



Types of exams

The approach you take to revise and practise for tests and exams, and the strategy you select for the exam room, will all impact on your performance. Before delving into the types of exams, the best study strategies for exams (see [Studying for exams](#), PDF, 113 kB), and the best in-exam strategies, use the following method of time management in any exam.

This section covers the different types of exams you will encounter

- Essay
- Short answer
- Multiple choice
- Clinical situations
- Neurological situations
- Scientific tests
- Open book and take home exams

Test and exam instructions

Example (Construction Technology 1, 2014)

Time Allowed: 2 hours
Number of Questions: 6
Total Number of Pages: 10

INSTRUCTIONS

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE PROCEEDING

1. Write your name and student number on the top of this examination paper and ALL answer booklets.
2. All exams include reading time, which allows you to spend some time at the start of the examination composing yourself, reading the exam paper, and planning which questions to answer, and how. We advise you to read the instructions and questions carefully, before you begin writing. **However, you are allowed to begin writing straight away if you wish.**
3. The examination is an open book examination with only a calculator allowed.
4. Answer all questions on the examination paper itself.
5. This exam is worth 40 marks in total.
6. Any calculator can be used.

DO NOT TAKE THIS PAPER FROM THE EXAMINATION ROOM

Question 1 (6)	Question 2 (7)	Question 3 (7)	Question 4 (6)	Question 5 (7)	Question 6 (7)	Total (40)

For this Construction Management exam, the students have 120 minutes to complete six questions, all roughly worth the same (6 or 7 marks). This means that, ideally, 20 minutes would be spent answering each question. It's a good idea to write your target start times in the left margin of the exam paper to keep you on track.

Example (English, Text and Writing)

Time Allowed: TWO hours plus TEN minutes reading time
Number of Questions: TWO
Total Number of Pages: TWO

INSTRUCTIONS PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE PROCEEDING

1. Write your name and student number on the top of this examination paper and ALL answer booklets.
2. This is a closed book examination.
3. Answer both questions in the Answer Booklet provided.
4. The two questions are of equal value (25% each). The examination result counts for 50% of the final mark for the unit.
5. Write your tutor's name on the front cover of the Answer Booklet.

DO NOT TAKE THIS PAPER FROM THE EXAMINATION ROOM

For this English, Text and Writing exam, students have 120 minutes to complete two essays, both worth the same marking value, plus ten minutes reading time. This means that you would ideally aim to use the reading time to analyse the questions and prepare your outlines, then complete each essay in one hour. If you go over time in your first essay, you'll have less time for the second one, so be strict about your time allocation.

Essay

Test and exam essays are similar to assignment essays, with slightly less emphasis on referencing practices. In exam essays you are not required to footnote or endnote, or include a reference list, but you can still use in-text citations where appropriate, e.g. Author Surname (Year).

When starting an exam essay, it is best to use a condensed version of the steps you would take for an assignment essay:

- Analyse the question by carefully reading it (see [Analysing the assignment question](#), PDF, 72 kB)
- Look for common task words
- Take a few minutes to plan an outline of how you will answer the question (see [Essay structure](#), PDF, 114 kB, for introduction, body of points, conclusion)
- Keep in mind the exam duration and how much time you allocate to writing each section of your essay

To prepare for exam essays, you can use questions set in past exam papers, plan essay outlines, and then practise using the exam conditions, i.e. time allocation and individual desk set-up (see [Studying for exams](#), PDF, 113 kB).

Example (English, Text and Writing, 2010)

Question 2. EITHER:

Show how genre issues are relevant to a consideration of meaning in *The Old Man and the Sea*.

OR

"Genres exist to guide both the writer and the reader". Examine this idea in relation to any two texts you have studied in the Genre and History module of this unit.

Short answer

The length of a short answer response can vary from a word or equation, a phrase or sentence, to a paragraph or three – the latter being a short essay. Look for the number of marks allocated to a question to assess the length of the answer you are required to produce. The short answer exam mode challenges your memory and ability to communicate clearly and concisely.

Start by reading the question carefully. Be mindful that sometimes there are different components of the question that you'll need to understand and explain individually and as a whole. Plan your answer before you start writing and be sure to keep it concise. If you're unsure of how to answer a question, make a small note to yourself (e.g. an asterisk in the left-hand margin) and return to it later if you have time.

When practising for short answer tests and exams, focus your attention on terminology, concepts, theories, examples, and similarities and differences. Some of the best study strategies involve revision with classmates. This includes your own study group or PASS. Your study group could create exam trivia as part of your exam study plan. For more ideas, see [Studying for exams](#) (PDF, 113 kB).

Example (Global History, 2013)

Note: Answer Five Questions – no more than 500 words per answer

QUESTION 11: Compare the ways that decolonisation changed relationships *within* the African continent and *beyond* the African continent.

Example (Green Chemistry 1, 2009)

Note: Answer any **FIVE (5)** Questions; all questions have the same value – 20 marks

Question 10.

Write short explanatory notes on **FOUR (4)** of the following topics.

- a) Process intensification
 - b) Biofuels
 - c) Fluorous bi-phase solvents
 - d) Polymers derived from renewable resources
 - e) E-factor
 - f) Photochemistry
-

Example (Construction Technology 1, 2014)

Note: This example is one of seven short answer/essay questions

Question 1

Discuss the implications of the new Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act 2012 as applied to a typical construction site. Specifically describe the role of the PCBU & the WHY committee on a large construction site with about 40 personnel on site.

Example (Nutrition and Community Health)

1(a). What are the 3 classifications of risk factors for cancer? (3 marks)

(b) List and briefly describe an example for each of the classifications that have been linked to the development of specific cancers. (6 marks)

Multiple choice

This type of test or exam question requires you to select the best answer that fits the question from a number of possible responses. This approach challenges your ability to recall and connect information from your course to the question at hand.

When answering the question, take a similar approach to [analysing the assignment question](#) (PDF, 72 kB):

- Read the question carefully
- Identify important words or keywords
- Read all options carefully
- Cross out answers you are certain are incorrect
- Look for answers that are opposites, hints in the answers, language used in class, etc.

To signal your choice you will either write or click on (a), (b), (c), or (d) on your paper exam booklet or your screen, or mark out the corresponding circle or box on the answer sheet. Be aware that some markers expect you to write the corresponding answer in full on paper exam booklets.

The best strategy to prepare for multiple choice questions is to attend all classes (lectures, tutorials, practicals) and other study sessions (e.g. your study group or PASS), as well as practice test strategies that force you to recall and apply knowledge to different situations (e.g. flash cards). For more examples, see [Studying for exams](#) (PDF, 113 kB).

Example (Contemporary Youth Health Issues, 2010)

1. Social justice principles guide work with young people and include
 - a) Access, diversity and social construction.
 - b) Equity, diversity, access and social construction.
 - c) Access, equity, rights and participation.
 - d) Access, equity, rights and social construction.

Some multiple choice questions have problem-solving components that require you to have a sound understanding of concepts, theories, or formulas that help you work through the idea presented step-by-step to arrive at the most likely answer. To prepare for this line of questioning, practise solving a range of similar problems.

Example (Engineering and Design Concepts, 2010)

6. What is the distance CD?
- a) $1.5R\sqrt{3}$
 - b) $3R\sqrt{3}$
 - c) $2R\sqrt{3}$
 - d) $R\sqrt{3}$
-

Example (Financial Statement Analysis, 2009)

4. Under the accrual basis of accounting, which of the following statements is true?
- I. Reported net income provides a measure of operating performance
 - II. Revenue is recognised when cash is received, and expenses are recognised when payment is made
 - III. Cash inflows are recognised when they are received, and cash outflows are recognised when they are made
- a) I only
 - b) III only
 - c) I and III
 - d) I, II and III
-

Clinical situations

Written exams

Scenarios rely on your problem solving skills to apply knowledge, theory, concepts, and procedures that are applicable according to your evaluation of the case. To present your solution you need to clearly articulate your thinking process to justify your observations, decisions, and actions.

To prepare for scenarios it is best to practise on as many case studies as you can access and create. In addition to individual study, group study can be advantageous to discuss different approaches or lines of thinking in any given situation to collectively decide which approach is best. For more strategies, see [Studying for exams](#) (PDF, 113 kB).

In the exam, it's important to read the question carefully. If you take a look at the example below, after the page-long case details (which have been omitted here) the examiner has provided guiding points on how to structure and frame your response.

Example (Paediatric Physiotherapy)

PART B: Video case study about Josiah: a 2 year old boy with myelomeningocele (spina bifida)
(40 marks for this section)

[Case details]

QUESTION 7 (20 marks)

Outline and justify a physiotherapy program for Josiah to address his current needs. In your answer include:

- The aims and measurable goals of your program
- Suggested activities to address and set goals
- How the program would be integrated at home and day care
- How you would reassess Josiah's progress

Also include time frames such as frequency of interventions at home and day care and anticipated frequency of physiotherapy reviews.

Note: Your program should reflect the principles of family-centred practice and evidence-based practice.

Practical exams

Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE) or Objective Structured Clinical Assessments (OSCA) represent a different exam type that tests practical and oral skill sets. Like practicals, they require you to demonstrate your thinking process to justify your observations, decisions, and actions, as well as apply your learning from not just a single unit but from the knowledge gained from all units over your years of study.

In an OSCE you have less time to formulate your ideas and execute them and often do not write anything down or you might have time allocated for writing after the patient interaction. The examiner will be with you in the room and could be the patient or a third party sitting quietly in the corner. The examiner is observing your performance with the patient or client with specific reference to your clinical techniques and competency in human interaction (social and interpersonal communication) with patients/clients. Be mindful that some OSCEs require you to demonstrate proficiency in a safety hurdle task. If you don't pass that component, it may lead to an instant fail of the exam.

More often than not, in an OSCE you will be examined on specific techniques. To help you prepare for your exam, you need to think long-term rather than just one semester. Have a special OSCEs folder where you store your own cheat sheets on each of the techniques you learn throughout your degree (yes, this will be a massive folder).

Also, at the end of every OSCE take some self-reflective notes on your performance immediately after, and then compare this with your feedback from the supervisor (see [Track, progress, success](#), PDF, 107 kB, and [Feedback hide and seek](#), PDF, 141 kB). This will help you to prepare for the next OSCE and will give you an idea of what you need to work on.

You also need to ensure you read or listen to the question and marking criteria very carefully as different OSCEs ask you to utilise different skills. For example, one may require you to verbalise your thinking to the examiner, whereas for another you may need to act as if the examiner is not in the room.

Example (Podiatric Practice)

OSCE STATION 2

Neurological assessment

Paul is a 42 year old male patient that you have been treating for a couple of years, for routine nail care (he has thick nails which are difficult to cut). He has psoriatic arthritis which he has had for the past 5 years, his disease has been very active in this time and 2 years ago he was placed on a biologic drug (etanercept).

Imaging has shown the following:

- Bilateral plantar calcaneal spurs (medial tubercle of the calcaneus)
- Tenosynovitis of flexor digitorum longus and tibialis posterior tendons (in the region of the medial malleolus)
- Syndesmophytes (bony bridges) in the sacral spine region at the level of S1 and S2

Since his last appointment he reports he has developed numbness/altered sensation in the sole of his right foot.

Conduct an appropriate neurological assessment to identify the nature and level of nerve entrapment.

The examiner is your patient (make sure you treat them like an actual patient)

- Ask for any equipment you will need for your assessments
 - During the assessment please tell the examiner, what specifically you are testing for
 - In the final two minutes you will be asked to summarise the findings of your examination and a preferred diagnosis from your list of differentials
-

Scientific tests

Written exams

Science practicals, and computational or calculation tests prompt you to respond to problems practically, by testing hypotheses, or theoretically, by searching for solutions to scenarios. These exams require you to use key vocabulary, theories and formulas correctly, and in applicable conditions.

To prepare for such exams you should review all content, draw out the key content and consider different lines of questioning. You can then test yourself by using practice questions. For more strategies, see [Studying for exams](#) (PDF, 113 kB).

When responding to these questions, decode what the question is asking by reading the whole question twice. Then brainstorm the procedures or formulas you want to apply. Write your response, whether it be in essay format or the working out for a mathematical equation, clearly and with explanations where appropriate. Remember, in these questions, even if your final result is incorrect, you can still be awarded marks for your thinking process. If diagrams are essential, use pencil so that you can make changes if necessary, and label all drawings.

Example (Abstract Algebra)

Question 6. (2+1+2+2+5 = 12 marks)

In this question denotes the Euler totient (ϕ) function.

- Explain carefully why $\phi(p) = p - 1$ if p is prime
- Calculate $\phi(253)$.
- You are going to use the RSA cryptosystem with encryption key $(253, e)$. What property does e have to satisfy?
- Show that $e = 147$ satisfies this property
- A message has been encoded using the encryption key 253, 147 for the RSA cryptosystem and the correspondence

$A \rightarrow 10$	$J \rightarrow 19$	$S \rightarrow 28$
$B \rightarrow 11$	$K \rightarrow 20$	$T \rightarrow 29$
$C \rightarrow 12$	$L \rightarrow 21$	$U \rightarrow 30$
$D \rightarrow 13$	$M \rightarrow 22$	$V \rightarrow 31$
$E \rightarrow 14$	$N \rightarrow 23$	$W \rightarrow 32$
$F \rightarrow 15$	$O \rightarrow 24$	$X \rightarrow 33$
$G \rightarrow 16$	$P \rightarrow 25$	$Y \rightarrow 34$
$H \rightarrow 17$	$Q \rightarrow 26$	$Z \rightarrow 35$
$I \rightarrow 18$	$R \rightarrow 27$	

The encoded message is 74-158-5-155-49. Decode it.

Practical exams

Practical exams are an integral part of many lab based units and are designed to demonstrate your recall knowledge (e.g. identifying anatomical structures on a cadaver) or your procedural skills (e.g. correctly preparing a gel plate for a bacteria growth experiment). These practicals can be very similar to an OSCE exam in which you are given a very short period of time to respond appropriately before moving onto another component of the exam. They differ though as in most circumstances you are writing your observations/results/answers on an exam paper and generally there are many people in the room at once.

These exams generally require a lot of recall and you will be tested not necessarily on your ability to critically analyse a situation, rather, how effectively you can remember and recall information. To prepare, utilising rote learning can be very helpful. This learning tool aims at allowing you to remember large volumes of information with fast memory access and recall.

When you enter the exam room it is quite easy to become daunted with the number of stations you need to complete. Also you will be exposed to a lot of equipment and/or specimens. Make sure you keep a level head and focus on the content that you have been learning and run through it in your head. This will help to focus on the task rather than a 'visually noisy' environment. Finally make use of any writing paper that you have access to. For rote learning to be effective you need to get the information out quickly from your memory and writing out what comes to mind can be helpful so you don't quickly forget it again. Lastly, DON'T scribble everywhere because the marker also needs to know what your final answer is.



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Example (Anatomy Spot Test)

Task

Students are expected to use correct anatomical terminologies to describe the anatomy of the regions, identify structures and their functions.

Station Question

This is a dissection of the palmar region

[IMAGE OF FORMALDEHYDE PRESERVED HAND]

- i. What is the structure marked 'A'?
 - ii. What is the main function of this structure?
 - iii. What is the structure marked 'B' (be precise)?
 - iv. What dorsal region of the hand does it supply?
-

Oral exams

Oral examinations are different from presentations and are often encountered in subjects like languages and performance-based disciplines like music. These tests, while relatively short (c. 10-15 minutes) offer you an opportunity to utilise your communication skills to express your understanding of the subject matter and skills. (It's also great practice for future job interviews!) You will usually be presented with a stimulus of some kind and required to formulate a response to it – be it the correct formal reply in Italian or a sound rendition of a musical scale.

To prepare for this exam type it is good to follow the standard revision process:

- I. employ a range of study strategies to learn and revise the content covered in class time, readings and assignments;
- II. manipulate and transform that content and share and exchange it with others in group study sessions (see [Studying for exams](#), PDF, 113 kB);
- III. locate example questions, create your own scenarios and swap with others in your study group to practise with as many different cases as you can.

When in an oral exam, you will find that you use many of the strategies and mindsets you use when delivering [Presentations](#). For example, project your voice, speak slowly and with confidence, make eye contact with the audience, stay on point or topic, and be mindful of your time if that is a condition.

Open Book and Take Home Exams

If your exam is described as 'open book' or 'take home' this means that you will be allowed to access your unit materials (notes, textbooks, readings, research, etc.) while you respond to the exam questions. This sounds great, and signals that you will need a different, perhaps less intensive, revision and practice strategy, but it actually means that more is expected of you – content detail, clear expression, well developed arguments, etc.

The best approach to take is to study as you would for a closed book exam, e.g. create topic summary sheets and mind maps. Then, on the exam day, arrange your learning materials – everything you think you might need – in an order than suits you at your desk. Having the opportunity to consult your previous work and ideas is only advantageous if you can reach it when you need it!

Once you commence an open book or take home exam, the same advice for exam strategy applies:

- Read the exam instructions carefully
- Manage and allocate time for writing according to the marks assigned to each question
- Read each question carefully
- Brainstorm and mindmap relevant information, theories, formulas, etc.
- For essays, prepare a short outline to which you refer
- For referencing, take note of instructions on the exam paper or advice from lecturers; when in doubt, use in-text Author (Date) citation