



Southbank
Institute of Technology

Education for aspiring minds

Managing your Studies

Preparing For Exams



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- **Essay.** You must know the topic well to condense the answer to a question in a few paragraphs within a specified time. The essay should include an introduction, content comprising clearly-developed points, and a conclusion.
- **Multiple choice (true or false).** Allocate how much time you will spend on each question and pace yourself. Read the questions carefully and identify the correct answer through a process of elimination. If you do not know an answer go to the other questions. Time permitting you may be able to return to the unanswered question.
- **Openbook.** You are permitted to take textbooks and other materials into the exam. A quick reference system will help you to find information quickly. For example highlighting key words / phrases in the text and attaching post-it-notes to pages.
- **Short answer.** You will be asked to provide answers varying from one sentence to a paragraph. Your answers must be clear and concise. Read the questions carefully and plan your response before you start writing.

For any written exam it is important to write clearly and minimise spelling mistakes.

PREPARATION

- **Plan your study time.** Determine how many hours you need for studying and how you will use the time.
- **Review course materials.** You are more likely to remember the material you study at the beginning and end of a session. To ensure you retain all material in memory, commence and end each session with material that is different to the last study session, and rotate the middle material so that it starts a session.
- **Focus on the main ideas.** Refer to the learning objectives for your course, study questions and chapter study-aids in textbooks.

SELF TESTING

- **Take a practice exam.** Your teacher may be able to direct you to an archive of previous exam papers. Take practice exams 1-2 days before the real exam.
- **Develop your own exam.** Use chapter headings, chapter aids, textbook and class notes to develop exam questions.
- **Create exam-like conditions.** You will not be able to use notes or textbooks in an exam (the exception is an open-book exam). You should complete a practice exam in the specified time and should not refer to support material.

THE EXAM

- **Minimise your anxiety.** Arrive on time to avoid 'brain pickers'. Discussing possible exam questions with other students and discovering you do not know the answers can cause anxiety.
- **Do a memory dump.** As soon as the exam begins write down information you are likely to need but may forget.
- **Read questions carefully.** Look closely at a question and identify key words. Translate the question into your own words. Ensure you understand what you are being asked to do and plan your answer before you start writing.
- **Verbalise unfamiliar words.** Break unfamiliar words into parts. Look at the surrounding words and sentences for clues. Anticipate possible meanings based on what you know and logical reasoning. If you are still unsure choose a possible meaning.
You may not be right but it is better to get some marks for trying.
- **Budget your time wisely.** Allocate how much time you will spend on each question and pace yourself. You should also consider the weight of marks when allocating time.
- **Try and relax.** Some anxiety in an exam situation is good because it helps you to perform better. However, excessive anxiety can reduce your performance. For stress management techniques refer to Study Companion: Managing Stress, or talk to a Southbank Institute of Technology counsellor.
- **Look for clues.** Answers to some questions may be clues for answers to other questions. When you are allocating time read the questions to determine if there is an obvious link.
- **Answer all questions.** Some teachers give partial marks for incomplete answers. Try to answer all the questions even if you are running out of time and cannot answer them fully.

- **Do not change answers.** Research has shown that a person's first answer, which is based on instinct, is correct. Only change the answer if you are sure it is wrong.
- **Use extra time for checking.** Review your paper if you finish the exam early. Check that you have answered questions fully and accurately, and that you have not missed any questions.

Need Further Assistance?

If you continue to experience difficulty in managing your studies and are not obtaining the grades you would like, talk with a Southbank Institute of Technology counsellor about further strategies to improve your study time.

Southbank Institute of Technology Counselling Service

To make an appointment, contact the following number:

Phone: 3244 5095

studentsupport.services@deta.qld.gov.au

Sources

This information was acquired from the following website: www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/stdyhlp.html (2002) Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Cook Counselling Centre).

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