

Preparing for online exams

Counselling and
Career
Development

October 2020



Define tomorrow.

Before the Online Exam

- **Read and understand the test guidelines** on myUnisa and check your myLife account regularly.
- **Know the exam format:** What kinds of questions will the instructor use on the exam e.g., multiple-choice, fill-in, short answer, essay, or perhaps a combination of various types?
- **Test yourself:** Use your assignments, learning objectives, and previous exam papers to test yourself.
- **Check your device:** Avoid last-minute problems! Whether you're using your own computer, tablet, or cellphone, verify that it has all the correct hardware and software well in advance. Make sure that you know how to use the programmes you may need to use (e.g. MS Word for Essay questions). Make sure that you have enough data and/or a stable wi-fi connection.

Before the Online Exam

- **Plan your time:** plan how long you will spend on each question (e.g. if the exam is one hour, how much time do you have to spend in one question?)
- **Carve out a quiet spot with minimal distractions:** Turn off all notifications from all your social media or set them to silent. Turn off the TV and radio. Let your family know that you'll be completing an exam, so that they're less likely to interrupt you during that time.

Before the Online Exam

- **Determine when you will take the exam:** You will have to start and submit the exam at specific times; however, if the exam will be available for several hours (or even a few days), choose a time that presents the least potential for distraction, interruption and stress.
- **Gather all that you'll need to complete the exam:** If you can have materials such as notes, books, or writing implements with you, be sure that they're set to go.
- **Take a deep breath:** Once you're logged in, take a moment to relax and get focused.

During the Online Exam

- **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 of your exam time.
- **Technical problems:** Don't panic. Contact your lecturer immediately by sending an email using myLife, detailing the exact problem that occurred and any error messages you might have received. If you can take a screen shot, that would be helpful as well.



During the Online Exam

- **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.
- **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 lecturer know immediately and follow the instructions as provided.



After the online exam: Review

- **Assess your own progress:** How do you believe you did? What questions did you find confusing? Did you have to skip anything?
- **Ask yourself how you can improve on the next exam:** Did your study strategies work? Did your plan for taking the exam online prove successful?
- **Write down your observations** and keep them in mind for the next time complete an exam.



Relaxation Techniques for Stress Relief

Finding the best relaxation technique for you:

- You need to **activate your body's natural relaxation response**, a state of deep rest that puts the brakes on stress, slows your breathing and heart rate, lowers your blood pressure, and brings your body and mind back into balance.
- You can do this by **practicing relaxation techniques** such as deep breathing, meditation, rhythmic exercise, yoga, or tai chi.
- It's important to remember, however, that there is **no single relaxation technique that works for everyone**. We're all different.

DEEP BREATHING

- Sit comfortably with your back straight. Put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
- Breathe in through your nose. The hand on your stomach should rise. The hand on your chest should move very little.
- Exhale through your mouth, pushing out as much air as you can while contracting your abdominal muscles. The hand on your stomach should move in as you exhale, but your other hand should move very little.
- Continue to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale enough so that your lower abdomen rises and falls. Count slowly as you exhale.

Progressive muscle relaxation

- Loosen clothing, take off your shoes, and get comfortable.
- Take a few minutes to breathe in and out in slow, deep breaths.
- When you're ready, shift your attention to your right foot. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.
- Slowly tense the muscles in your right foot, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10.
- Relax your foot. Focus on the tension flowing away and how your foot feels as it becomes limp and loose.
- Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.
- Shift your attention to your left foot. Follow the same sequence of muscle tension and release.
- Move slowly up through your body, contracting and relaxing the different muscle groups.
- It may take some practice at first, but try not to tense muscles other than those intended.

Rhythmic movement and mindful exercise



walk



run



climb



dance



cycle



swim

Stay Motivated!

Anyone who has ever had a goal probably understands that having the desire to achieve something is not enough. One of the major factors to get succeed is the motivation to study for exams.

Motivation can be the strongest pillar of your success.

Motivation leads you to put your efforts in the right direction.

It increases your determination to study.

It helps to increase your intellectual ability.

It fuels your brain with positivity.

It boosts up your self-confidence.

Motivation helps to take control of your negative thoughts.

Keep your end goal in mind - but also use interim goals along the way

- One of the best ways to stay motivated is to remember why you are studying in the first place.
- It is generally easier to stay motivated if your studying becomes part of your everyday life and routine.

Thank you

Visit the **Counselling website:**

<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/myunisa/default/Learner-support-&-regions/Counselling-and-career-development/Downloads-and-podcasts>

- **Some examples of topics** include preparing for exams, managing stress.
- Listen to the podcasts and identify tips to implement

Visit our Youtube channel: www.youtube.com/unisacareers

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