UMass Law
Fall 2020

ExamSoft FAQs

What is ExamSoft?

ExamSoft provides a variety of exam administration and exam security solutions. UMass Law has used ExamSoft for years to allow students to submit answers to their in-person essay exam questions through Examplify, ExamSoft's testing platform. Students download Examplify onto their computers many weeks in advance of their exams and download their actual exams in encrypted form to their computers a week or two in advance. At each scheduled exam time, students select the exam, enter the passcode provided by the proctor, and take the exam in Examplify. After the exam, their answers are uploaded securely and distributed to the professor for assessment.

For Fall 2020, UMass Law added additional ExamSoft tools to enable remote and secure exam administration. These are the same tools used in many states to administer the bar exam securely and remotely, although we require far less data sharing than do the state bar examiners. The new tools are ExamID, which takes an initial photo of you during your setup and then takes another photo to verify your identity before each exam, and ExamMonitor, which uses your computer's audio and video feed to remotely proctor your exam.

Is every professor required to use ExamSoft?

No, professors can decide what kind of assessments they will administer in their courses. In any given year, some professors give timed, proctored exams (either closed-book or open-book), while others give take-home exams that students complete on their own, with no proctoring. Professors still have that choice. ExamSoft's remote exam administration and proctoring tools simply replace the in-person proctoring environment for professors who wish to give a timed, proctored exam.

What are the minimum system requirements for Windows and Mac devices?

Examplify can be used on most modern computers purchased within the last few years. Currently, only Mac computers and Windows PCs are supported. Examplify will not run on Chrome, Android, or Linux operating systems. For remote exams with ExamID and ExamMonitor, exam takers must have a webcam and microphone that don't require virtual software to operate. For more information, see:
- Windows: https://examsoft.force.com/emcommunity/s/article/Examplify-MinimumSystem-Requirements-for-Windows
- Mac OS: https://examsoft.force.com/emcommunity/s/article/Examplify-MinimumSystem-Requirements-for-Mac-OS-X

Can I use my iPad to take my exams on ExamSoft?

No, you cannot complete your exams on an iPad.

How can I get technical support with my ExamSoft installation?

UMass Dartmouth CITS has already distributed installation instructions. If you experience any installation issues, please call the law school's technicians at 508-985-1186, and leave a message if you don't reach someone directly. They will call you as soon as they are available. You can also contact ExamSoft support 24/7 at (866) 429-8889, but we prefer that you contact us first.

Do I need an internet connection during the exam?

On the day of the exam, you will need internet access for a short time at the start of the exam session to obtain the exam password to complete your identity verification. Once that is complete, Examplify will secure your device and block access to the internet. After your exam, internet access is restored and the upload of your answers and the exam proctoring files will begin. If your computer cannot access the internet when your exam ends, your answers remain on your computer in encrypted form until your computer is next able to access the internet, when the upload will begin.

One I have my password, do I need to wait until the schedule start time to begin my exam?

No, once you receive your password, you're authorized to begin, at which point the ExamSoft timer will start counting down.

How do I know when my exam files have uploaded after the exam?

Your Examplify dashboard lists the status of all available exams. If you have completed an exam but your files have not yet uploaded, the exam will show as "Pending Upload." If your answer and proctoring files have uploaded, the exam will show as "Completed."

What should I do if my computer freezes or crashes during the exam?

Technical issues during the exam are rare, but if your device freezes or you have a technical issue during an exam session, you should immediately take the following steps:
1. Do NOT attempt to exit from or submit the exam as you will be unable to re-enter.
2. Reboot your device by pressing and holding the power button until your device turns completely off.
3. Wait five seconds, then restart the device by pushing the power button again.
4. When Examplify restarts, it will return you to where you left off with your answer, and the timer will restart at the point where you restarted your computer. If this does not restart the exam session, you should immediately contact UMass Law's technical support line, 508-985-1186.

Do I have to share information like my social security number or a picture of my government-issued ID with ExamSoft?

Absolutely not. The only information shared with ExamSoft is the same information that has been shared during our years of using ExamSoft for in-person exams, such as your student name and UMassD email, as well as the four-digit Blind ID number that you enter yourself at the start of each exam. (Remember, you have a different Blind ID number for each of your classes.) There have been recent media reports involving students sharing other types of information in connection with remotely proctored bar examinations, but we do not require that degree of ID verification.

How does the remote proctoring work?

After your exam is uploaded, the proctoring video and audio file will be scanned by ExamSoft's artificial intelligence tools to flag activity that might be associated with academic misconduct such as the presence of an electronic device (such as a smartphone), headphones or ear buds, as well as other potential triggers such as consistently looking off screen, other voices in the room, and other people in the room. The files are then reviewed by a human proctor to rule out any obviously false positives. Any remaining incidents are collected in a report sent to the law school for review by Associate Dean Spencer.

Do I have to complete a "room scan" to display the whole room in which I'm taking the exam?

No, ExamSoft does not require a room scan. The only video that will be saved in the proctoring file will be the same type of webcam video shared when you participate in a Zoom class. Please feel free to orient your workspace so that all that's visible behind you is a blank wall.

If my exam is closed book, that means I can't have any papers on my desk, so how can I use my exam password and my Blind ID to start my exam?

You enter the password and your Blind ID before you actually start the exam itself. You should bring those on a piece of paper and then put the paper away before you begin the exam. *We also urge everyone to print out the exam instructions that were emailed to you before the exam and have them quickly accessible in a nearby drawer or folder in case of a technical problem. Those instructions have the law school's technical support number on them (508-985-1186).*

Will I be allowed to bring scratch paper to my exam?

Only if the exam is open book. For closed book exams, Examplify has a "notes" feature that allows you to make notes on screen in a separate window displayed alongside the exam. Please be sure to follow the instructions that each of your professors gives you about what materials, if any, are permitted in the exam.

When I take exams on paper I like to mark up the multiple choice and essay questions. Can I do that in Examplify?

Absolutely. Exam takers can use a variety of different highlighter colors to mark up every exam question on screen, both multiple choice and essay.

I need quiet while I'm taking an exam, but there may be background noise in my work area that I find distracting. Can I wear ear plugs during the exam?

Absolutely, you may wear ear plugs during your remotely proctored exams, just as you may during our in-person exams. The remote exam rules in Student Handbook Appendix C instruct you to "hold the ear plugs in front of the camera before inserting them to document the fact that they are ear plugs, not headphones." Please do so just after you start the exam, so that ExamMonitor will document that they are ear plugs rather than earbuds or headphones.

If I can wear ear plugs, can I also wear headphones or air pods to play white noise?

No, headphones and air pods are not permitted during any proctored exams, whether remote or in-person.

My exam is open book, but I only bought a digital casebook. Can I use my computer to access the casebook during the exam? If not, can I bring another laptop or tablet?

No, the only electronic device allowed during an exam is the computer on which you've installed Examplify and are taking the exam. You may not bring any other electronic device, even for an open book exam. For an open book exam, you may print any resources you'd like to have available (so long as they are permitted by your professor) and have them with you during the exam.

I like to use a second monitor when using my laptop at home. Will that be permitted?

No, Examplify will only display the exam on your laptop's primary monitor, and the second monitor must be deactivated. If you're concerned about the size of the exam text on your laptop, Examplify lets you enlarge (or reduce) the font size during the exam.

My final exam will be hours long. Not to be indelicate, but I may need to take a restroom break. Is that allowed?

Yes, the remote exam rules in Student Handbook Appendix C expressly allow for restroom breaks. Please review those rules carefully. In the interest of exam security, restroom breaks will trigger additional review of the timing and patterns of answers across all exam takers. Please understand that taking a restroom break does not extend your exam time, and you should not attempt to close your exam when you leave. Just leave your computer exactly as is, and resume your exam when you return.

Will my professor watch me taking my exam?

Absolutely not. We have set up our account so that the professors administering the exams cannot access the proctoring files. This preserves test-taker anonymity and alleviates potential student anxiety about having their professor see the webcam feed of them taking their exam. The only faculty member authorized to review the proctoring files is Associate Dean Spencer. He will review the flagged portions of the proctoring files to ensure that there is no evidence of misconduct. In the unlikely event of potential academic misconduct during an exam, the matter will be referred to the university's student affairs office. This is the only point at which a professor could learn about potential academic misconduct during the exam and be shown the relevant portion of the video, but even then the professor will not be notified until the professor has already graded the exam in question, to ensure student anonymity.

So you're saying that Associate Dean Spencer has to review EVERY exam flag? Isn't that an awful lot of boring, tedious work?

Yes. Yes it is.

Does that seem fair to him?

No. However, it was his bright idea to talk about an interest in privacy and surveillance law when he interviewed for his first law teaching job twenty years ago. So in a sense he brought this upon himself.

Ok, enough about Associate Dean Spencer. What might trigger a "flag" in the ExamSoft artificial intelligence?

Here are a few of the most common possibilities. In a closed-book exam, if the exam taker is frequently looking away from the screen, the AI will "flag" that activity because it could be consistent with someone looking at resources other than the on-screen exam. Looking away from the screen should not cause a flag in an open-book exam, since exam takers are expected to review the resources they are allowed to bring to the exam. In any exam (closed-book or open-book), the sound of voices in the room will certainly trigger a flag, since that raises the possibility that the exam taker is not alone. Similarly, in any exam, the presence of any electronic device (such as a smartphone, iPad or other tablet, or a second computer or monitor) will trigger a flag, since those would all allow the exam taker to communicate with others about the exam or to take photographs of the exam questions.

Will I be interrupted during the exam if the artificial intelligence "flags" something?

No, you will be undisturbed during the exam. The artificial intelligence does not scan your proctoring file until your exam is complete and uploaded.

If the artificial intelligence "flags" something after the exam, does that affect my grade?

Absolutely not. All that the "flag" does is trigger an initial quality check by a human proctor. That proctor, engaged by ExamSoft, will review the relevant portion of the proctoring file to try to rule out any possible wrongdoing. For example, if the AI misidentifies a large bracelet as a possible mobile phone, the human proctor will review that portion of the video and clear the flag. If there are any "flags" that the human proctor cannot clear, those will be forwarded to the law school so that Associate Dean Spencer can review to rule out any misconduct, as described above.

How will I know if there's alleged evidence of "misconduct" in my proctoring file? Will I have the chance to appeal?

In the extremely unlikely event that there's evidence of misconduct during an exam, our process is the same as for misconduct during an in-person exam. The matter will be referred to the university's Office of Student Conduct and Dispute Resolution which follows its standard procedures, all of which afford the student an opportunity to be heard. You can find information about these procedures at https://www.umassd.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/academic-regulations-and-procedures/ and https://www.umassd.edu/studentaffairs/departments/community-standards/.

There's a lot of background noise near my workspace. Will that "flag" my exam?

Background noise should only flag an exam if it involves voices. The AI is not trained to demand absolute silence; it is trained to flag patterns consistent with human speech. However, if any background noise does trigger a flag, it should be cleared quickly by the human proctor, or failing that, by Associate Dean Spencer.

During my exam, it's possible that a minor child may come in the room. If I step away to talk to and attend to or care for my child, will that "flag" my exam?

ExamSoft will flag that portion of the exam, but the human proctor who reviews the flag will almost certainly clear it right away. And if it remains flagged for Associate Dean Spencer to review, he knows that the remote exam rules in Student Handbook Appendix C make clear that caring for a minor child during an exam is NOT an exam rules violation. (Even without that rule, Associate Dean Spencer would have reached the same result.)

What if my pet walks on screen during the exam?

ExamSoft's AI should be able to distinguish pets from people, but it's at least theoretically possible that ExamSoft's AI could interpret movement in the room as signaling another person in the room. In that case, ExamSoft's human proctor should quickly clear any pet-related flag. Should such a flag reach Associate Dean Spencer, he will welcome the brief moment of levity in an otherwise boring day of clearing ExamSoft flags.

I'm a "hunt and peck" typist who looks at the keyboard while I type. Will that trigger a flag?

It's unlikely, since looking at the keyboard would seem to be pretty common behavior during an exam, and glancing down at a keyboard is easily distinguished from reading prohibited outside materials. If it does, however, that should be easily cleared at the human proctor stage, or failing that, by Associate Dean Spencer.

Will proctors reviewing the monitoring videos have access to my personal information?

No, ExamSoft anonymizes the files before sending them to the proctors. You should ensure on exam day that no such information is visible in the background so that this information is not inadvertently available. Each proctor completes a rigorous background check for ExamSoft and participates in hours of training, certification, peer reviews and auditing. Additionally, they are trained by ExamSoft to be neutral and objective in feedback.

What is ExamSoft's policy regarding sharing and using my data?

ExamSoft's privacy policy is available at https://examsoft.com/privacy-policy. The information shared with ExamSoft is used only for the purpose of providing exam administration and proctoring services, is never sold, and is retained only as long as required to provide services, so long as the client's account is maintained. Exam proctoring files sent to ExamSoft's proctors is anonymized so that the applicant's identity is unknown to the proctor.

Does my data stay with ExamSoft forever?

Absolutely not. We ask ExamSoft to destroy the data at the conclusion of our semester grading cycle.

ExamSoft's privacy policy refers to iris scans, fingerprints, voice prints, and hand scans. What's up with that? Are those part of the law school's exam process?

Absolutely not. ExamSoft administers many different exams for many different audiences, some of whom require far more stringent security measures than we do. The privacy policy published on ExamSoft's website necessarily covers every possible type of exam security measure that any exam taker might encounter. The only measures involved in our exam proctoring process are the comparison of the picture of your face taken during the registration process against the picture of your face taken before each exam, as well as the AI review of the exam video and audio.

ExamSoft uses face recognition to verify my identity. Isn't there evidence that some uses of face recognition tools can disproportionately impact people of color?

You're absolutely right that some uses of face recognition tools can disproportionately impact people of color. This is an important social justice issue. But it's also important that any discussion of inequality in face recognition be guided by the research and focus on the specific application at issue. Anyone interested in learning more about demographic disparities in face recognition should read the National Institute of Standards and Technologies December 2019 study, *Face Recognition Vendor Test (FRVT) Part 3: Demographic Effects*, available at https://doi.org/10.6028/NIST.IR.8280.

Typical law enforcement uses of face recognition are known as "one to many" applications. For example, if the police have security camera footage of a burglar's face, they may use face recognition technology to match that image across a database tens or even hundreds of thousands of innocent people, such as a database of driver's license photos from a state department of motor vehicle database. In such searches, studies have found that face recognition technology is more prone to false positives when the subject is a person of color. In that context, false positives are obviously harmful to the innocent person misidentified as a suspect or criminal.

In contrast, "one to one" face recognition simply matches a baseline photo against a verification photo. If you use your face to unlock an iPhone, you're using "one to one" facial recognition. That's what ExamSoft does. At the start of each exam, ExamID compares an image of your face to the baseline image you took when you completed the mock exam earlier in the semester. The error rate is much lower because "one to one" matching is a far easier computational job than "one to many" matching. There is still a higher false positive rate for people of color in one to one matching, but in the exam proctoring context a false positive does not harm the exam taker. A false *negative* might harm the exam taker (by requiring multiple ID attempts before the exam taker can begin), but in "one to one" matching, false negative rates are higher for white people than for people of color.

Won't racial disparities in face recognition cause more "flags" for students of color?

No, because face recognition isn't part of the AI review process. Face recognition is only used at the ID verification step before the exam begins.