This online tutorial is designed to help you prepare for exams at uni. It focuses on 5 key areas which will help you be better prepared for your exams. These are: time management; knowing your exam; revising actively and remembering and applying information.

Reflections
You may have memories of your last exams and these could have brought back positive or negative feelings, depending on the experience. Things to think about such as, what your previous exam experiences were like and, what your current concerns are about exams, may help you become aware of what you might need to address and prepare for in the next lot of exams you do. They can help you identify what areas would you like to improve on.

Long term preparation
Ideally, it’s best to prepare for exams by starting early in the Study Period. As the study period progresses, make sure you understand key concepts and topics. Also try to revise throughout the Study Period so that you’re not trying to cram the whole semester’s work into the last few weeks before exams. Try to keep up with lectures, notes and readings so that you have a complete set and lastly, look after yourself so that you don’t get ill or too stressed out before the exams.

What to do before the exam
Some key tasks to help you learn more about what to expect from your exams and to help you set up for your revision of work includes: attending final lectures and tutes when there will probably be exam and revision information. Also make sure that you have all your PPTs and notes from all the course’s lectures and tutes so that you know you haven’t missed any of the course’s content. As the Study Period progresses check course homepages or outlines for: which course objectives will assessed in the exam; the course’s themes and sub-themes and check for past papers or practice questions. These are useful in a number of ways. They can help you identify any weak areas you have regarding content and they can also help you when you’re reviewing. Also note and check to see if all topics covered in course will be examined or only some.

1. Time Management - Sample Exam Prep Planner
In the next slide with a Sample of an Exam Preparation Planner you can see how this person has planned their study leading up to their exams. They have colour coded the courses and spaced out their revision. You can also see that they’ve been very specific about what they will cover the day before the exam, that is the ‘wobbliest’ bit, and they’ve made a point of factoring in some relaxation time.
Sample of Daily Planner
In the next slide with a Sample of the Daily Planner, you can see that they have been very specific about what they will cover and the activities that have been planned. Note that they have given themselves regular breaks which stops overloading with information.

Keep in mind
When you’re considering your own situation think about things such as:

- Which topic/course is your weakest? When would it be best to revise this one?
- When are you at your best at remembering information?
- What feedback have you had about your assignments? For example, if you haven’t done well in your essays, and your exam involves writing essays, spend some time getting your head around how you can improve in this area.

After a day of revising, and before you finish your study for the day, think about what you want to start with tomorrow and make a note. Be specific where possible.

Also when you’re thinking about your preparation for exams, think about what you get distracted by and how you’ll avoid it. If you are tempted to watch TV or do house-work, perhaps studying on campus might be a better choice for you.

2. Know your exam - Exam venue details and Know your exam
The next two slides about knowing your exam are to make sure you don’t get any surprises. They include points such as:

- Checking the date, time and place of the exam. More information can be found from the following site. Also work out how you will get there and how much time you should allow, especially if it’s in peak hour traffic or you’re using public transport.
- Understand the length, format and type of exam you’ll have to sit. Find out what kinds of questions and how many sections and questions you’ll need to answer.
- Also go to lectures, tutes and course home pages for more information and details.
- If you have never done an exam at UniSA be aware that there are ‘rules’ regarding taking an exam and more information about this can be found at the Exam Procedures site. It would pay to have a read through just so that you’re aware of rules such as what you’re allowed to take into the exam room, etcetera.

3. Revise actively
A lot of students prepare for their exams by just reading their notes. A more effective way to revise is to be active and this involves things like using lecture and tutorial notes to identify main themes or topics in courses and to look for connections between ideas. Other strategies include revising notes, and adding these to any gaps in knowledge or topic content. A more active way of revising is by practising how you analyse questions and practising to time, using past or sample exams if they’re available.
4. Techniques for remembering and Techniques for remembering (cont.)
Regardless of which techniques you use to help you remember information, keep in mind
that you’ll tend to remember material better by: revising it regularly over time, taking
regular breaks or exercise and eating healthily. Sitting and trying to cram for long periods of
time, drinking lots of cups of coffee, isn’t usually very effective in the long term.
There are a number of techniques you can use to help you remember information. One is
talking about ideas with others or out loud. This helps you learn the material and learn and
use the specific language of the course. Another (talking !) technique is to get someone to
test you with questions.

This slide has other techniques such as making summaries. Remember that summaries are
not long detailed text but rather where you reduce topics to a number of key points.
Some student use recall/flashcards, which are small cards. This can help develop a glossary
of terms where they have a term or concept on one side and the other side has a
description, definition, example or diagram. Another technique is using mnemonics, where
you make a connection, such as using ROY G. BIV to remember the colours of the rainbow.
Some students use mindmaps, which are useful if you are a visual learner.

Recall/flashcards and mindmaps
The next two slides show examples of some of these. The first one involves flashcards and
shows some that are made by a student and the other has a link to an online flashcard site.
The next slide shows a Psycholanalytic mindmap and the branches which carry different
kinds of information about that central concept.

5. Applying information
Keep in mind that exams assess how well you can select relevant information you have
remembered, and apply it to a task. Because of this, revision needs to include practice at
applying information and one way to do this is to use recent past exams if available. Also
be aware that different exams require slightly different things from you. For example,
multiple choice exams require you to work in a different way than essay exams. For all
exams though, a part of your revision should include practising writing to time and by
hand. The last is important as it’s a way of ensuring that you keep your handwriting
legible.

During the exam
Part of the exam time you have is called reading time. Use this time (10 minutes) to
choose questions. After this write an exam plan and in in make sure you have factored
in prep time, writing time and reviewing time.
Managing time is important in exams so start all questions where possible. Keep in mind
though that you shouldn’t answer more questions that you are asked as extra questions
are not marked and you should be using this time to go over what you have done. If you
do run out of time, copy your plan onto the page and /or finish in note form.
Also cross out any material you do not want examiner to mark.

General tips
I just want to conclude with some general tips. These are:

• Start with easiest questions first.
• Keep in mind the marks that are allocated to particular questions and how they are allocated to the question you are working on.
• Skip hard questions - go to the next. Other questions may jog your memory. Some students do ones they find the easiest first – if you do this, mark it clearly for the examiner.
• If you go blank or forget things – stop, breathe, relax and tackle something else. Try to stay calm.

Exam preparation resources
This slide is just to remind you that there are other resources which you mind find helpful such as the Exam Forum where you can post any question you have.

And the L3 EASS site has resources specifically dealing with exam tasks and questions.

For further information
For further information or help with exam preparation:

• Check your course homepage
• Contact the LTU for appointments with:
  • Counsellors
  • Language and Learning Advisers
  • Disability Advisers
• Access exam strategies information on the L3 EASS website.
• LTU ph: 8302 0022 email: ltu@unisa.edu.au