



The Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment

Exam tips during remote multimodal teaching and learning June 2020

Before the Online Exam: Prepare

1. Make sure you understand your instructor's expectations for the exam and that you clearly understand the exam framework:

- Read and understand the test guidelines.
- When will you have access to the exam?
- How much time will you have to write the exam?
- Determine when you will take the test. You may have to take the exam at a specific time; however, if the test will be available for several hours (or even a few days), choose a time that presents the least potential for distraction, interruption, and stress.
- Do you need to complete the exam in one sitting? Or can you take a break and come back to it later?
- Know the test format. What kinds of questions will the instructor use on the exam—multiple-choice, fill-in, short answer, essay, synthesis, application? Perhaps a combination of various types?
- What materials are you allowed to consult? All course materials? Google? Outside research articles?
- How can you ask for clarification, if you need it, once you've started writing?
- Remember - academic integrity still applies.
- Consult the General Rules and Policies Handbook and see for eg. G20.11 on plagiarism and dishonesty: "Dishonesty, including plagiarism or the submission by students of other people's work as their own, or the writing of work on behalf of others, in an examination or any other form of assessment will be dealt with in terms of the disciplinary rules and as per Examination and Assessment Committee (E&AC). NOTE: This rule must be read in conjunction with DP5.12".

2. Check your computer:

- Avoid last-minute problems! Ensure that your device has all the correct hardware and software well in advance of the exam. Also, make sure you'll be in a location with adequate Internet connection.

3. Prepare and study notes:

- Even if the test is "open book," it's still important to study and review just as if you were taking the test in a classroom.

- Start by preparing good study notes from the lecture notes/slides, course readings, and other course materials.
- Organise your notes based on the course organisation: themes, theories, processes, equations, data trends, etc.

4. Plan your time:

- Timing – the most important component! Plan the time you have per question based on grade/weighting and total time allocated. Check your pace and skip ahead if you need to.
- Example: 75 multiple choice questions in 2 hours = 1.5 minutes per question – 20 questions should take 30 min max. Check your pace!
- Reading the question – understand what the question is asking; identify key words in the question.
- For multiple choice questions, review all responses before selecting – analyse your options.

5. Try to carve out a quiet test-taking spot with minimal distractions as far as possible:

- Turn off all notifications from IM, your phone, your email, and elsewhere (or, set them to silent); shut off the TV and radio; let your roommates or family know that you'll be taking a test, so that they're less likely to interrupt you during that time.

6. Gather all that you'll need to take the test:

- If you can have materials such as notes, books, or writing implements with you, be sure that they're set to go.

7. Take a deep breath:

- Once you're logged in, take a moment to relax and get focused.

During the Online Exam: Focus

1. Keep an eye on the clock:

- You may want to set an alarm to notify you when you have limited time (e.g., 10 minutes) remaining in your testing period.

2. If allowed by your instructor, print or take a screenshot and save copies of the test questions, as well as your answers:

- These will prove extremely helpful if you have technical problems during the test or if you encounter issues while submitting your answers.
- If allowed by your instructor, first, write short-answer or essay questions in a word-processing program. This makes it easier to edit and check your work. Once you're done, then cut and paste your answer into the designated field on your exam site.

3. Don't leave the test page:

- If you are permitted to search the web or check other websites for information, do not use the same tab or copy of the browser as you do for your exam—you may lose all your work.

Instead, open a second copy of your browser (or, choose a completely different browser), then conduct your search.

4. Experiencing technical problems:

- Don't panic.
- Contact your instructor immediately, detailing the exact problem that occurred and any error messages you might have received. If you can take a screen shot, that is helpful as well.

5. Check your work before you submit it:

- Ensure that every answer is complete and appears as you intended.
- Review the accuracy of your answers, as well as your spelling and grammar.

6. Click submit:

- You should only need to do so once, but if you have a problem, try once more. If you still have a problem submitting the test, let your instructor know immediately, and send your intended answers in an attached document.

After the Online Exam: Review

1. Assess *your own* progress:

- How do *you* believe you did? What questions did you find confusing? Did you have to skip anything? Return to your notes and readings and see if you can find the answers to the questions that challenged you.

2. Check your grade:

- In some cases, you may be able to learn your grade immediately. However, exams with written answers will take longer for your instructor to grade, so allow some time to find out your score.

3. Ask yourself how you can improve on the next exam:

- Did your study strategies work? Did your plan for taking the test online prove successful? Write down your observations and keep them in mind for the next time you take a test. (Watkins and Corry, 183-185).
- In terms of preparing for the test/exam, how would you rate your level of involvement and effort at working through recommended material and hours spent on the course, before Covid-19 (low, medium, high) and during Covid-19 (low, medium, high)?

References:

Watkins, Ryan and Corry, Michael. 2014. *E-Learning Companion: A Student's Guide to Online Success*. 4th ed. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

