



Adding Remote Proctoring for Exam Administration: Key Questions for Accredited Programs to Make a Quick and Careful Decision

COVID-19 has changed the testing landscape resulting in the widespread closure of “brick and mortar” testing centers. In response, accrediting bodies for professional certification programs, including the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) and the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB), are providing avenues for accredited programs to use live remote proctoring (LRP) during this crisis.

NCCA and ANAB established specific conditions for approval of LRP. Accredited programs considering remote proctoring have a lot of information to digest to make quick and responsible decisions. Thorough discussions now, and sufficient documentation throughout the process, will safeguard the program’s accreditation status.

Consider these 10 LRP discussion areas when planning with vendors and internal staff. We encourage you to join the conversation, add your tips, and share lessons learned in the comments.

#1: Determine cost & timeline

Discuss the associated cost and timeline for launching remote proctoring to candidates. Timelines vary depending on your existing relationship with the vendor and the time needed to import and set up the item bank or exam forms. Programs are acting quickly and demand of vendors is high.

#2: Discuss and establish rules for exam administration via remote proctoring.

Accrediting bodies require standardized exam administration across all delivery methods, including LRP. A candidate should not be advantaged or disadvantaged based on the delivery method used. Discuss the rules below, as well as others factors specific to your program.

- What security features are in place to protect confidential information and to prevent and detect cheating? Security features include, but are not limited to, browser lockdown, encrypted transfer, use of AI or other methods to detect cheating, session recording, camera panning, candidate surveys, etc.
- How are proctors authorized to respond if issues or irregularities arise during testing?
- How do proctors check-in test takers and verify identification?
- How are recordings of test sessions used?
- How do proctors communicate with and actively monitor candidates?
- How are scores reported?
- How are candidate issues or technical problems handled? Who troubleshoots these issues?

#3: Understand how LRP is delivered.

Methods and resources vary across providers. Ask potential vendors about their specific platforms and capabilities. For example, we suggest asking about proctor to test taker ratios and where proctors are located. It is also prudent to discuss availability of proctors and back-up plans if the network of proctors is unavailable as this crisis continues or expands.

Understanding what candidates will experience is essential, including what technical support is available to test takers, what technical requirements candidates need to meet, and whether or not your target audience can likely meet these requirements. For example, could corporate firewalls and security features be problematic if your candidates are likely to use an employer provided computer?

#4: Discuss and establish proctor requirements.

Proctors must be trained and impartial. Discuss who can serve as a proctor, how the vendor trains proctors, how proctors are supervised, what quality assurance methods are in place, and how conflict of interest is managed.

#5: Discuss protocols for protecting confidential information.

The requirement for secure exam administration and the protection of confidential information cannot be understated. Security has been a barrier to the acceptance of LRP to date. Confidential candidate information and exam content must be protected by robust security protocols. Policies and procedures must be documented and available for review by the accrediting bodies.

#6: Discuss documentation needs for accredited programs.

Documentation is key to accreditation compliance. Ensure the selected vendor can provide required documentation including, but not limited to:

- Proctor manual(s) (outlining how exams are monitored, security requirements, handling irregularities, handling technical difficulties, verifying candidate ID, etc.);
- Proctor training materials and evidence of training;
- Security policies and procedures for the transfer and storage of confidential information; and
- Confidentiality and conflict of interest agreements

#7: Discuss the need for psychometric analysis and ensure sufficient data is available in the required timeframe.

Determine who is responsible for analyzing the performance of exam forms, conducting item and test analysis, and providing summary reports of technical analysis for the accrediting body. Technical reports should demonstrate comparable results across different modes of testing.

#8: Communicate effectively and consistently with candidates.

The addition of remote proctoring does not just include partnering with a trusted vendor. Organizational staff have responsibilities to ensure candidate needs and accreditation requirements are met. Update internal exam administration policies and ensure information is presented accurately in candidate materials (e.g. handbook, website, etc.). Policies that need to be addressed include, but may not be limited to: vendor monitoring (of proctors, sites, delivery), ADA accommodations, record retention (for proctor monitoring, candidate confidentiality agreement), security, exam administration (includes irregularities, process to escalate/handle issues for both the organization and vendor), and score reporting.

#9: Discuss how the organization will monitor the vendor.

Implement and document a system to monitor the remote proctoring vendor. This could include reviewing technical analysis, reviewing candidate feedback, watching recorded test sessions, conducting candidate surveys, and reviewing incident reports (including the resolution of any incidents). Prior to signing on with a vendor, make sure data is available to support monitoring.

#10: Consult your psychometrician.

If you are considering a new vendor, or if you use different vendors for exam development and delivery, be sure to include your psychometric consultant in discussions specifically related to new form development and technical analysis. Your psychometrician can help inform decisions related to retesting policies, score reporting practices, the need for additional exam items and/or exam forms, and more.
