

Work smarter, not harder

## Preparing for Tests and Exams

The best preparation for examinations is regular study

### Have clear goals

- adopt a positive attitude
- know what they want long term
- in the short term: divide material into topics/tasks to create regular termination points
- reinforce/reward themselves regularly
- write down or tell someone else their intentions

### For each topic, gather material

- about what will be tested
- from their lecturers and tutors by asking questions
- within peer and study groups through discussion

from texts or readings, handouts, laboratories, field trips, old exam papers

## Successful Students

### Have a designated place of study with attention to

- lighting
- fresh air
- temperature
- posture
- noise and interruptions

### Are systematic and regular in their study habits

- know how to make the best use of the day and are aware of their own learning preferences
- know how long their concentration span is
- take regular breaks
- have an 'end' time pre-determined

### Are better organized

- start early in the semester
- set up a revision schedule
- have a clearly defined overview of each paper
- use a variety of methods
- know the format of the exam and the style of questions likely to be asked

read course handouts; ask tutors, lecturers; find old exam/test papers

practice answering questions; SQ3R; memorise, summarise

length: multichoice, short answer, short paragraph, essay; open book; resources allowed ('cheat' sheet, calculator etc.); choice of questions

## A suggested system for exam preparation

### First Review - for each subject

Brainstorm main ideas, concepts and understanding. Check for omissions and errors and add or correct where necessary.

Try to complete this review for all subjects before starting the second review for all.

### Second Review - for each subject

For each concept or topic, note the key words, definitions, meanings of terms, key facts and key people, important opinions, current thinking, examples or case studies and expand ideas via mind maps, graphs, diagrams, lists, summaries, etc.

Check that your information is correct and complete before changing to the next subject.

### Third Review: the BIG one - for each subject

For each topic, after revising course and lecture notes, expand knowledge and understanding via extra reading, research, discussion groups, practice questions.

Several sessions per subject will need to be set aside for this period of study

This is the main body of revision work - the previous two revisions are 'mind setters'.

### Fourth Review - for each subject

Summarise and review via brainstorms or fast recall of key words or mnemonics.

This should be a summary of everything you will need to 'trigger' your recall in the exam.