

University of New England responses to the inquiry into the future development of the NSW tertiary education sector :

Response to question on notice from Hearing (regarding online examinations and potential issues associated with these):

UNE is currently in a pilot phase with our online supervised examination project with ProctorU. UNE has scaled up its use of this online examination program in response to COVID-19 health restrictions but also offers alternative examination options to students on request. Requests for alternative assessments from students can be made for a variety of reasons including but not limited to personal privacy concerns, access to technology or facilities or other personal preference. The implementation of the ProctorU online assessment program at UNE is being monitored and will be reviewed based on both student experience and organisational value. UNE requires a tool which allows flexibility to meet the needs of students in terms of examination time and place, ensures academic integrity and where there is capacity for supervision of the quantum of examinations required to support student progression.

UNE's contract with ProctorU provides that ProctorU complies with Australian privacy laws. ProctorU also complies with General Data Protection Regulation standards and records disposal standards. To ensure academic integrity (e.g. that the person taking the examination is the UNE student enrolled in the program) personal information including facial recognition/photo identification, keyboard pattern (typing style and speed) is collected. UNE has agreed arrangement for data retention and assurance with ProctorU where data is kept by ProctorU for the minimum period required.

UNE's approach in the area of data privacy in our pilot phase has been one of openness and transparency - working closely with all stakeholder groups that includes our students, staff and ProctorU's senior management team. UNE's collection notice identifies for students that the information collected by ProctorU is for the purposes of the examination, including where information is be stored and provides information re use of cookies.

Now that UNE has rapidly and successfully upshifted the scale of our online supervised examinations in response to COVID-19 health directives, UNE is moving into a procurement planning phase. Feedback from students, options for data storage in Australia and review of options for control and management of personal information are a priority for UNE. This will be reflected in our future procurement process. As an institution, UNE is prepared to apply the maximum effort to ensure safe and robust assessment options are available for students, and that agreed process is in place that will provide all the benefits of flexibility and quality assurance that online supervised examinations can achieve.