

EXAM PREPARATION

Organisation

Firstly, you should look at the **Time Management PDF online**. **This advice will help you to organise the tasks that need to be completed in preparation for an exam.** If you are preparing for a topic covered in a module, consider the following tasks:

- Have you **gathered all your extra reading material**?
- Have you **reviewed and photocopied** the relevant material?
- Have you **filed your notes** for each topic?
- Is there **anything that you need to ask the lecturer or tutor about**? You may need to send a query to your lecturer/ tutor, e.g.:
 - o Difficulty in understanding an element?
 - o Further sources for a specific term or topic.
 - o Advice regarding what you have already completed?
- Have you **organised a study space**?
- Have you **arranged a study group** to look at areas that you may be strong/ weak in?
- Have you signed up for **Skills Centre sessions**/ Writing Clinics/ Advisor Appointment to improve your academic skills?

TOP TIP

You should break down tasks into smaller actions, in preparation for an exam. For example, simply getting extra material from the library:

1. Time travelling to college
2. Gathering and reviewing material
3. Photocopying material
4. Filing material

You need to acknowledge how long each task is taking even before you begin studying.

This is a sample of some of the tasks you will be completing and they take time!

These **small tasks should be part of a checklist** that can be used for each topic.

| Time | Mon. | | Tues. | | Wed. | |
|-------|--|------|--|------|---|------|
| | Planned | Done | Planned | Done | Planned | Done |
| 08:00 | Photocopy Ryan's 1996 article | ✓ | Review notes from final lecture | ✓ | Create Flashcards for Topic 4. | ✗ |
| 09:00 | Review Ryan's article | ✗ | Select extra reading material for Topic 1. | ✓ | | |
| 10:00 | Paraphrase ideas | ✗ | | | Unpacking a Question in the Skills Centre | ✓ |
| 11:00 | Write one paragraph for Section C of the exam. | ✓ | Research the term "histography" | | | |
| 12:00 | | | | | | |
| 13:00 | Lunch | - | Lunch | - | Lunch | - |
| 14:00 | | | | | | |
| 15:00 | Time Management in the Skills Centre | ✓ | | | | |
| 16:00 | | | Edit 3 paragraphs of prepared answer for question 5. | ✓ | Select chapters from Meaney's 2004 book and photocopy | ✓ |
| 17:00 | | | | | File Meaney's material | ✓ |

Past Exam Papers



TOP TIP

Reviewing the past questions and marking scheme will let you know how much time you have for each section/ question in the exam paper.

You should **familiarise yourself with the material that the markers are looking for by looking at Canvas, lecture notes, reading lists, etc.** You can **identify gaps in your knowledge by reviewing the marking scheme and reading previous year's questions.**

You should check the content of the past papers and ask yourself:

- Which **topics** have come up?
- What is the **style of question?**
- Look at the **marking scheme**
- **Compare exams papers to your tutorials/ lectures.**

TOP TIP

You should be able to list the number of topics that you need to cover through an analysis of the past papers and your lecture notes. This should allow you to create a checklist to ensure that you are well prepared for the exam.

Reviewing

In the lead up to an exam **you should ensure that you understand how to read the question.** In other words, do you know the difference between discuss, criticise, analyse, describe, etc. You **should be aware of the use of the terms that are used in questions** and what these terms are asking of you as the student.

You should be able to **reduce any notes that you have made into flashcards and test yourself** on a question from each area.

Increase Your Brain Power

This goes without saying – **you have to look after yourself!** A healthy body equals a healthy mind and you will need your **brain power to be in optimum condition** in preparation for upcoming exams! **It is important to balance study and life healthily** and avoid any burnouts.

- Get enough sleep
- Eat properly
- Giving yourself breaks
- Exercise
- **Hydrate**
- Take vitamins if you need them

TOP TIP

These activities should be scheduled into your timetable. They are just as important as studying! If your mind is in a good place, you can be more efficient with other tasks.

The Night Before . . .

- **Check the time and venue of exam (see the useful links below)**
- **Only review notes for the exam on the next day.** Avoid overloading yourself with material.
- **Remind yourself of exam structure**
- **Pack** bag, pens, ID, water, watch, etc.
- **Choose comfortable clothes**
- Wear layers

Day of the Exam . . .

Have a plan:

- Take a few moments to **settle yourself** in the exam hall
 - o Sit with your feet flat on the ground
 - o Take a few deep breaths
- **Write your name, student no., exam no., and module code on each answer book**
- Read the **whole exam paper** before you start your answers and **planning out answers is a great way to keep you on track with the question asked!**

TOP TIP

Don't answer the question that you were hoping for – answer the question that is asked!

Exam Techniques

Once you decide what questions to answer:

- **Underline key words**
- **Write down any phrases/theories/definitions/formulae** needed for each answer
- **In the rough work section, write outline answers/mind maps/bullet points**
- **Gather information from other questions on exam**

TOP TIP

Remember someone has to read your paper, so write as legibly as possible.

Time Management in the Exam

- **Allot time** for all questions required
- **Allow time for review**
- Watch your time and use it wisely
- **Be aware of time limit**
- Start with the question you feel most confident about

TOP TIP

Make sure to proportion time per question based on marks and use any extra time to review your answers rather than leaving the exam hall early.

After the Exam

Let it go! It's over! **Move on to next exam topic and remember, we are the worst judges of how we have performed.**

Useful links

- <https://libguides.ucc.ie/libraryessentials/exampapers>
- <https://www.ucc.ie/en/exams/timetables-venues/>
- <https://www.ucc.ie/en/exams/procedures-regulations/>

Other Relevant Online PDFs

- Time Management
- Notetaking for Lectures
- Notetaking for Academic Reading
- Unpacking the Question
- Study Skills
- Essay Planning & Structuring