UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE

DATE: 7 March 2023

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO SGA RESOLUTION TO DISCOURAGE THE USE OF
                 RESPONDUS LOCKDOWN BROWSER AND OTHER PROCTORING
                 PROGRAMS REQUIRING THE USE OF AUDIO/VISUAL
                 RECORDING

SUBMITTED BY: Faculty Information and Technology Services Advisory Committee
                 (FITSAC)

SUBMITTED TO: Dr. Susan Harden, President, Faculty Council

Dear SGA constituents,

Thanks for drawing our attention to some student concerns regarding the use of Respondus for
remote proctoring. FITSAC has discussed the student concerns and listed some clarifications in
our response.

Online proctoring has been at UNC Charlotte and elsewhere prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.
One-IT was working on a project from late 2018 to identify an enterprise proctoring solution that
would allow faculty and students some options for proctoring flexibility. Currently, remote
proctoring is mostly used by Distance Education programs. Also, faculty who teach fully online
courses or large-enrollment classes rely on tools such as Respondus for proctoring remote exams.
It needs to be noted that Respondus was carefully selected by OneIT among the available options
for proctoring software. It ensures compliance with our academic integrity policy for online
courses and distance education programs at UNC Charlotte. As such, it is the only
university-supported proctoring tool available.

Although faculty have expressed some concerns with student usage of Respondus Monitor in
their personal spaces, Respondus (as a contracted, enterprise IT system) has been thoroughly
vetted for security, safety, and data protection by the university. In fact, FITSAC and One-IT
have discussed proctoring and related issues on several occasions in 2022, and considered
possible alternatives (e.g., Proctorio, etc.). Overall, there has been a consensus that all remote
proctoring tools have similar interfaces that require the use of a microphone and a webcam. The
Office of Legal Affairs encourages faculty to allow students to seek other options if students are
not comfortable with being recorded or monitored through a webcam during an assessment. (see
https://legal.charlotte.edu/legal-topics/classroom-policies-and-practices/suggested-syllabus-polici
es-notices) Certainly, whenever feasible, faculty have been encouraging students to take exams
on university-owned laptops and students have the option to borrow a laptop from the Library.
This service is available for 7 days at a time with up to two renewals, for a total loan period of 21
days and the student may take the exam elsewhere. (see

https://library.charlotte.edu/check-out-request/borrow-laptops/laptop-policies) Alternatively, students may request academic accommodations and use the testing center at the Office of Disability Services for proctoring (see https://legal.charlotte.edu/legal-topics/classroom-policies-and-practices/suggested-syllabus-policies-notices).

It is important to note that Respondus cannot access a computer´s sensitive files. It accesses the webcam and microphone of the computer only while the exam/assessment is in progress. UNC Charlotte and its faculty do not have access to a student's webcam at any time outside of the assessment time period, and Respondus Monitor cannot track eye movements. It can only track whether a face is visible in the camera´s view or not. If the face is not fully visible or if there is poor lighting in the assessment setting, to name a few constraints, it may raise a "flag." This flag does not automatically trigger an academic integrity violation. Faculty members do not rely on the flags and alerts and typically watch the video to determine if the flag is genuine or not. Respondus operates in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and does not share any data it obtains with other parties. Respondus will also fully destroy any data it has collected at the request of UNC Charlotte. Faculty have been receiving training on Respondus and a significant majority of courses do not use Respondus or online proctoring.

To conclude, FITSAC wants to reiterate that we share some of the student concerns regarding Respondus, but we have students taking fully online or distance education courses who appreciate proctoring flexibility. We also want to take this opportunity to remind our students that faculty are increasingly concerned with academic integrity. There is consensus in the existing literature that proctoring is the only effective method in deterring academic integrity violations in an online or distance environment. To our knowledge, there are no alternative options at this stage for online or remote proctoring that do not resort to the use of audio and/or video recording. FITSAC certainly welcomes new ideas on remote proctoring tools that may serve our online students better while contributing to our continued efforts to maintain academic integrity at UNC Charlotte.

Sincerely,

Faculty Information and Technology Services Advisory Committee (FITSAC)
[Dr. Daniel Alston, Dr. Sarah Birdsong, Dr. Shen-En Chen, Tyler Cline, Dr. Dong Dai, Dr. Tiffany Gallicano, Dr. Teresa Gaston, Dr. Donald Jacobs, Dr. Jeff Murphy, Dr. SungJune Park, Dr. Monica Rodriguez (Chair)].