

BEST PRACTICES IN THE USE OF RESPONDUS MONITOR (OR SIMILAR SYSTEMS LIKE PROCTORIO MONITORING)

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With contributions from FASS, CTL, and ITS

One of the challenges of virtual instruction is the accurate assessment of individual student learning. Instructors are vigilant about academic dishonesty—even though most do not welcome this role—to make sure that students are evaluated in an equitable way. In a face-to-face classroom, the instructor can help ensure the integrity of examinations by visually proctoring test-takers. In a virtual setting, many instructors instead rely upon monitoring software such as Respondus Monitor. (For a more substantial discussion of academic integrity, please join the SDSU Academic Integrity Think-In on January 22, 8:30 - 11 a.m. RSVP [here](#).)

Students may harbor some concerns about the use of [Respondus Monitor](#), including:

- Anxiety about meeting and managing the technical specifications of Monitor, including appropriate hardware and stable internet connectivity.
- Privacy issues stemming from webcam use in the learn-at-home environment
- Anxiety about triggers in the learn-at-home setting (poor lighting, background noises and motions) that may cause their video to be flagged
- Anxiety that being flagged by Respondus Monitor will impact their success

Here is how faculty can be responsive to assessment concerns:

1. **DESIGN [STUDENT-CENTERED ASSESSMENT EXPERIENCES](#):** Remember that students are required to remain seated during Respondus Monitored exams. Consider the time required for the exam and determine whether it might be appropriate to break the exam into smaller units. Consider scheduling exams when you will be readily available in case a student needs immediate assistance with a technical glitch.
2. **EXPLAIN RESPONDUS IN THE SYLLABUS AND ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS (see appendix)**
 - a. Explain the purpose of Monitor and why the instructor is using it.
 - b. Articulate the technical requirements of Monitor.
 - c. Explain how Respondus Monitor works and how you as the instructor intend to use it.
 - d. Explain best practices for students to engage in when using Monitor.
 - e. Describe the process a student must follow if unable to meet the Monitor requirements.
3. **HOLD AT LEAST ONE PRACTICE EXAM:** Consider assigning a simple five-question syllabus or course objective quiz with unlimited attempts and no real time limit, or another form of low stakes assessment. Practice exams should replicate the actual exam experience to the extent practicable (e.g., environment checks). This will allow learners to become familiar with Respondus Monitor before exams.
4. **BEFORE EACH EXAM:**

- Remind students to review best practices for test taking (see appendix).
 - Alleviate student concerns by communicating compassion for learn-at-home situations and your understanding.
 - Reassure students that just because a video is flagged does not mean they are at risk of being accused of academic dishonesty; the instructor will review flagged video in the context of other relevant data.
5. **ON THE DAY OF THE EXAM:** Remind students of best practices for test taking. You may also wish to offer time management strategies, for example, suggesting how much time students should spend on each question or section.
6. **MAKE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS AS APPROPRIATE:** Instructors may at their discretion and in extraordinary circumstances consider offering alternative assessments appropriate to their subject matter and class size. These may include:
- A second but similar exam that will include other measures to control for academic dishonesty such as limited time, no backtracking, randomized questions, etc.
 - A subjective essay exam to be Zoom-proctored by the instructor
 - An oral exam with the instructor via Zoom
 - Other alternatives can be found at ctl.sdsu.edu

SAMPLE SYLLABUS LANGUAGE

This course uses Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor. Respondus LockDown Browser is a secure browser for taking tests in Blackboard or Canvas. It prevents you from printing, copying, going to another URL, or accessing other applications during a test. Respondus Monitor is a tool in Respondus LockDown Browser that records video and audio while you take a test.

Please note, older operating systems (Mac and PC) and Chromebooks may not support the use of Respondus Monitor. Technological requirements:

- Windows: 10, 8, 7; Mac: OS X 10.12 or higher; iOS: 10.0+ (iPad only).
- Webcam and microphone. Students using a desktop will need an external webcam and microphone.
- Reliable internet connection—preferably hard-wired Ethernet; if wireless, plan to sit near the router or access point.

Here is how Respondus Monitor works: **Exam video is not live-monitored**; it is scanned by a machine and flagged if algorithms detect image patterns that may be consistent with academic dishonesty. If video is flagged, I will review it (or “your instructor will review it”) along with other information from your exam, such as types of exam questions and answer times, exam completion time, unexpected movements such as typing during a multiple-choice exam, etc.). No student will be reported to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities on the basis of flagged video alone. Students can also consult the [Respondus Student Guide](#) for more information on downloading and using Lockdown Browser.

Some students have concerns about whether elements of the learn-at-home environment—background noise, shared spaces—will be flagged and reported. Please know that many of these challenges can be managed. I understand these challenges and will be sensitive to them. If you have any concerns that something happened during your exam that may lead to you being flagged, please contact me and let me know. To reduce the risk of being “flagged,” you should also review best practices for test-taking.

If after reviewing the course requirements, you determine that you are unable or unwilling to participate in assessments monitored by Respondus Monitor, please contact me. The best solution may be enrolling in another section or another semester to complete the course if required for your program.

TESTING BEST PRACTICES

- Restart your computer, and shut down unnecessary programs running on the computer, as well as those that might be running on your network (Netflix, etc.) before starting the exam.
- If you can, test in a well-lit location where you will not be interrupted. If you live in a shared space, ask others to be considerate of your exam time. If possible, avoid backlighting—that is, sitting with your back to a window.
- If available, place your computer or tablet on a firm surface (desk or table). Try not to hold the computer on your lap, or on a bed, couch, or other unstable surface.
- Prepare to remain at your desk for the duration of the exam by using the restroom, arranging for child care, etc., before the exam starts.
- Your instructor will inform you if you are allowed to use a calculator or notes. Clear your workspace of all other materials— electronic devices (tablets, phones, additional laptops), books, and papers, and other devices. If possible, consider removing them from the room so that you are not distracted.
- Run your webcam, environment, and facial detection checks before the exam. You will be asked to take a photo of yourself, **show your SDSU student ID**, and use your webcam to record a view of your workspace, including the space above and below a desk or table you may be using.
- Avoid wearing baseball caps or hats with brims. Head coverings without a brim should not impact Respondus Monitor.
- If using a built-in webcam, try to avoid tilting the screen after the webcam setup is complete and the exam has started.
- Whenever possible, remain at your computer for the duration of the test. Remember that your video and audio are being recorded. If your face moves out of view, you will get an on-screen alert. Return back in view of the camera to dismiss the alert and continue with the test.
- If, during an exam, you experience an interruption, please attempt to log back on and continue. If you are unable to do so or have some other issue, contact the instructor [*specify how e.g., contact me via Google chat or @sdsu.edu email*].