

## Addressing Respondus Questions

[The Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning](#) recommends the following guidance for faculty when navigating potential student concerns regarding the use of Respondus Lockdown Browser with Monitor.

For immediate support and assistance, please contact:

- Respondus Support: [Submit a Ticket form](#) | [Respondus Knowledgebase](#)
- Mason ITS Support: [Live Chat](#) | [support@gmu.edu](mailto:support@gmu.edu) | 703-993-8870

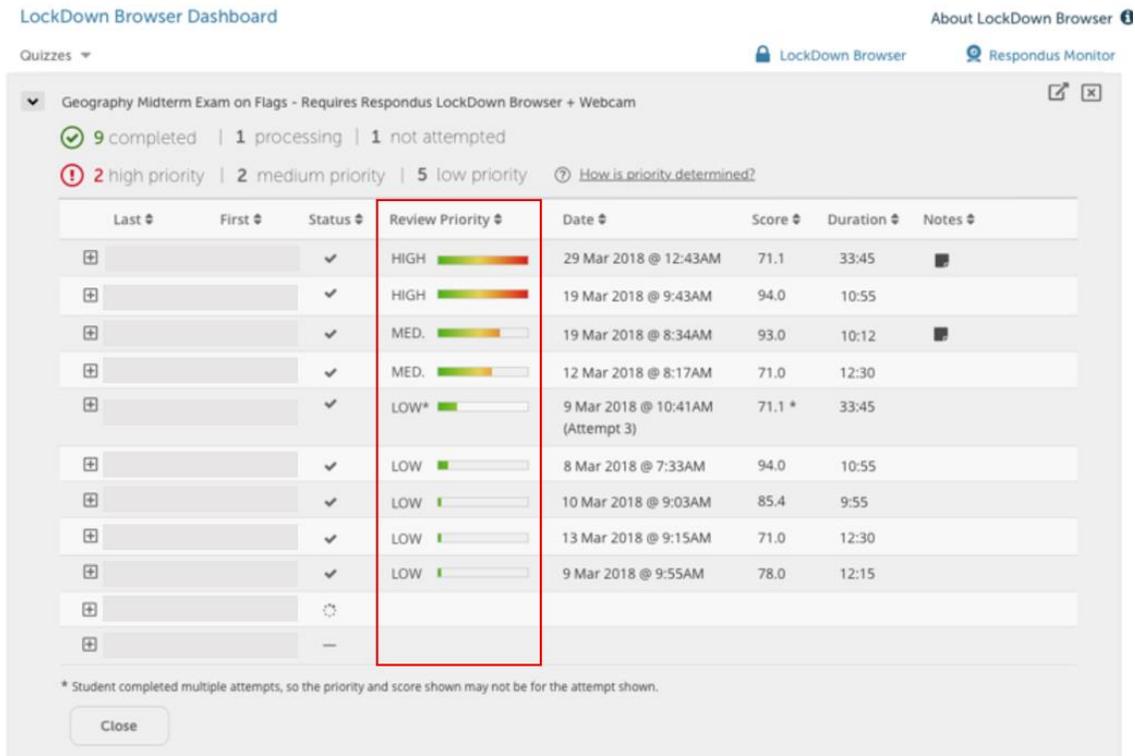
### Student's Home Environment

Respondus relies on a consistent testing environment throughout the duration of an exam. Under certain circumstances, students might not be able to practice perfect test-taking behaviors. Common questions faculty receive include *what if I have a pet, roommate, or family member enter the room by accident while taking an exam? Or, what if I have to go to the bathroom (or in some extreme cases) have to throw up?* Questions such as these reflect student anxiety about testing environments, and often wonder if their scores will be adversely impacted should something happen during an exam.

#### Response: Flagging vs. Failed Attempts

While Respondus will flag any deviations from a normal test environment, it does not automatically fail a student, nor do flags immediately have an impact on student scores. The flags simply provide faculty with additional context about the student's behavior during their exam period. Faculty can review the dashboard to make case-by-case decisions.

In the example below, the second HIGH flag would be a good video to review, as the student received a high score (94.0) within only a few minutes of the exam (10.55 min. total duration).



\*\*The above graphic is used for illustrative purposes only; actual dashboard may vary based on versioning.

Here is a web resource for [How Respondus Review Priority Value is Determined.](#)

## Privacy and Security

Respondus relies on video-based biometrics to proctor exams, which raises well-known (yet challenging) issues related to student privacy.

### Response: Clear Communication and Syllabi Statements

Both faculty and students are encouraged to review [Respondus Privacy Policy](#) to be well informed about the data the site collects. In order to keep students aware about faculty expectations and the use of Respondus Lockdown Browser with Monitor during exams, faculty are **highly** encouraged to include a [syllabus statement](#) and explicitly direct students to this statement at the beginning of the term.

Stearns Center created this statement and other helpful resources. Visit [Designing Your Syllabus](#) and expand the **NEW Fall 2020: Policies for New Course Structures and**

**Interactions** section to review the available statements. Faculty leveraging Respondus are especially encouraged to include both **Course Materials and Student Privacy** and **Testing with LockDown Browser** statements in their course syllabi.

- A syllabi statement should also include a “**Subject to Change**” statement so that any additional requirements can be added based on any needs that may arise during the term.
- Communication with the students regarding the use of a proctoring services should be clear to address and overcome any challenges or confusion early in the term – ideally before a student needs to take an exam.
- Faculty are encouraged to work 1:1 with the students as needed should a specific, individual request be made.
- Faculty may also consider **alternative assessment strategies** such as,
  - A series of shorter exams throughout the term,
  - A more evenly distributed weighted grade scale to reduce test anxiety,
  - Lowering the point-per-question of content-based multiple-choice questions to lower their overall impact of the total exam score
  - A combination of multiple choice and open-ended questions,
  - Or project/case-based assessments to avoid heavily relying on any one assessment practice

## Challenges with Facial Masks

Students may need to take exams in locations where facial masks are required (e.g., testing centers, libraries). Students who must take exams wearing facial masks during exams will (1) cause the Respondus facial detection Startup Sequence to fail and (2) during the exam the facial detection alerts will appear on the students’ screen repeatedly.

### Response: Facial Detection Options

Faculty are encouraged to review the **Respondus Facial Detection Options** to bypass startup sequence failure and repeating alerts on the student’s monitor.

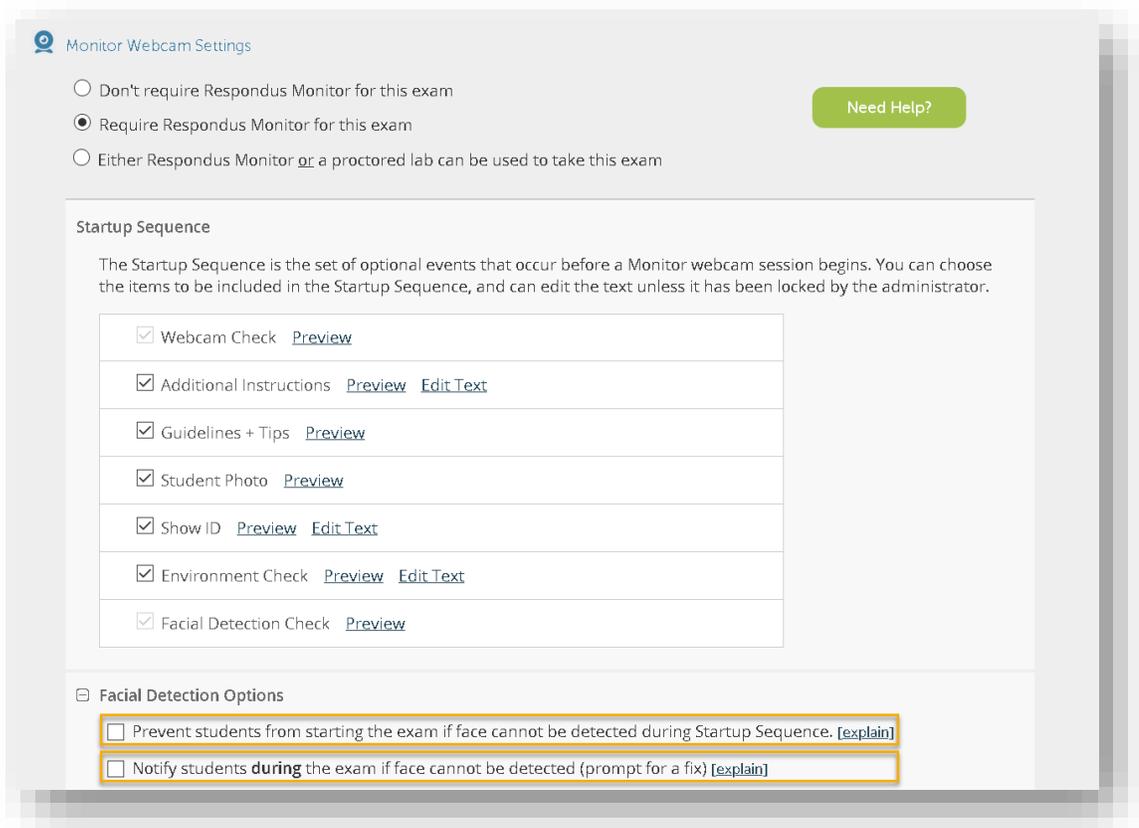
### How to Resolve the Issue in Two Steps:

**Step 1:** In the Monitor Webcam Settings, select **Require Respondus Monitor for this exam** to access the Startup Sequence.

 Monitor Webcam Settings

- Don't require Respondus Monitor for this exam
- Require Respondus Monitor for this exam
- Either Respondus Monitor or a proctored lab can be used to take this exam

**Step 2:** In the Startup Sequence, **Uncheck/Deselect** the two Facial Detection Options. By default, these two options are selected. A detailed explanation of both Facial Detection Options is provided on the following pages.



The screenshot shows the 'Monitor Webcam Settings' page. At the top, there are three radio button options for requiring Respondus Monitor. Below this is a 'Startup Sequence' section with a descriptive paragraph and a list of seven items, each with a checked checkbox and a 'Preview' link. The 'Facial Detection Options' section is collapsed, showing two unchecked checkboxes with 'explain' links. A green 'Need Help?' button is visible in the top right corner.

**Startup Sequence**

The Startup Sequence is the set of optional events that occur before a Monitor webcam session begins. You can choose the items to be included in the Startup Sequence, and can edit the text unless it has been locked by the administrator.

- Webcam Check [Preview](#)
- Additional Instructions [Preview](#) [Edit Text](#)
- Guidelines + Tips [Preview](#)
- Student Photo [Preview](#)
- Show ID [Preview](#) [Edit Text](#)
- Environment Check [Preview](#) [Edit Text](#)
- Facial Detection Check [Preview](#)

**Facial Detection Options**

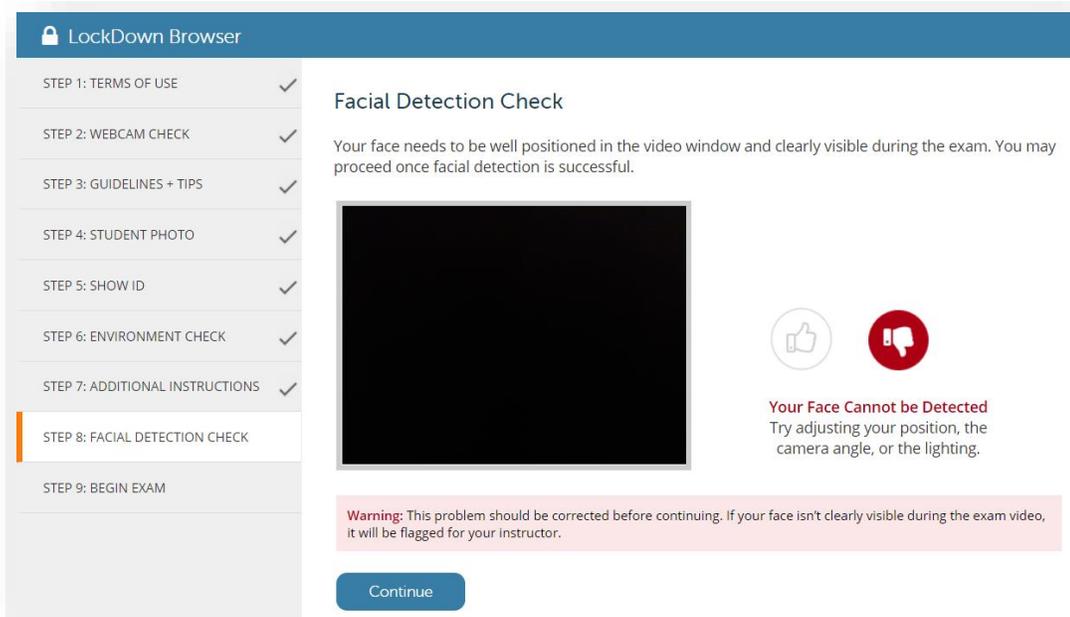
- Prevent students from starting the exam if face cannot be detected during Startup Sequence. [explain](#)
- Notify students **during** the exam if face cannot be detected (prompt for a fix) [explain](#)

**a. Facial Detection Option: Prevent students from starting the exam if face cannot be detected during Startup Sequence.**

Deselecting this option means that if their face cannot be detected, they will still be able to enter the exam. Students will automatically bypass Step 8: Facial

Detection Check (shown in the photo below) in order to begin the exam in Step 9: Begin Exam.

**Alternatively, if you would prefer for students to remove their masks during the Facial Detection Check, leave this box checked. (This is only recommended in locations where facial masks can be removed.)** Students will view Step 8: Facial Detection Check (shown in the photo below). At this time, students can remove their masks so their faces are clearly visible.



**b. Facial Detection Option: Notify students during the exam if face cannot be detected (prompt for a fix)**

Deselecting this option means that students will not be alerted repeatedly during the exam if their face cannot be detected. The recording video and images during the exam will be available for the instructor to review.

**Alternatively, if you would prefer for students to receive alerts during the exam if their face cannot be detected, leave this box checked.** Students will be able to disable the alerts. Instructors will see the following flags in the Class Results.

[00:00:46](#) ▶ Missing from Frame [\[explain\]](#)

[00:01:50](#) ▶ Student turned off facial detection alerts [\[explain\]](#)