

## Introduction

Preparing for exam during the study break is often one of the many challenges that students have to grapple with during this short pre-exams preparation period. Students often find this period too short because they feel inundated with sheer amount of revision work they have to do before the exams. With several modules to cover in a relatively short time, students are often not sure how to proceed. With learning activities now fully online, which is new for many students, the likelihood of students being overwhelmed is more, as many of them do not know what to expect as far as taking exams online is concerned. There is also the uncertainty around how to prepare for such exams. This section provides some quick tips to serve as a guide to students on how to prepare for online exams during the study break.

## Basic preparations tips

As you may know, the study break is short period, often a one-week period, scheduled to give students the opportunity to prepare for exams. This period is most likely the only time you will have completely free to dedicate to studying before the exams. There may be no classes or other formal academic activities, yet the time is limited and how you use it is crucial. This means that you have to plan your time in such a way that you are able to fit all of the revision work you need to do for all your modules into that short week.

- **Increase revision time:** Revision of work done should be regular and ongoing throughout the academic year – however, you do have to increase revision time as the exams draw closer.
- **Do an audit of time available** – It is important to analyse and be aware of how much time you have available for preparation before the time you are scheduled to write the exams.
- **Do an audit of the subjects and quantity of work** – You need to have a sense of the amount of work you have to get through before exams. Go through the learner guides and your notes for all your modules, and make a list of every topic you need to do revision for, and then plan your study strategies.
- **Set goals per study sessions** – Plan study sessions and determine what you are going to do in each session - do not be distracted by all the work you have to do.
- **Stay focused** – You must focus on achieving the goals you set for each session.
- **Allocate more time for modules you are struggling with** – Do not neglect any module, but it will be beneficial to allocate more time to modules that you find difficult. The more time you spend engaging with a specific module or topic, the more likely it is that you will understand the content better.

## Preparing your revision timetable

- Below are some things you need to pay attention to when setting up your revision timetable:
- Make use of your weekly timetable template
- Audit the number of hours you have per day
- Add up the available time for each week so that you know your available hours
- Work out how many topics per module you need to study – go back to the assessment criteria in your study guide to remind yourself about what you are expected to master for the module.

## During the study session

During the study session, you need to:

- Select the sections of work you want to cover in a given timeframe.
- Divide a set amount of time into sections, for example, if you have allocated 5 hours to study on a Monday, divide the 5 hours between sections of work you want to cover in the 5 hours.
- Take breaks – assess how much time you can study for, before you start losing concentration; 30, 45 or 50 minutes.
- Use past papers/questions – practice answering them so that you get used to how to interpret questions and the instruction words.
- You also need to practice how to manage for your various modules during the exams. A clock timer could be useful.

## Preparing for online examinations

Here are some practical guidelines for preparing for online examinations:

- **Arm yourself with necessary information.** Make sure you have all the necessary information about the online exams - duration of the exam, format, scheduled time and date.
- **Work on the previous questions.** Practice answering some past questions during your revision.
- **Check that your computer or smart cell phone** is in good working condition – you need to avoid stressful technical issues during exams. Ensure that that your computer or smart cell phone is compatible with the platform, or suitable for the format of the exam you are going to take.
- **Ensure good internet connectivity and sufficient data.** You need to make sure that you will have good internet connectivity and sufficient data to last of the duration of the exam.
- **Get a suitable spot.** Identify/get a suitable spot in your home/space with limited distractions, to ensure that you complete your exams minimal or no disturbance.
- **Plan your time.** You will already be aware of the date, time and format of the exam, now you need to know how much time is allocated to each section, and relatively how long it will take you to complete each of the exam section, then plan your time accordingly.

## Summary

The study break period is a short, but crucial time for preparing for exams, especially with additional need to learn how to take exams effectively on the online platforms. Proper planning of study and revision activities during that period is therefore very important.

Random or casual approach towards exam preparation should be avoided as this could lead to inadequate preparation for all exams. Adequate preparation is only possible if students make sure that each study session is planned for, and proper and realistic goals set for the sessions.

Such study sessions should be scheduled for times when they are most alert for optimal results. In order to keep concentration optimal, students also need to pay attention to their preferred learning styles. As most exams are now online, it is important to ensure that students gather detailed information about all the online exams they will be taking.

## References

Rees, C. 2019. How to prepare for online exams: Student Life Network. Canada, Toronto