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To our McMaster student community,

The McMaster community values integrity in everything we do. It is core to our research and academic missions. Academic integrity in our learning spaces is the responsibility of everyone on campus, including instructors and learners.

Our new learning environment involves a range of new technologies and practices: pre-recorded modules, synchronous lectures using Teams or Zoom, virtual office hours and tutorials, and break out rooms in various online forums. I appreciate that this has been a difficult transition for instructors and students, teaching and learning from your homes in ways that blur the boundary between work and home life. I thank everyone for your empathy, compassion, and patience as faculty, instructional staff, and students work hard to navigate this transition. I am grateful to our students for your engagement and enthusiasm as you pursue your studies here at McMaster in these challenging times. I would also ask you to join me in recognizing the creativity, dedication, and efforts of our faculty and instructional staff as they forge new ways of learning.

Testing and evaluation are a part of the learning process, especially for a range of professional programmes requiring accreditation. More generally, testing is one of the ways that you show us what, and how, you have learned. Invigilation of testing is in alignment with our practices and policies. It is one way of ensuring the integrity of your academic work, the integrity of your peers, and the integrity of your McMaster degree. Prior to this year, in-person tests and exams were supported by invigilators in physical testing spaces. In the remote learning environment, you may have seen evaluation methods shift and you are having to adapt to new types of testing and assessment. In other courses, testing looks familiar, but invigilation is facilitated by software that uses cameras. Like the remote classrooms, this brings new intrusive technologies into your home. I and your instructors understand that this is novel, may feel disconcerting, and may even be concerning.

McMaster went through an extensive review process to identify an online proctoring tool that is best aligned with our community principles and needs. The review included a pilot of tools in the spring and summer terms and explored accessibility, security, and technical requirements. There was also an additional privacy impact assessment (PIA). The Respondus online proctoring tool was selected and is integrated into Avenue to Learn. It may be used in a few of your courses this year. A summary of the primary aspects of Respondus and McMaster's use of Respondus are detailed in the [Respondus FAQ sheet](#). The project team also assessed Examity, which McMaster Continuing Education had been using in many of its courses prior to 2020 and still employs as a proctoring tool. The results of the [online proctoring pilot report](#) and the [privacy impact assessment](#) are available at the associated links.

As part of the review process, the interoperability of Respondus with standard, up-to-date operating systems (Windows and Mac OS) was undertaken and there were no issues that arose. We are committed to providing technology support to help you use Respondus and also to prepare your

computer for use. You can find out more information on the [Student Success Centre's online learning page](#). Should you experience any technical difficulties while using Respondus, you can connect with their technical support by emailing support@respondus.com. If you have concerns about your computer after using Respondus, you may reach out to our UTS Service Desk ([UTS HelpDesk](#)) for technical guidance.

This is not the end of our decision-making process, only the first phase. Assessment and invigilation in the remote environment are processes that our community will continue to review. An assessment committee is being assembled. Students will be part of this review process and I have reached out to your McMaster Student Union for representation. We will continue to review the use and impact of the Respondus tool each term and we will improve our practices. These ongoing reviews will keep an eye to issues of security, privacy, accessibility and equity including changes to privacy and information security protocols. We will weigh the benefits of providing our community with tools to support academic integrity and balance these with the concerns of all members of the community. McMaster is also committed to exploring different forms of assessment and evaluation that are not centred on invigilation and this is an important element of our Teaching and Learning Strategic Planning process.

Teaching and learning are founded on a partnership between the teachers and the learners and we will move forward together based upon the needs and concerns of our shared community.

There are many resources available to address your questions and concerns, whether they are about privacy, academic integrity, technology, or your student experience. These resources are available at the following links:

- [Respondus and privacy FAQ sheets](#)
- [Academic integrity policies](#)
- [Privacy Impact Assessment Report – Respondus – Online Proctoring](#)
- The Online proctoring pilot report is available at [VP Academic Contingency Planning](#).
- Technology information is available at the [Student Success Centre's online learning page](#).
- Technology supports can be found through the [UTS HelpDesk](#) or [Respondus Technical support](#)
- If you are experiencing test anxiety, McMaster also offers supports through the [Student Wellness Centre](#).

I wish you all the best as you continue through the Fall 2020 term.

Sincerely,
Kim Dej
Acting Vice Provost, Faculty