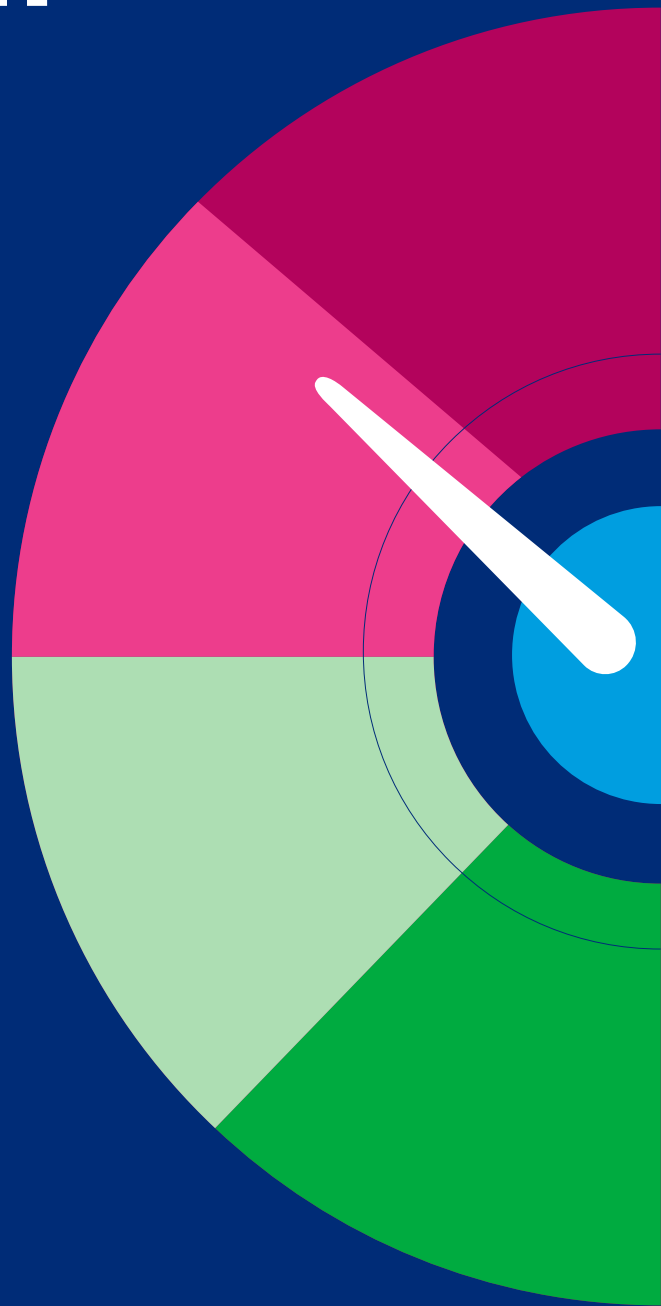


# Twelve ways to calm **student anxiety** before an online exam



The anxiety when doing something new many a time tends to get the better of us. **But, as Tom Peters would say it,**



**Unless you walk out into the unknown, the odds of making a profound difference in your life are pretty low.**

-Tom Peters



So, after consulting leading proctoring exam experts to understand their best practices, we have created a list of the best tips and creative tricks to help educators and test-takers benefit from shifting their exams online.

Let's evaluate what all must students consider before taking an online proctored exam. Aside from not indulging in unauthorized behavior, here is how students can ensure a seamless online exam session.



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- 01** Calm your nerves and understand the test guidelines
- 02** Familiarize yourself with the test's format
- 03** Choose a safe environment
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## Calm your nerves and understand the test guidelines

Understandably, placing oneself in a new environment can be overwhelming, but don't let it stress you. Slight anxiety or nervousness is common, but you cannot let it hamper your performance. Read all the guidelines stated before and during the test to ensure you don't miss out on anything. Be well prepared, confident and take the exam just as you would in an offline setting, without overthinking.

## Familiarize yourself with the test's format

The best way to ease yourself into the online examination system is by familiarizing yourself with its environment. This process begins by taking a full-length practice test before the actual exam. So, when you take a mock version, you acclimatize yourself with the computer, location and the process. Also, you're better placed to evaluate your performance. Simultaneously, you get acquainted with the exam format and how you would answer each question type. Several experts suggest taking regular, timed practice tests to simulate the actual exam environment, helping ease test-takers' anxiety.



## Choose a safe environment

Before you commence your online proctored exam, ensure that the space you choose to take your exam from is quiet, safe and well-lit. Your surroundings must be uncluttered, and you should be alone in the room. Ideally, inform your family members about your exam to ensure no disturbance if you choose to take the test from your home.

AI-powered proctoring tools are highly advanced at picking up even the slightest whispers. Therefore, ensure there is no noise or unwanted device anywhere around you. Else, they can be flagged as suspicious or create doubt in the proctor's mind.

## Test your system's functionality

One crucial tip before you start your online examination is to test your system. Check that your computer meets the system requirements and that the microphone, webcam and the internet are tested to avoid errors during the online exam.

Ensure you have all the information, from required writing material to a valid login id and password. Once all this is done, it is advisable not to change the computer or the laptop you've tested to avoid any last-minute hassle.

## Be aware of the do's and don'ts

Taking an exam offline or online is not vastly different. However, the process can vary for some students. Hence, if you're a first-time navigator, understand how the exam is structured, the due dates to sign-up for the exam and the submission requirements. Connect with fellow students and discuss how much time you would have to complete the test to ensure you are not rushed during the process.

Every exam is different; what is allowed in one might not be permitted in another, so ask for guidance and clarifications from your faculty for a seamless experience.

Now let's come to the educators. Apart from exhibiting compassion and being available for students, here is a list of what an educator must consider for ensuring a hassle-free online exam.

## Ease students into the system

The best way to ensure a comfortable exam-taking experience for students is by hosting a mock exam proctoring session. Acquainting them with the process, sharing support articles and videos can help them understand the nitty-gritty of online exams - for instance, how to take the test and what is expected of them.

Meanwhile, faculty can also comprehend the test-takers' mindset to cater to each exam requirement as required.

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## Ensuring fair experience to all

Whether starting, writing or submitting an exam, an educator must ensure that every test-taker gets a fair exam-taking experience. No matter how early students log in to their systems, the exam should start for all students simultaneously. Similarly, if students are accustomed to writing by hand than typing, they should have that advantage.

Lastly, suppose a student accidentally closes his/her exam window or can't access it. In that case, the exam for that particular student should commence precisely from where it got disconnected, with the remaining time.

## Provide unhindered and timely support

Technical glitches such as power cuts, computer malfunction and internet instability are common during online exams. But they should not cause concerns for any test-taker. Hence, educators should have a dynamic customer support team to ensure such issues are nipped in the bud.

Also, students should be apprised of such services. Knowing that their problems would be resolved promptly minimizes the glitch's impact and anxiety in taking an online exam.

## Maintain data privacy

It is critical to protect any exam's sensitive details. Hence, educationists should have well-defined protocols to safeguard exam questions, results, and students' data, such as personal information and academic records, from exploitation. Academia should also regulate access to such information to avoid any complications later.

## Set clear guidelines

Building mutually clear guidelines for online exam proctoring from the onset lends transparency to the entire session. Address queries like the exam's objective, how many questions to expect, the time in hand to complete the exam, the grading system, etc. Once students know what to do and what is expected of them, there are no last-minute surprises. If the rules are explicit, the exam-taking process is easier and more seamless, lowering the chances of any academic misconduct.

## Provide flexibility

Online exams are location-and-time-agnostic. Thus, not all students would take their test from one location or time zone, mandating flexibility on exam dates, time and submission deadlines.

Also, educators must avoid panic-stricken situations by enabling flexibility concerning technical issues, considering the probability of patchy internet.

Suppose a student gets logged out of a test due to poor internet connectivity or a power cut. In that case, educators must have a command to resume the test/ invigilation without any hassle.

## Host easy-to-understand exams

The anxiety in doing something new is always high! Therefore, don't worsen it by designing complicated exams. This doesn't mean one has to develop an easy exam paper but create easy-to-understand formats that students can answer without much assistance. Also, align them with your learning modules as much as possible to lower the inclination to cheat.

It is pretty common to struggle with exam anxiety. But, this hesitation should not get in the way of your education and exam preparedness. Trust us when we say that all these worries will disappear once you are ready and focused.

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