

COVID-19 Pandemic and Academic Continuity

Restricting Use of Online Proctoring of Examinations

12 February 2021

The Senate Executive Committee continues to monitor the impact of the pandemic-related disruption under the auspices of the *Senate Policy on Academic Implications of Disruptions or Cessations of University Business Due to Labour Disputes or Other Causes* (the Disruptions Policy).

With the shift to predominantly remote teaching and learning during the pandemic it has not been possible to hold in-person examinations. The pandemic restrictions have led some instructors to adopt online invigilation / proctoring to hold virtual examinations. Online proctoring is where students are monitored while writing a test or exam online. *Proctortrack* is a specific online proctoring platform that has been used at the University during this disruption.

Challenges associated with online proctoring continue to be raised as issues by both students and faculty members. Key among them are concerns around equity for racialized communities, privacy, student anxiety and technical challenges. Additionally, experience has shown that there is little evidence on the effectiveness of online proctoring in the detection and prevention of academic dishonesty.

The Senate the *Disruptions Policy* has three governing principles: academic integrity, fairness to students, and timely information. The *Senate Policy on the Conduct of Examinations* affirms the University's commitment to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity in the examination process, in accordance with the standards and principles established in the *Senate Policy on Academic Honesty*, the *Senate Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities*, and York's *Mission Statement*.

Collectively guided by the Senate legislation in determining appropriate remedial actions during a disruption, it is the decision of Senate Executive that **effective for the Summer 2021 term and for the duration of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that:**

- **any form of technology-enabled invigilation (also known as “online proctoring”) by instructors, which includes the use of proctoring software or video conferencing software, such as Zoom, used for proctoring purposes, not be used except in exceptional circumstances; and**
- **authorization for the use of online proctoring in exceptional circumstances is required by the Dean / Principal of the Faculty / School / College in question and the Vice-Provost Academic.**

The Teaching Commons and Learning Technology Services offer “virtual” one-on-one consultation meetings with instructors to directly support them in adopting alternative methods of assessment, and adapting their curriculum to support a high quality, online learning experience for students. One-on-one consultations with course directors with expertise in online delivery is another resource that can be facilitated for faculty seeking greater facility with the use of the technology.

Alison Macpherson, Chair of Senate