

# EPC Motions - 2021-22

22 June 2021

*A motion was made that every faculty member must utilize a Moodle landing page for each course during the 2021 fall semester. At a minimum, the Moodle site must 1) contain the course syllabus or link to syllabus, 2) include links to other platforms used for class work, and 3) IF grades are electronically disseminated or posted, it must be through Moodle or Gustavus email. M/S/C*

9 August 2021

*A motion was made that Gustavus will not re-issue the College-wide COVID-related Pass/Fail Grading option for Fall 2021. Students facing COVID-related academic interruptions can petition the Academic Petitions Board for Pass/Fail. M/S/C*

17 August 2021

*The EPC endorsed the following two recommendations:*

## Testing and Proctoring Practices Guidance

The following motion was approved by the Emergency Planning Committee of the faculty on September 15, 2020.

*“A motion was made that the recommendations of the Online Testing Working Group, with input from EPC (Faculty Emergency Planning Committee) now incorporated, be forwarded to the Office of the Provost for further action. Additionally, the matter of online proctoring shall be reassessed by the EPC and/or other appropriate bodies (e.g., Faculty Senate, AOC, etc.) in early 2021 with the goal of amending the recommendations, if necessary, and moving them into the Faculty Handbook following a full faculty vote.”*

In light of this motion, the Provost's Office has considered the recommendations of the Online Testing Working Group and provides the following information for Gustavus faculty for the 2020-21 academic year (**or until Faculty Handbook language is developed and approved**), as it relates to online testing and exam proctoring practices.

Note for 2021-22: the statement below is held to be in effect for the 2021-22 academic year until the matter has been brought before the Faculty as above.

## Statement on the Nature of this Work

*(From the Online Testing Working Group, affirmed by the EPC and Provost's Office)*

As an overall approach to this issue, we first suggest that faculty reflect on the particular assessments in their courses that are most likely to elicit poor decision making in their students. We strongly suggest that faculty consider ways to convey to their students the idea that they would rather the student communicate difficulties or anxiety to them than to make decisions resulting in academic dishonesty. For example, faculty should explicitly discuss the Gustavus Honor Code in all of their courses in order to continue to increase its salience to our students.

The team appreciates that faculty face a variety of pressures and challenges with regard to online assessment and that one-size-fits-all solutions are unlikely. In general, we urge faculty to develop and begin using assessment instruments that are less vulnerable to academic dishonesty, and we provide resources to this end. However, we recognize that such development and use will take time, energy, and creativity at a time when most faculty already face increased demands. We also acknowledge that such assessment methods may be more or less attainable by faculty in varying disciplines and meeting varying learning outcomes. Therefore, we offer the following guidance on various surveillance-based online assessment strategies along with rationales.

The team would also like to note that asking faculty to design and implement new, often more labor-intensive assessment strategies should not coincide with an earlier final grade due date.

#### Online Testing and Proctoring Practices Guidance for 2020-21

### **1. The use of third-party online proctoring services by the institution or by individual faculty members in Gustavus courses is prohibited for the 2020-21 academic year.\***

*Rationale: Third-party online proctoring services are for-profit corporations with a history of accusations of unethical practices ranging from racial profiling to nondisclosure of data sharing and security practices. Their services are also costly, and some of them charge students directly.*

### **2. Requiring students to ask another person to observe them in person while they take an online exam for the purposes of “vouching” for the student’s behavior during testing is prohibited for the 2020-21 academic year.**

*Rationale:*

- *Not all students live with an individual who may be willing (or whom the student is comfortable asking) to provide this uncompensated labor.*
- *Asking anyone outside the student’s household to perform such a service poses a health risk to both parties given the current pandemic.*
- *The third party, if not a GAC student, is in no way bound by GAC’s honor code.*
- *Having another person in the room, not associated with the course, increases test anxiety for most students.*

### **3. Faculty members who plan to use video surveillance of students during testing (whether live or recorded) should use caution and give thoughtful consideration to issues of bias, equity, and data security.**

*Rationale:*

- *Students may feel even more anxious being watched in their private residences than they would be in a physical classroom while being tested. Live proctoring with other students also able to see the student in their surroundings likely compounds this anxiety. This situation differs from synchronous class sessions in two ways. 1) Anxiety is already likely greater in a testing situation than in a regular class session and 2) In many class sessions students are given the option of not using their cameras.*

- *We are uncertain as to the effectiveness of this method for detecting cheating and suspect it may be subject to a high number of both Type I and Type II errors (that is, false positives as well as false negatives).*
- *Faculty are subject to the same biases that have allegedly (but credibly) led to racist actions by third-party online proctors. We urge faculty to be aware, for example, that they are more likely to perceive dishonest behavior in students belonging to groups subject to racist and other discriminatory stereotypes. In particular, faculty may be at risk of bestowing more scrutiny and suspicion on students of color than they are on other students. For these reasons, we urge faculty to use particular practices uniformly with all their students. For example, if a faculty member decides to ask one student to share their screen, other students should be asked to do the same.*
- *Consideration should be given to the storage of sensitive information including video surveillance of students in their homes.*

**4. Faculty members should consider the significant limitations and possible inequities of browser lock-down software, if they choose to use this method.**

*Rationale:*

- *This strategy is not particularly effective as most of our students have access to multiple devices with which they can access the internet. Browser lock-down software only prevents students from accessing other windows or websites on the device they are using to take the exam.*
- *Given the above point, this strategy is significantly less likely to prevent cheating among more socioeconomically privileged students than among those less privileged. This raises the serious ethical concern that the practice may unfairly advantage some students.*
- *This strategy requires students to download software, which has historically resulted in significant demand for technical support from GTS, especially under high-stakes circumstances like an approaching exam deadline. Additionally, older computers may not be compatible with some downloaded software.*
- *This added layer of technological complexity is likely to introduce new sources of anxiety in situations that are already extremely anxiety-provoking.*

Resources for Creating Online Assessments Robust to Academic Dishonesty

[Promising Practices for Online Academic Integrity, courtesy of Kyle Chambers](#)

If faculty have questions about any of this information and guidance, please contact your Academic Dean. The Provost's Office thanks the members of the Online Testing Working Group who thoughtfully generated these recommendations, as well as the EPC in moving forward this work.

Members of the Online Testing Working Group

- Valerie Banschbach
- Kyle Chambers
- Lisa Dembouski
- Melissa Denler
- Marni Dunning
- Mimi Gerstbauer
- Heather Haemig

- Lauren Hecht
- Sarah Ruble
- Marie Walker

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\* Third-party online proctoring services approved by external accrediting bodies that are required for accreditation-based testing within the Nursing or Education programs are allowed with approval from the Provost Office.

## Food and Beverages in Classrooms, Laboratories, and Common Spaces in Academic Buildings

When College masking mandates are in effect, no food will be permitted in classrooms, unless there is a medical accommodation. Beverages will be permitted in classrooms, but students/faculty may only remove face coverings during the time when they are actually drinking, if necessary.

When College-level masking mandates are in effect, eating and drinking are allowed only in designated dining areas, at seated events, and when seated in public lounge spaces in academic buildings or in private offices. They are not allowed in hallways or classrooms before, during, or after class.

Eating and drinking are also not allowed while standing or walking in buildings, including during events, when a masking mandate is in effect.

These restrictions are based on the additional risk posed by removing a face covering to eat and drink.

## 17 September 2021

*A motion was made to support faculty requested changes to mode of instruction due to COVID-related reasons should campus-wide mask mandate be lifted. M/S/C*

## 11 October 2021

*A motion was made to endorse the COVID Leadership Team's policy that faculty will enforce the policy that students who do not test in advance of college-sponsored air travel will not be able to participate in the trip. Academic consequences will be at the discretion of the faculty.*

## 21 December 2021

*A motion was made that every faculty member must utilize a Moodle landing page for each course during the 2022 January and Spring terms. At a minimum, the Moodle site must 1) contain the course syllabus or link to syllabus, 2) include links to other platforms used for class work, and 3) IF grades are electronically disseminated or posted, it must be through Moodle or Gustavus email. M/S/C*

## 28 March 2022

*A motion was made that attendance at Honors Day and Commencement be voluntary, not required, during the 2022 Spring semester. M/S/C*

25 April 2022

*A motion was made that the EPC continues to exist through the summer of 2022 and into the 2022-23 academic year, in tandem with the existence and function of the COVID Leadership Team. M/S/C*