**Preparing for exams**

Exams can be stressful, but being prepared can help manage stress and allow you to perform at your best. There are lots of techniques you can try and resources available to make sure you get the most out of your exam study.

### What to study

As early as possible, find out what topics will be covered in your exam, the type of exam and its conditions. Important details include the duration of the exam and whether it has open book, multiple choice, short answer or essay questions.

You can find information about your exam from a few sources.

* The unit of study outline will show you the most important topics of the unit of study.
* Your lecturer or tutor may suggest which topics are most important to focus on

### Plan your study

* Make your plan as accurate as possible. Remember to include the time you need for important considerations such as transport, eating, family, work and sleep.
* Update your plan each day.
* Find out as soon as possible what topics you need to study, and work out how much time you have for each topic before the exam.
* At the end of each study session, make a list of what you need to cover the next time you study.

### Prioritise

* First, do a quick review of all the main topics. Then go back to the topics that are more difficult and review those in more detail.
* If you don’t know how much detail you need to study, try looking at each topic in progressively more detail. That is, first study all of the topics at a very general level (for example, just the main concepts). Then go back and study each topic with more detail (for example, the major theories, key models, rules or facts). Finally, if you have enough time, go back and look at some extra details on each topic (for example, debates about the theories, specific studies and their methodologies).

### Effective study

* It’s not recommended that you leave studying for the night before a test. Research shows that losing sleep to study makes you perform worse academically. Having regular study sessions which don’t interfere with your sleep time means you’ll be well-rested and can learn more effectively.
* Often you can improve and solidify your understanding by discussing the concepts and information with someone else.
* For your learning to last beyond your short-term memory, try to make connections and relationships between facts and ideas. For example, think about how the facts or ideas relate to other things you have read, how you might use them in your future career, and whether you agree with the author's arguments.

### Use your time efficiently

* choose to study at a time when you are naturally alert and focused. For example, if you are a ‘morning person’, don’t try to study late at night.
* Before each task, remind yourself of its specific purpose. For example, do you really need to read the whole chapter, or to only check the paragraph about one particular topic?
* If you lose concentration while you are reading or studying, stop. Think about how this paragraph fits into the big picture. Is it important?
* Read every article or book chapter before you read it in full to get a sense of the main idea and if it’s relevant. That is, first read the title, abstract, introduction, headings/topic sentences and conclusion.
* If you find that you’re procrastinating (spending your time on things that are a low priority, such as checking social media), stop and deal with it immediately. For example, turn off your phone, log out of your social media accounts, turn off the TV.

**Reference:**

Sydney University . www.sydney.edu.au