

Navigating Online Exams (Slide 1)

Hello and welcome to the Student Success Center's video series on navigating online exams. I'm Dina Taher, one of the Academic Development Specialists at the Student Success Center. My colleague, Maryanne Howell and myself have created a series of videos to help support you with online exams. This particular short video focuses on some important preparations to make before you even begin to write your online exam.

Before the Exam (Slide 2)

Success in online test-taking is not restricted to the time you spend writing the exam. In an online setting, there are important measures to take before, during, and even after the test is completed to ensure you do well.

Before an exam, you will need to know how you will be tested, what you will be tested on, the type of technology you will be using, and who to reach out to in case of technical issues. Now let's take a look at each one of these points in more detail.

Know How You Will Be Tested (Slide 3)

To know how you will be tested, make sure you read your course outlines as well as check-in with your instructor.

One of the most important issues to know for online exams is whether the exam is open book or open web, or if it is a closed book exam and you are not permitted to use any external materials at all. Don't assume that just because it is an online exam, that it will be open book. If it is not clear or you're unsure, make sure you ask your instructor in order to avoid inadvertently breaking an academic integrity policy.

Another factor to know for your online exam is the time limit given. You may have an unlimited time to complete the test, a 24-hour window with a fixed amount of time provided, or a specific date and time that the test is available for completion.

Besides timing, another factor that is sometimes overlooked is how many attempts you have at an exam. Your instructor may build additional attempts into your exams just in case of technical issues or if the test times out. Check ahead of time to see if they have done this.

Know What You Will Be Tested On (Slide 4)

The next point to clarify before the exam is what you will be tested on. Your instructors likely will not focus on memorization style questions because those answers can be found very easily in a textbook or in your notes, and you're not being tested on your ability to look things up. University studying and especially online assessments focus on higher levels of learning, specifically your ability to evaluate, analyze, and apply knowledge.

The pyramid pictured here is known as Bloom's Taxonomy. Here, the lower levels of understanding and remembering cover very basic concepts like knowing definitions, recalling dates, and basic explanations. In an online test setting, especially in an open book exam, these types of questions are not an accurate gauge of your knowledge on a subject, because these are things that can be easily located in a textbook and recited on the test. Online exams don't test your memory, but rather your understanding. So you're likely to see more questions that fall

in that middle range of the pyramid that ask you to apply or analyze a concept or take a very close look at a topic. One way you can tailor your studying to these types of questions is to connect course material with other sources of information, such as the learning outcomes listed on the course outlines.

Know What Technology You Will Be Using (Slide 5)

The next point is technology. It's important to become familiar with the technology you will be using on the exam. The first step is to test your computer. Make sure your computer is charged or plugged in, and that the Wi-Fi connection is adequate in the exact spot you'll be taking the exam, whether that will be in your house or elsewhere.

After testing your computer, consider your comfort level with the software you are using. Follow-up with your instructor or IT if you have any questions about a platform such as D2L and how it works, and keep an eye out on the Student Success Center's online learning page for further supports with practice tests on D2L. It's better to practice in a test space when the stakes are low, then to mis-click something during an exam and have to troubleshoot a solution.

Lastly, it's a good idea to check in with the instructor to see what the other technology you are able to use. This might include typing responses into a word process software like Pages or Word, and then pasting them into the test, or using a citation management program like Mendeley or Zotero.

Know What Additional Materials You Can Use (Slide 6)

If your exam is open book or open web, there are steps you can take to make it easier to find necessary information. After your instructor confirms what materials you can reference, create an index of that material while you're studying so you can easily access the information during the exam. If you're accessing material from the web or are allowed access to online content, make sure you have a separate window open to search in so that you don't accidentally close or hit the back button on your exam.

Know Who to Reach Out To (Slide 7)

It is very important to have a communication plan laid out in order to know who to reach out to in case something goes wrong in the middle of your exam. Check with your prof ahead of time so everyone is clear on what to do in the event of technical issues and have their email handy so you can contact them right away.

Also, it is a good idea to open the IT's website in a separate window or tab. IT offers live chat and phone support during business hours. Make sure you check out their webpage for more information.

<https://ucalgary.service-now.com/it>

In addition, it's also wise to know when your instructor is available for support. If you have a 24-hour window to write the exam and you choose to write it at 10pm on the day it is due, be aware that your instructor may be unable to support you at that time. If the prof has not mentioned how they will handle things, it is within your right as a student to ask. Odds are other students in your class are also curious about how unforeseen circumstances will be handled.

Questions or Additional Support (Slide 8)

Thank you for watching our video on Navigating Online Exams and the important preparations to make before you begin your exam.

If you have any questions or are looking for additional support with online learning strategies, please visit the Student Success Center's webpage to book a zoom or phone appointment with an Academic Development Specialist.

<https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success>