

From Onsite to Online Proctored QuickBooks Certification Exams

As instruction shifted remotely this spring, the accounting department at Dallas College Brookhaven Campus needed to find a way to administer QuickBooks certification exams to accounting students. As an accounting instructional specialist, I worked with the department's faculty and staff to bring the certification exam to students online. We discovered that Certiport had developed a home-based assessment solution as a pilot program, and that the QuickBooks site licenses we had previously purchased gave us access to this service. I took on the role of administrator and proctor of the Certiport online certification exam, helping students progress toward completion remotely.

Preparation and Analysis

I began by communicating with the Certiport representative to find out what kind of exam service options they offered and how they differed from one another. I set up timelines for QuickBooks practice tests and QuickBooks certification exams for students based on the various end dates of QuickBooks classes. Once the general timeline was in place, I sent an RSVP form to collect accounting students' available time slots and dates for the certification exam. We did our best to accommodate students' needs, keeping in mind that extra flexibility would be needed.

I divided students into several exam groups based on their available dates and time slots and reserved the exam spots via Certiport. As soon as I received the confirmation email regarding the exam reservation requests, I sent each student an email containing the confirmed certification exam date, time slot, start and end date for practice tests, an instructional handout for Gmetrix (a skills management system with practice tests), an exam study guide, and my contact information so students could get in touch with me at any time.

Communication

Before COVID-19, students usually attended several in-person instructional sessions that explained how to navigate Gmetrix features and practice exams. To replace this in-person instruction, I hosted several virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams with students individually and in groups. During the virtual meetings, I demonstrated how to create a Gmetrix account, how to navigate Gmetrix

exam features, how to check their learning progress, and how to view feedback for each question. In addition, I covered some simulation questions to promote student participation. I answered student inquiries and gave assistance via Microsoft Teams during the practice test period as well. Ahead of each student's certification exam date and time slot, I provided information via email and Microsoft Teams about his or her certification exam time slot and personal exam link, as well as the certification exam policies, and how to communicate with me when needed before the exam began.

Implementation

As the exam proctor, I was the point of contact for all student questions, and I gave immediate assistance via email or Microsoft Teams. I also participated in every virtual meeting hosted by Certiport stakeholders before and while proctoring each certification exam. This helped me become familiar with the procedures and policies and prepared me to resolve any issues I might encounter, such as student exam links not working. Once the exams were complete, I sent QuickBooks certificates to the students who passed the exam. When students did not pass, I sent them another RSVP and repeated all the preparation steps until they retook the exam.

Conclusion

Faculty and staff should highly consider using an online platform to administer certification exams. Certiport enabled our students to continue to pursue an industry-recognized certification during the COVID-19 crisis that will distinguish them from other students in an increasingly difficult hiring environment. I was satisfied and grateful for the convenience, flexibility, and prompt support received when proctoring and administering the exam. Student participation and passing rates were higher than the previous year, and many students expressed their gratitude for being able to continue working toward their degree and career advancements during this crisis.

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