

How to Invigilate (Proctor) a Test

Note carefully and follow the instructions of your course supervisor regarding the pick-up of test papers, and try to report early, so that your supervisor won't start worrying about a last minute absence, and what to do about it (there is enough stress on test day!).

Know where the test location is beforehand. You may be asked to post it in tutorial, and should be able to give directions to your students.

Make sure you bring a copy of the **room reservation slip** (unless the instructor will be there with you and he or she will have it instead). It should have the phone number for the U of T police, who can open up the room, if it is locked. And on rare occasion, there can be confusion about reservations, so if someone else is claiming the room, and refuses to leave after seeing the reservation, phone the course supervisor for advice right away.

Arrive at the test location at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start (or earlier if directed by your course supervisor), so that you can assist students, and get things organized and started on time. Help students get seated properly. In many rooms, this means ensuring that they sit with one seat between any two students. You might specify that they should sit only in the first, third, fifth, etc. (vertical) rows. If possible, make it difficult for a student to copy from someone directly in front as well. It is extremely important to do everything possible to minimize the opportunities for cheating. Distribute the papers face down, before the start time, announcing that they should not touch the papers yet.

Check that the room conditions are the best possible, e.g. opening windows, checking lighting, telling the music band down the hall to quiet down, etc. Report any bad conditions to the course supervisor afterwards.

Post the starting and ending time on the board, and thereafter, post the current time every 15 minutes. Announce to the class the time when there are 15 minutes left, in a one hour test, and announce the midpoint as well in a 2 hour test.

Announce that students should display their student I.D. cards at the corners of their desks, and that no cell phones or other unauthorized aids should be in their possession. Students' books and bags generally are to be placed somewhere out of reach- at the front or the back of the test room or completely underneath their chairs. All students' cell phones and alarms should be turned off. Tell the students to begin when appropriate. Whether or not you start exactly on time, it is important to give exactly the specified amount of time. If you give more (or less), surely other students in other tutorials will hear of this, and complain to the course supervisor about their disadvantage.

Circulate during the test, looking for disallowed aids, and other possible problems. Confiscate disallowed aids with the test paper, but give the student another test paper to finish the rest of the test. If you suspect the possibility of some copying going on, immediately move one of the students. Do not explain why. You are in charge, so just do it. Proving cheating, and pursuing this through the academic channels is extremely difficult. PREVENTION IS WHAT WE HAVE TO FOCUS ON.

Keep all your conversations with other TA's and students as quiet as possible. Don't stand behind a student and read or appear to read his/her paper. This makes a student nervous.

Be very alert for students holding up their hands to get your attention (so don't sit around with your head buried in a book, computer or your phone). You must be actively watching and moving around the room for the entire test. If students ask for help on a question, remember that you cannot help them to solve a problem (e.g. do not give hints). You can assist with interpreting of some words or phrases, and occasionally in the interpretation of a question, if you are convinced there is some genuine ambiguity. However, this is a gray area. You do not want to assist students in interpreting things they should be familiar with. You can tell the students that if they are not sure of the interpretation of something, they should make a clear note on the paper indicating their particular interpretation. You should check with your course supervisor in advance to find out what,

if any, clarification of wording you are permitted to give students during an exam. Sometimes there is a strict “no questions answered” policy because students are expected to understand the question as written. Sometimes if invigilators help students interpret a question during the test and they get the answer wrong, they may argue that they were misled by an invigilator’s answer to their question. You need to be very careful what you answer. If you think there is legitimately an issue with a question, do not discuss with the student, but bring it to the attention of the course supervisor or chief invigilator immediately.

Assist late arrivers to get seated quickly. You cannot give them extra time, but you can make a note of the time of arrival (especially if they arrive quite late) and forward to your supervisor.

Midway through, go around signing in students on a sign-in list, checking out carefully the I.D. for those you do not recognize. Impersonations have been known to occur. Count the signatures, and do a head count. These numbers should match, and correspond to the number of test scripts you should collect .

When there are 2 minutes left, announce that 2 minutes remain and that students should finish up what they are doing, and that now everyone should stay seated until **all** papers have been collected and an announcement has been made that they may leave. When time expires, announce that everyone should stop writing. Go around collecting papers in some logical fashion (e.g. back of room to front). Do **not** ask them to pass their papers down the row. If people start to get up, repeat loudly that everyone must stay seated. Do not tolerate those who ask for another minute to finish something. Anything like this should be reported to your course supervisor or chief invigilator as soon as possible.

It is important to execute things well at the end, as students have been known to not hand in their papers, later claiming that they in fact did. When you have all the papers, count them. If they do not match your earlier count, immediately check around the room, and report the

discrepancy to your supervisor as soon as possible, indicating whose paper is missing.

Obtain the phone number of your supervisor, if he or she will not be there as well, so that you can call during the test if necessary. Find out where the closest phone is located at the test site. If you think you have found an error in the test, call it in right away.