

Statement against banning online proctoring in fully online programs*

The EC has proposed a revision to UW Bothell ban on online proctoring. We note that the only significant difference in the proposed policy versus the policy currently in place is to remove the exception against banning online proctoring in "fully online programs that students intentionally signed up to take". No rationale or justification is given for this change in the proposed EC policy. We will not try to argue against a case that has not even been made in the proposal. However, we can provide background and reasoning behind our ongoing use of such proctoring in our online graduate certificate program.

CSS initiated an in-person Graduate Certificate in Software Development and Design (GCSDD) several years ago. In many courses in the area, we strongly believe that tests must be performed with proctoring. The material being tested can be found online easily and students place intense pressure on themselves to succeed. The overall quality and reputation of the certificate depends upon the students who complete it having understanding of the material and not just the ability to search online. Employers, educational institutions, and other current and potential students notice when a student with a credential is not able to perform at the level implied by the credential.

In Fall 2018, we initiated our first cohort of students in a fully online GCSDD. Participation in this certificate necessarily requires the use of technology. Students know this when they sign up. Our FAQ specifies that "Most exams are given online, via an environment that verifies student identity and controls exam access to ensure integrity. In the rare occurrence, if a paper exam is necessary, students will be able to choose between coming to campus or arranging a proctor site near them." In the rare cases where technological issues have arisen, accommodations have been made.

In the first year of the certificate, testing was entirely in-person or at proctored testing facilities. However, this was onerous on both students and facilitating staff (even for the lower initial enrollment) and does not scale to the current enrollment of the online certificate. **In Fall 2019, we began using ProctorU to administer exams via Canvas in CSS 501 and this has continued in multiple courses in the GCSDD to date.** The use of ProctorU has proven less onerous for both students and staff. However, accommodations can (and have) been made when necessary.

We believe that removing the ability to test in this fashion would place the entire GCSDD at risk to its quality and reputation in its current implementation, put its success in danger, and hinder the future development of on-line programs. The use of online proctoring is also in alignment with many other online graduate computer science programs.

* Approved by CSS division faculty 3/1/21..