

UNEMSA
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ProctorU Position Statement

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed immense pressure on all industries, including education and the university sector. This has led to large-scale rapid changes in policy, exam methods, and teaching. Due to government restrictions on public gatherings and social distancing, in-person teaching and exams have become impossible to organise.

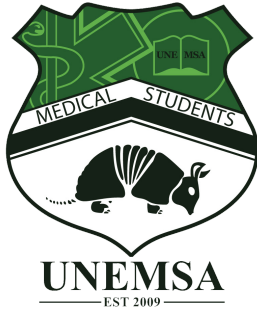
ProctorU, as UNE's contracted partner for the provision of online exams, is the solution chosen by faculty to conduct MCQ exams for Semester 1. While UNEMSA understands the difficult situation faculty have been placed in with government restrictions, ProctorU has a few notable flaws which we believe faculty and students should be aware of.

Privacy

ProctorU has raised global privacy concerns about its collection of data, AI monitoring system and high-level access to student computers during exams. ProctorU uses LogMeIn Rescue, a software which provides online invigilators access to keystrokes, webcam and microphone recordings, and screen footage, as well as further access to a student's whole computer.

Furthermore, ProctorU is an American company with contracted invigilators working around the world. This third-party access to student data poses numerous privacy and cybersecurity risks, and transparency regarding how data is stored, who is provided access to it, and when it is accessed is limited.

Most concerningly, ProctorU's privacy policy allows for the sale or transfer of data collected during the exam in the event the company is "involved in a bankruptcy, merger, acquisition, reorganisation, or sale of assets.". We understand and sympathise with student concerns over ProctorU's handling of student information.



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Exam Quality

Medical students have multiple years of experience in taking exams and every student has developed their own method to approach exams. With the advent of online examinations and e-proctoring, two of the most widely used test-taking strategies – use of scratch paper and options to eliminate answer choices – are completely removed for the students' arsenal.

The elimination of those two strategies pose a significant detriment to the students' ability to complete the exam in a timely manner and to their best ability. These two strategies allow for students to write down their thought process, and allow them to review their thought process at the end of the exam to ensure no mistakes were made. By removing the ability to write and review the thought process associated with the questions, students are liable to make more mistakes and miss opportunities to rectify them.

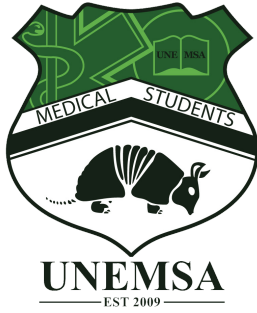
By allowing the use of a whiteboard and the ability to markdown questions, via modifying ProctorU's method or using a different service, student satisfaction with online examination and their results will improve.

Stress and Challenges

One of the most important factors to consider in conducting online exams is that students are unfamiliar with the software, and that most students are used to taking multiple choice exams on paper. This different environment, along with the prospect of technical difficulties during the exam, has the potential to lead to higher levels of stress and worry which could impact exam performance.

Furthermore, ProctorU's individual proctoring method and limitations on widely used test strategies are problematic to student performance. ProctorU's requirements for a quiet test space with no writing displayed in the room will be difficult to achieve for a large number of students, especially those with young families or large households.

Students taking the exam from locations with poor internet access may also be challenged with connectivity issues that impair their performance.



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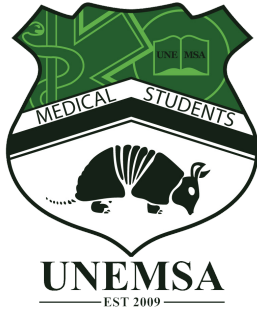
Position Statement

We acknowledge:

1. The difficulty faced by staff and faculty in conducting quality teaching and examination online during the COVID-19 pandemic;
2. ProctorU's convenience as UNE's subscribed online exam proctoring software;
3. Student concerns over ProctorU's:
 - a. Privacy policy;
 - b. Limitations of test-taking methods;
 - c. Potentially invasive nature, and;
 - d. Potential impact on stress levels.

In light of these concerns, we recommend that faculty:

1. Acknowledge student concerns about privacy and discuss these with the student body;
2. Allow students the use of laminated paper or whiteboards in the place of scratch paper during online exams;
3. Conduct some form of practice exam using ProctorU to familiarise students with the software
4. Provide support for students with limited or no access to technology required to take an online exam, including but not limited to webcams;
5. Provide clear, standardised solutions and suggestions for students who are worried about the potential impact on their performance by:
 - a. Poor internet connectivity;
 - b. Distractions/interruptions posed by household members, and;
6. Consider alternative solutions to ProctorU for any future online exams that need to be undertaken after the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Furthermore, we encourage students to;

1. Acknowledge the rapidly-changing situation faced by faculty during the pandemic, and the challenges of trying to find an alternative solution to ProctorU at such short notice;
2. Stay informed about ProctorU and other online proctoring solutions;
3. Contact your year representatives or other UNEMSA committee members with your concerns, and;
4. Take all possible steps to prepare for a positive online exam experience.

And finally, encourage staff and students to;

1. Engage in respectful, transparent, and frequent communication with each other to relieve frustration, worries, and confusion.

Kind Regards,

Isaac Wade
President

Nihal Lalwani
Vice President External