

Tips for alternative exams

Prepare for the 2020 first semester
examinations



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The information in this document was correct as on 15 May 2020. Visit myUnisa for regular updates about the examinations.

The May/June 2020 examinations will be in the form of non-venue-based online assessments. Taking the online assessment for the first time can be quite overwhelming. With every change it is normal to experience some level of anxiety.

Getting ready



Know the game

- The 1st semester examination period is from 25 May-7 July 2020.
- The final examination timetables for the May/June 2020 exam period will be e-mailed to students over the weekend of the 16-17 May 2020.

- Regularly check your **myLife e-mail account and Myunisa** for important notices about the examinations.
- For each module, you will receive a link that contains a step-by-step guide on the specific assessment method applicable to the module.
- Your exam session includes the provision for time to download the examination question paper and then to upload your responses. This impacts on the commencement time of each assessment (e.g. Session 1, 07:45-10:30; 2 hour examination plus 15 minutes to download the examination and 30 minutes to upload your responses).
- See <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Announcements/May-June-2020-examination-arrangements> for further details.
- According to Professor McKay, students have a choice to type their answers, or they have the choice to write, scan and upload their answers. As part of your preparation, it is advised to practise scanning in a document beforehand so that you are familiar with doing this during the examination itself.

Set the scene

- **Identify and create an environment** that is conducive to write your exam. Set up your venue as if it was the traditional exam. Set up a table and chair. Sit in upright position – do not sit on the floor or on your bed, etc.
- **Have a pen and paper ready to make notes/ do calculations.**
- Create space for your notes and study material. If the exam is an open book examination it means that you can have your books, study material, and notes. If it is NOT an Open Book exam using your texts or notes during the exam is CHEATING.
- **Identify a space to put and to connect your device** (laptop, desktop, tablet or phone). Test the device to ensure that it works well, charge it, and ensure you have data or a wi-fi connection.
- Before the exam **make sure that you are familiar with your device** and you know where to find things. For example, if you need a specific app (MS Word to practise writing sentences, essays or short paragraphs), then download this and learn how to use this before the examination.

Play the game (the day of the exam)

- **Put your phone on silent** to avoid calls and put off social media before your exam to avoid unnecessary interruptions. You can also use your headphones to block noise.
- Once you have logged on for your exam, take a deep breath to **relax and get yourself focused**. Go through the exam instructions carefully. Check the time allocation, mark allocation, how to save, how to submit, etc.
- Be strategic: **read through sections and questions before starting**. It pays off to start where you are most confident.
- **Have a watch to track time**. Plan your time for all questions – this helps to reduce stress. In your time allocation, also keep 10 -15 minutes to go through your paper. Allocate time to check your work before you submit it.
- **Remember, if you are unable to complete the non-venue-based assessment, irrespective of the reason, you will automatically be deferred to the October/November 2020 examination period, free of charge** (<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Announcements/May-June-2020-examination-arrangements>).

Self-care

- **Allow your body and mind to rest well** (6-7 hours). Do not study throughout the night. Do not drink too much water/ drink/energy drinks or coffee, especially on the exam day in order not to waste time.
- **Work through Anxiety:**
 - a. Think about past achievements, to remind yourself that you “Can do it”.
 - b. Visualise success. Repeatedly say a mantra to calm you (e.g. I can do this”).
 - c. Exercise (this can be indoors; if outdoors, adhere to lockdown rules)
 - d. Listen to music that uplifts you or watch videos that entertain you (e.g. watch comedy, cartoons).

- e. Reflect on what worked for you (from planning, study technique, preparation to examination).
- f. Implement positive actions.

Learn from others

- Exam preparation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKLvU7DEekA&feature=youtu.be>
- Concentration tips: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1UaU6O59tg>
- Relaxation exercise – focus on the deep breathing technique: <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/relaxation-techniques-for-stress-relief.htm>
- Dance Therapy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xs3Lz2_RAYo
- Mindfulness relaxing music for stress relief - calm instrumental background music for relaxation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qB0Gms_GrtQ

References

- Announcement on Myunisa: May/June 2020 examination arrangements <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Announcements/May-June-2020-examination-arrangements>
- Relaxation techniques for Stress relief: <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/relaxation-techniques-for-stress-relief.htm>
- Mphaphuli T (2020), It's all systems go for Unisa's online examinations. Unisa Department of Institutional Advancement.
- Announcement on myUnisa: <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Announcements/Final-examination-timetables-for-the-May-June-2020-exam-period-to-be-e-mailed-to-students-over-the-weekend-of-16-to-17-May-2020>

Counselling and career development

Unisa Counselling and Career Development offers career-, academic- and personal counselling services to Unisa students and the broader community. You can talk to a counsellor about:

- **Career decisions.** I am not sure which career path to follow; I do not know which qualification would be best; I want to change my career direction...
- **Career information.** How can I find out more about a career in ...
- **Employability.** How do I market myself to employers? How can I look for work? How can I compile an effective CV? How do I go about networking with others? How do I put together my career portfolio? How can I meet potential employers? How can I improve my interview skills?)
- **My studies at Unisa.** How can I get started with my studies? How do I plan my studies? How can I study more effectively? I do not feel motivated to continue with my studies... I feel worried about preparing for/ writing the exams. I failed my exams – what now? I need to improve my reading/ writing/ numeracy skills
- **Personal issues.** How can I have better relationships with others? How can I cope more effectively with issues that impact on my studies?

Contact us

Visit our website at <http://www.unisa.ac.za/counselling> to access many self-help resources

Talk to a counsellor by e-mail to counselling@unisa.ac.za or contact Counselling and Career Development at a [regional centre closest to you](#).