

St. Patrick's College

Managing the End of Year Exam, Study and Exam Tips!

Section 1 - Study tips 1 - 10

1. **Ensure your needs are covered.** Students requiring alternative exam arrangements should have consulted with the Access Officer (0504-20535). If not, please contact immediately.
2. **Have a plan to cover all six subjects.** This means an actual timetable for the two weeks that ensures all modules get thorough revision. It also means organising a set of notes and materials for each subject.
3. **Study leave timetable with your needs in mind.** Are you a morning person? Some people find it works best to get the most challenging work done before lunch etc. It is vital to include break time and to keep the energy levels up. Diet/sleep and leisurely walks...(good for thinking & relaxation)
4. **Be focused.** Do you need to cover everything or are there definite choices on papers that you can count on without taking risks?
5. **What about study groups?** They can be really useful if well organised. A group of students agree to meet during the study leave. Each student takes a topic/theme and prepare extensively on it. They agree to meet at specific times & each person presents the key points from their topic to the group. The group then ask questions/take notes/discuss exam questions and answers. This can be very useful for some who enjoy group discussion
6. **Using summary topic cards.** Some find it useful to summarise each topic as they do the final revision session. This can be a spider diagram or chart with the main headings and sub headings plotted out etc. Very useful to have as the final image going into an exam.
7. **Using previous exam questions.** This is highly recommended. Be familiar with the layout of papers and the possible choices between sections. Are there any compulsory questions? If so they must be attempted. If not attempted then you cannot pass this paper even if you do really well in other sections.
8. **If you come across a problem you cannot solve?** Check with a colleague/student but if you're not assured contact the dept and see if you can talk to your lecturer.
9. **Making the most of your exam timetable.** Every exam time-table carries with it some advantages and disadvantages. There is no such thing as the ideal one but

there is at least some consensus that more than one exam per day is not ideal at third level

Dates						
Module						

Consult with the latest timetables, there may have been changes. Double Check the times and Locations of the exams.

Given your exam timetable what is the best way to manage the final preparation for each module?

10. **Take good care of yourself.** Pay attention to your diet, eat sensibly and drink plenty of water. Try and get in some exercise, fresh air will help clear your head and will also help you sleep. Try getting in a few good nights sleep leading up to the exams, particularly the night before. You will be more alert and refreshed during the exams. Eat a good breakfast the morning of the exam and allow yourself plenty of time to get to your exam venue. No matter how unprepared you feel you are, you can maximise your exam performance by some relaxation exercises; breathing exercises are very good. Also let go of any negative feelings and just focus on the here and now/doing your best.

Compare and contrast	Present both the similarities and the differences between two or more things.
Criticise	Evaluate a topic or question using relevant evidence and arguments. Give your own view supported by relevant evidence.
Define	Explain the precise meaning of a given term/phrase.
Describe	Give a detailed account of...
Discuss	Tease out different aspects of the topic. Present reasons for and against the topic/argument. Be analytical.
Evaluate/review	Examine both sides of an issue or argument. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the topic. Include your own views substantiated with evidence.
Explain	Give reasons and/or evidence to support your account of the topic.
Give an account of	Describe the topic in detail.
Illustrate	Explain using appropriate examples/diagrams.
Interpret	Make clear and explicit the meaning of something.
Outline	Organise your answer to indicate the main features/facts of, or general principles underlying, a given topic.
State	Present a clear and brief account.
Summarise	Provide a concise account of the main points.

Trace Describe the historical development of...

Source: Managing Your Own Learning at University by Aidan P. Moran 2000

Section 2 Exam tips 1-10

1. Students should arrive 10 minutes before the exam starts to locate their seat on the seating plan. Arriving after the exam starts causes disruption to others reduces the time available to complete the exam and can increase levels of stress. **Ensure you have your ID card.**
2. **Students should read the instructions carefully:**
For example:
Answer 5 questions, 2 from part A and 3 from part B
Is completely different from
Answer five questions, 2 from A and 2 from B and the fifth from either A or B
3. **Divide up the time evenly between each Q.** as they usually carry equal marks. Watch the allocation of marks for subsections. **Use your time effectively.** If questions carry different marks allocate time appropriate to the number of marks the question carries. If questions carry equal marks divide that number by the number of questions to be done to get the exact time allotted to each question. You have 160 minutes to answer a question (i.e. 5 questions = 35 minutes per question. 4 questions = 45 minutes per question and so on). There is no point in writing pages on a small part of a question. It is important to keep asking yourself if you are answering the question asked? Try to be clear, concise and correct throughout!!!
4. **Select your best question and begin.** Try to finish each question on time. If you let time slip for each question then your final answer will be in danger of becoming a panic stricken effort.
5. **Plan answers.** Use the rough work paper and **brainstorm** effective answers to each question.
6. **Leave some space at the end of each section** so that if you wish to return to it later you can add additional information. Always re read answers with the reader in mind and asking yourself; *am I answering the question that is being asked?*
7. **If you become stuck in a question** & the knowledge just isn't coming... Try to relax yourself and if necessary leave the section and move on to the next one so that at least you won't be wasting time. Sometimes the knowledge may return when we are in the middle of something else...subconscious mind is very powerful.

8. **Make sure you allow yourself enough time to read over your material.** The number of errors, grammatical or otherwise that you have made would surprise you. Avoid using tippex. It's very easy to forget to go back and write over the white blotches. Examiners will read all of your paper even if you have written '*cancelled*' through a particular section and you may gain some extra marks. This cannot happen if a section or part of an answer has been erased with tippex.
9. **No post mortems!** When exam paper is over it is over and no amount of discussion will change your performance. With the quick lead in to the next exam, you need to clear the mind, let go of what's over (scream with delight or frustration when you get home but let it go...). Post mortems outside exam halls are very unfair to other students so try to resist the temptation. You could of course plan a celebratory post mortem when all the exams are over.

Help is available. There is a counselling service available throughout the examination period. If anyone needs help just ask. If something unforeseen happens and you need to speak with a member of the Dept to discuss anything just ask and we will do our best to respond appropriately.