Policy and Procedures to Support the Academic Integrity of Online Courses

Introduction

As expressed in the Institutional Catalog, Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico seeks to foster a spirit of honesty and integrity. Any work submitted by a student must represent an original work produced by that student. Consequently, to maintain the academic integrity in distance learning courses, the University has developed the following policy and procedure to verify and ascertain the identity of a student enrolled in an online or hybrid modality course, as well as monitoring performance of students who take remote exams, as required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

Policy

PUPR includes Respondus Monitor and the Respondus Lockdown Browser within its learning management system; both tools allow for the verification of remote students’ identity and remote monitoring of evaluations. Furthermore, the University incorporates Safe-Assign, a tool to determine the originality of written works submitted by students and compares said assignments against existing works (in databases) to identify and attribute authorship of submitted academic works.

From August 2019 onwards, all remote course instructors are required to include at least one (1) evaluation through Blackboard to maintain the academic integrity in online courses. The instructor must notify students of all scheduled Respondus Monitor evaluations within the information provided at the beginning of the course. The instructor will confirm the student's identity and monitor the learner's performance during the evaluation using the Respondus Monitor and Respondus Lockdown Browser tools. Likewise, as of August 2019, it will be a requirement for distance learning course instructors to use Safe-Assign to verify the originality of written works submitted by students, such as essays, research papers, and other similar assignments.

The student enrolled in an online course is responsible for ensuring that the computer to be used during the remote evaluation has a webcam and a microphone, and a reliable broadband internet
connection with adequate internet speed. The minimum required equipment specifications, and internet speed can be verified through the links below:

**LockDown Browser System Requirements**

https://www.respondus.com/products/lockdown-browser/requirements.shtml

**Respondus Monitor Requirements**

https://www.respondus.com/products/monitor/requirements.shtml

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**Procedure for Verification of Student Identity and Remote Monitoring of Evaluations**

**Before the exam**

1. Just before the remote evaluation takes place, the verification of the student's identity will be determined by webcam photographs. During the session, the system will ask the student to take a self-portrait photography and then a picture of the official photo identification (ID) that must be validated by the instructor.

2. The student will record a video of the area in which the exam is taking place, including the top and bottom of the piece of furniture where the computer is located, as well as the surroundings of the room or office in which the student is taking the evaluation. If the student does not make an appropriate recording of testing surroundings, the evaluation of the student could be invalidated by the instructor.

**During the exam**

1. Through a Lockdown Browser application, access to websites is disabled, as well as other applications that the course instructor does not authorize the student to access while taking the evaluation. The copying and printing options from the computer in which the student is taking the evaluation are also disabled.

2. Using the webcam, the Respondus Monitor application records a video and audio session while the student is taking the evaluation. The course instructor is the only one with access to the video recordings.

**At the end of the remote evaluation**

The course instructor will receive a report of anomalies or unauthorized behaviors (such as the video showing that someone has entered the area of the evaluation, or that the student has been absent from the evaluation area) that have been detected while the student took the evaluation.
Disciplinary Measures

Any student who has been identified in violation of academic standards during a remote evaluation will be subject to the corresponding institutional regulation. Acts of dishonesty, fraud, and plagiarism, and other inappropriate behaviors associated with academic works are considered major infractions sanctioned by the Students Regulation Manual. Major infractions, as stipulated in the Student Regulations, may lead to the suspension or expulsion of offenders.

Validity

This policy shall enter into force in August 2019.

Approval

[Signature]
Dr. Miguel A. Riestra
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Date

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