National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) Guidance Document:

Breaks during Live Remote Proctored Examination Administrations

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NCCA Guidance: Breaks during Live Remote Proctored Examination Administrations

For the purposes of compliance with NCCA Standards related to security and exam administration, certification programs administering their assessments using Live Remote Proctoring (LRP) must have a mechanism in place to prevent candidates from being able to leave the testing area (i.e., for a scheduled or unscheduled break) and then upon return, go back to previously viewed test items. Programs must have policies and procedures to address scheduled and unscheduled breaks, including specific language precluding the potential for any candidate to revisit test content after leaving the view of the camera.

To operationalize this, examples of things programs have done include:

- assembling forms of tests that contain multiple sections, ensuring that the delivery platform will not permit candidates to return to a previous section;
- selecting a testing strategy that will prohibit candidates from returning to any items previously viewed items (e.g., Computer Adaptive Testing, forward-only testing); and
- developing and implementing policies for terminating testing if a candidate leaves the room and for addressing an incomplete exam.

References:

NCCA Standards (2014)
Standard 12, Essential Element B:
The certification program's policies and procedures must have provisions for secure methods for examination development and maintenance, including item security and examination security.

Standard 18, Essential Element B:
Examinations must be administered using standardized procedures that have been specified by the certification program to ensure comparable conditions for all candidates and promote the validity of scores. The program must document and follow standardized examination administration procedures, including verification of candidate identity, regardless of the examination delivery or proctoring method. The program must establish and document procedures stating what it expects of examination administration personnel and the procedures to follow to ensure adherence to these requirements.

NCCA Standards (2021)

Standard 18, Essential Element B:

To ensure comparable conditions for all candidates, the program must document and follow standardized examination administration procedures, including verification of candidate identity, regardless of the examination delivery or proctoring method. The program must document the responsibilities of examination administration personnel.

Standard 18, Commentary 2:

Each administration modality (e.g., test center or remote proctoring) should be conducive to testing. Programs should design their administration policies and procedures to maintain examination security and ensure examinees have a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities. If the modality does not allow for real-time termination of the administration, programs should demonstrate how they assure the security of examination content.

NCCA Program Considerations When Selecting Live Remote Proctoring (LRP) Document

As related to Standard 12 (2014 NCCA Standards)

A mechanism should be in place to prevent candidates from being able to leave the testing area (i.e., for a scheduled or unscheduled break) and then upon return, go back to previously viewed test items. This reduces potential benefits that could be derived from consulting materials or external sources of information.

A review of current security policies and procedures as they may be affected by LRP is needed. This should include a mechanism to identify which policies/procedures were revised. It might be necessary to include an "effective" date if the revisions are substantive. Routine statistical and psychometric analyses (data forensics) and regular web searches for compromised content should be conducted.

As related to Standards 6, 15, 16 (2014 NCCA Standards)

The length of the test and the way items are rendered on screen may impact test time. A policy regarding breaks, whether scheduled or unscheduled, should be established. Collusion or unauthorized access to information while a candidate is out of sight from a proctor can pose great risk to several facets of the examination process including validity of the resulting scores.

Review the candidate comments about the need for breaks and develop a policy that works well for the candidate population.