

Exam and test preparation

Success in exams and tests is the result of careful planning and sustained effort. The earlier you begin studying for exams, the more likely you are to be able to recall the information and theories from your course. These steps will help you to develop an organised approach to revision.

Planning exam study

Step 1: Plan

Step 2: Collect information

Step 3: Find out what topics and types of questions will be covered

Step 4: Memorise

Step 5: Revise

Plan

Know when and where your exams are, and when and where you will study for them.

Exam timetable

- ✓Write down exam dates
- ✓Block out study times (see the Time Management Handout for a blank timetable)
- ✓Decide on the amount of time needed to study for each exam
- ✓Have regular breaks
- ✓Break each session into topics that you will study and practice
- ✓Review timetable every week

Exam study

- ✓Create a dedicated study area
- ✓Understand your working style (playing music, clear workspace for example)
- ✓Select and stick to regular study periods
- ✓Use a “to do” list to focus on particular study activities

Work early or work late –find the best place and time for you. While studying, remember to eat, sleep and get regular exercise.

Collect information

- gather and sort all the information you have for a paper, including:
 - lecture, tutorial, and study notes
 - assignment preparation notes
 - notes from books and readings

- go and look at the [past exams](#) for the last two to three years.
- Stream information and discussions for the course

Find out what topics and types of questions will be covered

- What topics are repeated?
- What themes are emphasised?
- What type of questions will you be asked (essay questions, short answer, multiple choice)?
- What is the allocation of marks for each section/question and how much time should you give to each section/question?

Memorise and revise

Phase one: Summarising and understanding

Phase two: Storing and retrieval activities

Phase three: Practice and application

Phase one and two are covered below, phase three is up to you!

Summarising and understanding

Condense the information you have gathered using study summaries. Use your own words and consider presenting the information visually. Some examples of study summaries are:

- Linear notes
- Charts
- A matrix
- Mind maps

Overall, the key to good memory in exams is to present your information in a way that works for you and revise, revise, revise.

Storing and retrieval activities

There are a range of memory strategies and tactics designed to help you study as efficiently and effectively as possible. However, there is no single memory method that suits all situations. Check out [OWLL](#) for different options. Two strategies are:

1. Acronyms and acrostics

Use these to remember a set or sequence. Acronyms use the initials of a word, or term, or for studying purposes, a series of words.

For example:

BEDMAS: brackets, exponentials, division, multiplication, addition, subtraction.

Acrostics are poems or sayings, where the first letter of each word (or line) is a cue to help you remember particular terms.

For example:

Every Good Boy Deserves Fruit Always (The notes on the lines of the treble clef).

2. Talking out loud

Go through a topic and speak it out loud, as if you were giving a speech or lecture to someone.

- How fluent is your explanation?
- Did you have to stop and start?
- Did you cover all the parts of a topic or did you miss bits out?

Academic writing and study skills support

1. Academic Q+A

If you have a quick question about study skills or academic writing, then they can ask it on the [Academic Q+A forum](#), which can be accessed via the [Academic Support Stream site](#).

2. Consultations

One-to-one consultations with learning advisors and writing consultants are [available online and on campus](#). Consultants can answer your questions about academic writing and study skills or give you feedback on your assignment's structure, focus, paragraph structure, flow, presentation, use of sources, and referencing.

3. Online Writing and Learning Link (OWLL)

Develop your academic writing and study skills with the [Online Writing and Learning Link \(OWLL\)](#) website from Massey University. OWLL includes information on assignment writing, assignment types, referencing, study skills, and exam skills.

4. Pre-reading Service

The [Pre-reading Service](#) is a free service, which gives students an opportunity to send their draft assignment to [CLS consultants](#) for review and advice. Students receive individual written feedback on their assignment's structure, focus, paragraph structure, flow, style, presentation, referencing, and use of sources. The service can be accessed via the [Academic Support Stream site](#).

5. Workshops

Free study seminars and workshops are run on campus and online. See [Workshops page on OWLL](#) for [programmes and registration details](#).