

The Proctor's guide to stuff that can happen during an exam, and what to do about it....

This guide is meant as a supplement to the Senate regulation "Administration of Examinations," which can be found here:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/administration.pdf.

Anyone who will be acting on behalf of the University as an exam proctor must be familiar with the rules laid out in the Senate regulation.

Despite the availability of these regulations, a multitude of possible events can take place during an exam, for which no specific protocol is given. The guide below, presented in a Q&A format, is based upon actual events, and the responses reflect the collective wisdom of several experienced individuals at UWO.

In the majority of cases, exams proceed smoothly without incident. However, there are a few students who will be attempting to achieve their grades dishonestly, and it is your job as a proctor to **prevent** this from happening. Catching dishonesty in action is second best to preventing it in the first place.

Preventing dishonest behavior may be as simple as the following:

- 1) Before the start of the exam, you, or the chief proctor should clearly announce exam rules such as:

No electronic devices of any kind are permitted

All outdoor coats and bags should be placed at the front of the room, under their seats, or in another secure, designated area (note that thefts *have* occurred, so we are discouraged from forcing students to leave valuables in insecure locations, particularly in large exams)

This exam is 3 hrs long

No other materials are permitted

You will not be permitted to leave the room during the first 30 minutes

- 2) Be vigilant, and **be seen** to be vigilant. You are not doing your job by sitting at the desk grading papers, using your cell phone (other than for exam business), or reading a newspaper. *Continuously* walk around the room in a random fashion, or place yourself in a location where you have a clear view of room. You should actually spend very little time sitting down.
- 3) In prior consultation with the chief proctor, have a plan in place for the orderly collection of papers at the end of the exam. Inform the candidates of your procedure (e.g., "when you are finished, remain in your seat and raise your hand").

If and when something questionable does happen, remember that a finding of a scholastic offence can only be made following an investigation by the undergraduate chair. As a

proctor, you do not have the right to apply any penalty, nor to remove the student from the exam. Instead, you should find a witness (e.g., another proctor), gather evidence, document the incident, and, if necessary, take steps to prevent continued cheating from taking place.

The things that can happen during an exam may not unfold exactly as given below. However, you are expected to use your judgment, and you may extrapolate an appropriate response from one of the incidents given below. We welcome suggestions and additions to this guide. Please send your comments to acadsci@uwo.ca.

Stuff that can happen...

Student ID

Q. A student has no student ID or any other kind of photo ID. Should I remove him or her from the exam?

A. The Chief Proctor may bar the student from the exam, but also has the discretion to allow the student to write the exam if the Chief Proctor is satisfied that the student is likely the person he or she claims to be and provided that the student provides satisfactory evidence of his or her identity after the examination. One recommended procedure is to ask the student to sign the top of the exam or scantron sheet using his or her normal signature, in two places. Check that the signatures match, and if they don't, ask the student to sign again.

If you have a camera/cell phone, you could also take a photo of the student. Inform the student that he or she will have to present his/her student ID after the exam and tell the student where this must be done (in fact, if the student finishes early and is able to return with valid ID before the exam finishes, the matter can be taken care of with no further requirements).

If the student is permitted to write the exam under these circumstances, then you must document the incident carefully. Once the student's ID is verified, any photo taken at the exam should be destroyed.

Always check student ID carefully during the nominal roll. See below.

Q. The photo on the ID does not seem to match the student presenting it. What should I do?

A. This is a **very** serious matter. If you are certain, call the campus police immediately.

If you are not so certain, take the student to one side where you can have a private conversation. Ask the student several questions such as: What is the name of the instructor? Describe him/her. Which building and classroom are the lectures in, at what times? Which days of the week? What is the name of your TA? If the student clearly has no idea, then call campus police.

- Q. The photo on the ID does match the student presenting it, but does not match the photo on file in the class list (which you printed out in advance).
- A. The student ID is very likely a forgery, and you should call the campus police immediately. Do not chase the student down, but do make careful notes of the situation, including the name of the student in question.

Entering and Leaving the Room

- Q. Is there a limit to how late a student may start the exam?
- A. Yes! No student will be allowed to start if they arrive more than 30 minutes after the posted start time. The Senate regulations are quite clear on this point, and an “act of kindness” could potentially allow a student to appeal his or her exam grade. Obtain the student’s name and student number and forward it to the appropriate Dean’s Office. Instruct the student to report to his or her faculty’s academic counsellors as soon as possible. If a student arrives late but within this 30 minute grace period, he or she should **not** be given extra time to finish the exam.

Note that this rule follows from the rule that no student is permitted to *leave* the exam during the first 30 minutes. This prevents a student arriving late from receiving information about the exam.

- Q. Should all requests to visit the washroom be granted?
- A. During the first 30 and last 15 minutes of the exam, only *emergency* washroom visits should be permitted, and **only** if the student can be accompanied to the washroom by a proctor.

Other than for those periods, requests to visit the washroom should be granted, and the student should be escorted to the washroom as available resources allow. Ideally, only one student should be absent from the exam at any one time.

If the student is wearing a hat or a big coat or such, **require** that they remove them first.

- Q. What if I am with a small group and on my own?

Senate regulations require that students can leave the room only if accompanied by a proctor. Therefore, if you are alone for some reason, you should ensure that you are able to contact another proctor for assistance. For this and several other reasons, proctors should have a cell phone with them, and in the case of an exam taking place over several rooms, have the numbers of all the other proctors.

If the student is wearing a big coat or such, **require** that he or she remove it before leaving the room. Ask students to remove any hats before they leave the room.

Coats and Backpacks

Q. Can I impose a kind of “dress code” for the exams to stop students wearing big coats with many pockets for example?

A. To a limited extent, yes. You can, for example, require the removal of all hats with a peak (a common cheating tool). You can also require “hoods down” for anyone wearing a hoodie. You can also require all large outdoor coats to be placed at the front of the room along with bags. If a student claims he or she needs to wear the coat because he/she is cold, **require** the student to sit at the front of the room.

This would be about the limit of anything that you can require.

Q. A student sits down wearing a hoodie or a baseball cap. What should I do?

A. Ask the student to remove the headwear before the exam begins. Within reason, if headwear is required for religious purposes, the student may wear it.

Q. Students were asked to drop their bags at a particular location at the start of the exam. On a walk around, I notice one student has their backpack under the desk. What should I do?

A. Inform the student of the violation and then take the backpack to the designated storage location. If you are at all concerned about the student’s honesty, at the end of the exam, ask the student to empty the bag to your satisfaction. Do not empty the bag yourself.

Note: due to concerns of thefts of students’ bags—which *have* occurred—it is permissible to designate an alternate area for storage, depending on the room size and layout. At the proctor’s discretion, bags, etc., *can* be stored under the students’ seats.

Wandering Eyes

Q. I think a student is looking around a bit too much, but I’m not really sure that they are cheating. Should I just wait and see?

A. It’s better to prevent cheating than catch it happening. At the start of the exam, try to leave several desks near the front vacant. If you are suspicious of this student’s actions, then **require** the student to move to one of the vacant desks. Make a note of the time and any other relevant information and change the nominal roll if necessary.

If the room is small and you don’t have this luxury, inform the student of their behavior (they may genuinely be unaware that what they are doing looks suspicious) and if absolutely necessary, make a swap with another student near the front (this is not very desirable as it involves disturbing another student).

Q. Now I'm sure this person is looking at another student's exam. Should I pull their paper and throw them out?

A. No—a sanction can only be applied after an investigation of a scholastic offence by the department Chair (which should certainly occur, in this case). Make a careful note of the time and all the relevant details on the nominal roll sheet. If you don't already know, get the names of all students adjacent to the "cheater." If there is more than one proctor present, alert another proctor to the behavior and get them to witness the events and co-sign as noted on the nominal roll.

Warn the student quietly that he or she has been observed exhibiting suspicious behavior and move the student to the front of the room if a vacant desk is available. At the end of the exam, tell the student that he or she will be investigated for cheating. Inform the chief proctor or exam coordinator.

Cheat Sheets

Q. On a routine inspection, I find that the student's calculator (or water bottle label, etc.) has some relevant data written on it. Is that the end of the exam for this person?

A. No. Again, make a careful note of the time and the circumstances on the nominal roll. Confiscate the calculator (or other item, or perhaps just the removable cover of the calculator). At the end of the exam, inform the student that he or she will be investigated for cheating. **Do not give the item back to the student.** If the student makes a huge fuss, call the campus police. Inform the chief proctor or the course coordinator.

Q. At the end of the exam, the student who had the calculator with writing on it comes to confess and says that he/she will accept a zero on the exam if it goes no further. Should I do this to get it over with?

A. No. This student may be making a habit of such behaviour. All incidents of cheating **MUST** be reported.

Q. I think I saw a student looking at some papers or cards during the exam, but when I went to the desk, I don't see them. The student is wearing a big coat. Can I search him/her?

A. No, do not put your hands on the student in any way. You can take them to one side and **demand** that they empty their pockets to your satisfaction. If they refuse to comply, document the incident, inform the chief proctor and call campus police.

Q. So, during the confrontation with this student, some cheat-sheets were found. Should the student be allowed to continue?

A. Yes, but again, confiscate the material and make a note of the time and any other relevant information. Inform the student at the end that he or she will be reported for suspected cheating and will be contacted by the instructor or Chair of the department.

Q. Why should I let them finish? Clearly they cheated!

A. That's not for you to decide at that moment. It is for the Chair to investigate and decide. If the student decides to leave, let him/her.

Electronic Devices

Q. Electronic devices are specifically barred from our exam and it is stated so on the exam cover. A student is found with a cell phone on the desk, but does not appear to be using it in any way. Should the student be reported for cheating?

A. Students will often quite innocently use a cell phone to watch the time. They are such a part of people's lives that they may have just forgotten they had it there. If you are sure that a student has not been operating the device, ask him/her to put it away and give the student a warning.

A clear announcement before the start of the exam that electronic devices of any kind are forbidden is helpful. You can alleviate concerns that the students need to know how much time is remaining by, e.g., keeping track of the time on a board at the front of the room, or by using the A/V equipment to display a clock.

Q. In one case, the student was observed with a cell phone in their hand and seemed to be operating the device. Can I confiscate the device?

A. **No.** In the past this was recommended, but cell phones have become a very personal (and expensive) part of students' lives.

Make a note of the time and any other relevant circumstances. Look at the device and if there is anything that is apparent on the screen **without** operating it, make a note of it. You may also ask the student to unlock the screen. **Do not** open files or otherwise operate the device yourself to look for incriminating evidence.

- Q. Students are allowed to use a specific calculator during the exam. A student is found with a different model of calculator on the desk. What should I do?
- A. Inform the professor or chief proctor immediately. If the calculator is different from the allowed model, you may confiscate the calculator. If a calculator is required for the exam, the chief proctor may decide to allow the student to continue using the calculator if no suitable replacement model can be provided. Make careful note of the situation and inform the student after the exam that they will be investigated.

Suspicious Activity in the Washroom

- Q. A student went for a washroom break and did not return in a reasonable time. I went to the washroom and I think the student is locked in the stall and I can hear the sound of cards or paper. Can I look over the top?
- A. First, and obviously, a male proctor must not enter the ladies washroom and vice-versa under any circumstances unless you think that someone is in peril.
- Do not look over or under the door.** These are essentially public washrooms and so the person in there may not be who you think it is. Wait for them to come out (do not announce yourself as this may give them the chance to flush the evidence). **Require** the person to empty their pockets.
- Q. When the student in question came out and saw me, they had papers in their hands, and tried to get back into the stall and lock the door (or run away). Should I try to prevent this?
- A. No. Do not do anything that might get you into a physical confrontation with a student. That's not your job. The student will have to come out eventually, and if he or she refuses to come out, call campus police. When the student does come out, the papers you saw will be in one of only a few places: flushed, still on his or her person, inside the toilet paper holder, or perhaps under a ceiling tile. Gather any evidence you can, even if it's not actually in the student's possession. Make detailed notes of the event and report it to the chief proctor or Chair.
- Q. When I went into the washroom, I found the student on the cell phone or talking to another student. Is this cheating?
- A. Yes. Either one is cheating no matter what they happen to be talking about and inform them of such. Escort the student back to his or her desk; make a note of the time and details of the circumstances.

Exam Interruptions

Q. During the exam, the fire alarm goes off. Can students grab their stuff?

A. No. As with any fire-alarm situation, students must leave immediately. If you have a room with multiple doors, have proctors lead groups out and congregate where they can be kept under watch.

The course of action to be taken at this point depends critically on several factors, and the decision as to whether the exam should start, restart, or be terminated is to be left in the hands of the chief proctor.

If you are alone with a small group of candidates, and perhaps isolated from other sections of the exam in a different building, you should attempt to contact the chief proctor (by cell phone) to seek direction. In the event that the exam *may* be able to continue after the disruption, the candidates should be kept under watch at all times.

Q. During the exam, the power goes out. There are many other sections of the exam going on in other buildings, but we may have to abandon our room. How long should I wait?

A. As long as practical, but within some reasonable limit. You should inform the chief proctor of the situation as soon as you can and seek direction. There will be emergency lights, so you should not be in the total darkness. Keep a keen watch on the room. If the power comes back on within a few minutes, resume the exam and add this time to the end (be generous in this regard—such events are very disruptive for the candidates, and they may need a few extra minutes to refocus their thoughts). If there is no sign of power after a few minutes, call campus police to see if they are aware of the situation and can give you an estimate of the duration of the disruption. Stay in touch with the other sections and the chief proctor if you can. At some point, you may have to abandon the exam, which should only be done if it really looks like the power will not be back for a long time. If the delay lasts longer than an hour, it is recommended that the exam be cancelled.

Tell the students that information regarding the situation will be sent to them as soon as possible.

Q. Confronted with the suspicion of cheating, a student starts making a scene. What should I do in response to this student? Can I give the other students extra time to finish their exam due to the distraction?

A. Try to calm the student down verbally. If the situation escalates, call campus police immediately. Do not touch the student. You may give other students a little more time to finish the exam, given the distraction.

Exam Emergencies

Q. My exam room is locked, and there are 300 students waiting to write. What do I do?

A. If you can find a building custodian, they will be able to get you in. Otherwise, it should be possible to reach an **exam staff member at x84866** from 30 minutes prior to the regularly scheduled exam start times, up to 30 minutes after, during the December and April exam periods. Alternatively, you could call the **Campus Police at x83300**, their extension for non-emergency calls—they will also have contact information.

Q. There is already a class in the room, and they say they have it booked. Can I kick them out?

A. The room is very unlikely to have been double-booked. Both you and the other chief proctor should check your information carefully. It would likely be very disruptive to try to move a class that is already writing, so a quick decision to relocate may need to be made. For exams in December and April, again call **x84866** to work out the best course of action.

Q. What do I do if a student passes out during an exam?

A. This could be nerves, but it could be a medical emergency. If the student regains consciousness *immediately* and is able to clearly articulate that he/she doesn't need medical attention, you might not need an ambulance, but should still call the Student Emergency Response Team (SERT).

SERT is dispatched by the Campus Police, so you should **call 911 from the classroom telephone** (i.e., *not* using your cell phone). Using the classroom phone will allow the Campus Police to pinpoint your exact location. By the time you have explained the situation to them, the level of response needed will probably be obvious; if not, err on the side of caution.