable feedback on what is working well (and not so well).

- **Support Team:** You always need to make sure that the OP program supplier has a well-trained support team and associated processes and systems in place, to help to exam candidates if they run into problems. Does your potential supplier have a proven track record of providing great candidate support and do they have references who will attest to this? It is also important to say that much as suppliers can mitigate risks associated with their own software, they do not have control over all parts of the service, and events such as full internet outages, although infrequent, have to be properly managed.
- **Personal Data Collection:** Highly sensitive biometric data can be collected and stored on the pretext of verification purposes. Hence, personal data collected during OP system operations need to be carefully identified, classified, and labeled according to its sensitivity level for storage to maintain its confidentiality, integrity, and availability, irrespective of the medium of storage.

Some Guidelines for A Quality And Successful Online Proctoring System

Some general—and relatively easy and obvious—guidelines have already been identified when conducting any form of online proctoring. We will provide a few examples:

- When performing an online exam, candidates need to be informed in advance of the nature of the exam, and their consent to use the data is needed. Consent information must be as clear as possible. Candidates need to be made explicitly aware of what is going to happen with the data and their rights (ownership, data protection, etc.). In some institutions, these kinds of experiments (with students) even need to be submitted to an ethical commission.
- When collecting ID information, ensure the test-takers cover any information on their ID cards that refers to, for example, passport, social security or driver license numbers.
- Ensure that obvious rules-of-conduct for superusers of systems, proctors and examiners are in place, such as not viewing videos in a public place, not downloading videos to personal or unprotected devices, not downloading ID cards and photographs to personal or unprotected devices, etc.
- Ensure that any video or ID material that is stored will be erased by default from all systems after a set time in case that no suspicions of fraud had been detected.
- Preventing and reacting to security breaches is one the main preliminary conditions for successful and trustworthy online proctoring. Possible security problems in technical systems can be identified in numerous process steps, technological devices, software and organizational structures in the proctoring chain.
- Online proctoring technologies include a vast array of systems with different features, but those that claim to guarantee the integrity of the exams have the capacity to record the exam-taker's environment (including images and sound) to monitor keyboard strokes, mouse movements, web browsing data, and background applications, and to

analyze breath and eye movement. They may even have the authority to decide if a student is cheating and stop the exam. The use of the described technologies has legal consequences, with potential violations of data protection legislation. That's why, higher education institutions (HEIs) should be aware of these violations.

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