

## Exams and Tests: Preparation & Techniques

If you study efficiently and effectively all the time, especially by previewing and reviewing your work (see handout [Learning Before, During and After Class](#)), it will be easier for you to revise for your tests and exams.

The following is a guide to getting ready for your tests and exams:

1. **Find out what to revise by reviewing:**

- Past exam papers (ask your tutor where they are kept)
- The learning outcomes for the course
- Class handouts, readings and references you were given
- Class notes
- Previous assignments

2. **Find out about the tests or exams:**

- Ask your tutor what content knowledge you need to know
- What is the format of the exam? E.g. essay, short answer, multiple choice
- What is the length of the test or exam?
- How many questions will you have to answer?
- Do you have to answer all the questions, or do you have a choice?
- What proportion of the total course marks is represented by this test or exam? (This is found on the course descriptor)
- What is the pass mark? (This is found on the course descriptor)

3. **Plan the revision process:**

- Use a diary or timetable to plan what you have to do
- Break the subject into parts and give time to each, but think about which area you will need to spend more time on
- Plan to revise at the times of day that suit you best

4. **Revising (reviewing your work). Review actively and often:**

- Sort your notes into topics
- Read your notes and underline and highlight the key points
- Put the main points, key words/concepts onto cue cards
- Test yourself in a way that suits your learning style:
- Make up your own questions
- Answer questions from your text book
- Answer questions from past tests and exams
- Do a timed mock exam (partial or full paper)

- Form a study group so you can discuss the information you need to learn or ask someone to test you (see handout [Study Groups](#))
  - Find ways to remember key terms and concepts using:
    - visuals and diagrams
    - mnemonics
5. **The day before the test/exam**
- Check the start time of the exam and the place
  - Make sure you have all the equipment you need: pens, pencils, watch, water
  - Eat and sleep well
6. **On the test/exam day and in the exam room:**
- Do not learn any new information
  - Get to the exam room early
  - Wait in a quiet area and try not to get distracted by noise
  - Read the instructions carefully. You may have 10 minutes of reading time before you start answering the questions
  - Read all the questions carefully
  - Check how many marks there are for each question and then work out how much time you need for each
  - Decide what order you will answer the questions in. Easy ones first?
  - Attempt ALL the questions you have to answer. The first few marks of every question are usually quite easy to get.
  - Plan your short answer questions and keep to the point
  - If you are short of time write down your main points as these may earn marks
  - If you have spare time at the end check your work thoroughly

For other useful Learning Services handouts and resources related to this topic go to <https://myara.ara.ac.nz/pages/academic-support/learning-resources>. See:

- Learning Before During and After Class
- Notetaking
- Time Management