The Exam Period

With the number of people that contact me with the same questions about EXAMS, I thought I might as well consolidate all the information into one newsletter. I know it’s stressful and a crazy time of the semester. Hang in there, I’m confident that you’ll make it through. If any of you need to contact me, you can always email me at BAS@uoguelph.ca. Good luck on your finals everyone! Keep up the good work! I’m rootin’ for ya!

Let’s just say...hypothetically...you missed an exam. For some reason. What should you do?

The first thing YOU need to do is contact me. Right away. Even if it’s after hours, email me. Right away. If you contact me much later after the fact...that tells me that you weren’t too concerned about it...therefore, why should I be? Of course, in an event of a family or medical emergency, obviously, just let me know when you can.

The next thing you will need to do is make a request for academic consideration. How do you do this? You come to my office and we fill out the paper work. In order to make a request for academic consideration, you need to have a valid reason for not writing the exam (ie. medical, psychological, compassionate, etc.).

If there’s any chance that you will perform badly for a valid reason, don’t write the exam. It’s always easier to request academic consideration to write a deferred exam than it is to write an exam when you’re not well and totally blow it. Serious. Plus, if you blow it, it’s hard to tell if it was because you weren’t well or if you just didn’t know the material. Once you write an exam, it’s always harder to do anything about it. At the end of the day, if you can write the exam, you should write the exam...but hey, LIFE happens. Just make sure to be in contact with me at bas@uoguelph.ca. Promise?

After the exam period, I get a list of students that didn’t write final exams or complete a major portion of their course work (ie. major paper, lab reports, presentation, etc.). I then match up the list from the instructors with any requests for academic considerations and contact the students for more info if necessary. Depending on the situation, we will request a deferred exam. This will obviously depend on your reason for missing the exam in the first place. Do you have documentation that supports the reason for missing it (ie. health services, counseling services, etc.)?

If you have any questions or are unsure about anything, please email me right away at bas@uoguelph.ca.

But this was all hypothetical anyway...right?
EXAM FAQs

Q: I have 3 exams in 24 hours. I heard that this isn't supposed to happen and I can move one.
A: Sadly...this does happen (quite often actually) and there really isn't much we can do about it. The only time that there's a problem is if you have 2 exams scheduled for the exact same time and day. Anything other than that is not a conflict. It's just a bad exam schedule. You've had this exam schedule since the beginning of the semester, so you've had plenty of time to plan accordingly. In some cases, people have asked one of their instructors to see if they can write one of the exams at another time. It never hurts to ask...but the instructors don't HAVE to. My best suggestion is to just plan out your study schedule and stick to it.

Q: What happens if I miss an exam?
A: Well, it all depends on why you miss that exam. Did you sleep in? Did you read the time wrong? Did you just forget? For any of these reasons...there's not a whole lot we can do...but you should still contact your program counselor ASAP. If it's after hours or on a weekend, send an email ASAP. It would also be prudent to send the instructor an email letting them know that you are in contact with me. And hey...RELAX...while it does suck...these things happen. I'll do my best to help you out. That being said...double check your exam schedule...get a buddy to make sure that you go to the exam together. Do it now. Seriously. Go. Now.

Q: Ok, but what if I miss the exam for a good reason?
A: Good reasons fall under 3 categories...medical, psychological and compassionate. If you aren't able to write an exam because of any of these reasons, you need to contact me ASAP. Also, we will need some sort of documentation supporting the circumstances (i.e. medical note from doctor, note from professional counsellor, an obituary, etc.).

Q: What if I'm starting to feel sick but I'm pretty sure I can still do the exam? Should I write it and see what happens?
A: Generally, if you are ever in a situation where you think that your ability to perform to the best of your abilities is not possible (i.e. your sick, personal/family emergency, etc.) then you should NOT write the exam. If you do poorly, it's always difficult to determine if you did poorly because of the circumstances or if you just didn't know the material. If you miss the exam, please keep in mind that you need to provide documentation to support the reason that you missed the exam. All that being said, if you are able to, you really should write the exam.

Q: When do I write my deferred exam(s)?
A: Deferred exams are always scheduled to be written in the following semester. You will be contacted via email and it will outline very clearly everything that you need to do.

Bottom line everyone...if you have any questions about exams, just email me at bas@uoguelph.ca GOOD LUCK!

Learning Commons & Exams...

Learning Services in the Library's Learning Commons continues to offer free, confidential appointments to discuss strategies for preparing for exams and studying effectively for different types of exam formats. Email learning@uoguelph.ca to set up an appointment. Please note that Writing Services does not offer appointments to undergraduate students during the exam period.
Ack, exams! With mid-terms and final exams, students have two goals. First, you want to ace the exams, or at least get decent grades and do as well as possible. Second, there's your sanity; you want to get through exams with a minimum of stress and test anxiety.

Fortunately, with the right study techniques, you can manage both your stress and do well on the exams. Here are some study tips for final exams to help you do well AND stay sane.

**Time management.** Plan, plan, plan. Before finals begin, get out your calendar and schedule as much of your exam period as possible. Then stick with the schedule.

**Schedule in study breaks.** Don't plan to study non-stop for the next two weeks. You'll go insane, and you'll be too tired to do well on the exams. When you write your schedule, include short study breaks to help you recharge. You'll feel so much better and will be able to concentrate so much more.

**Take advantage of study sheets and study sessions.** Just be careful not to use these as crutches. They're not supposed to replace studying.

**Schedule in sleep.** Some people can function well on three hours of sleep a night. Most cannot. You'll do much better during exams if your mental state is good, and sleep is essential for this.

**Exercise.** There's no better source for stress relief. Just don't overdo it to the point that you're procrastinating heavily. Go for short, stress-relieving activities, like racquetball or a treadmill run. And don't underestimate the value of a brisk walk.

**Prioritize.** You have limited time to study and will have to choose what to spend the most time with. You could spend hours and hours on that math exam because if you do really well, you might be able to pull off a C. Or you can spend hours and hours on a history exam because if you do well, you've got a good shot at an A. It's up to you.

**Form effective study groups.** Just don't waste your time with lousy ones. If it's not working for you, find one that does. Or make one.

**Free your schedule.** As much as possible, eliminate other responsibilities. Work fewer hours. Put off social events. Definitely put off shopping.

**Ask your instructors and TAs for help.** If you're confused about your notes or the readings, go to the resident expert. This works much better if you don't put off studying until the last minute. It's a good idea to read through all of your notes before you start to study, so that you can inquire early about things that confuse you.

**Keep things in perspective.** What's the worst thing that can happen if you don't do well on this test? Excessive stress will make you crazy and hurt your performance on tests, so as much as you can, relax. And if you're having serious problems with anxiety during final exams, seek help at your school's counseling center. This is a common problem that schools are well equipped to help you with.

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Reducing EXAM ANXIETY

Practice interrupting exam-anxious feelings. Reducing exam anxiety is a learned skill. Daily practice can lead to mastery. The more often you practice, the more responsive your body-mind will become. The more often you practice, the more likely you will remember to use them in the actual exam.

Use it!
Use your study sessions to practice the techniques. Use the techniques just prior to the exam. Deliberately take short time-out breaks during the exam and use the techniques to reduce your stress. Apply the techniques just after the exam is over. Use the techniques before you go to sleep, especially the night before the exam.

Techniques
Take a deep breath. Take a deep breath and hold it for three seconds. Exhale audibly all at once and let your head, jaw and shoulders drop. Breathe easy ‘into’ your neck, jaw and shoulders and breathe again into the relaxed state. Repeat cycle once or twice.

Total tension release
Tense your whole body one part at a time. Lift your toes and tense both calves. Tense your thighs and buttocks. Tighten your abdomen. Tense your chest and back. Tighten your arms and clench your fists. Tense your neck and clench your jaw. Tightly close your eyes. Take a deep breath and hold it for five seconds. Let it go at once. Notice the tension leaving your body and repeat the cycle. Focus on your arms and hands and repeat the cycle. Focus on your shoulders, neck, jaw and face and repeat the cycle. Focus on your total body tension and repeat the cycle.

Focus on your feet and legs
Imagine them becoming warmer and warmer. Imagine them becoming heavier and heavier. Imagine them becoming warmer. Imagine them becoming heavier. Continue focusing on your feet and legs. Imagine the tension in the rest of your body flowing downward into your feet and legs making them heavier and warmer. Emphasize exhalation in your breathing.

Breathe your tensions away
Focus on your feet and legs. Draw all tensions into your breath. Exhale through your mouth. Expel those tensions away from your body. Focus on your abdomen and repeat the cycle. Focus on your chest and back and repeat the cycle. Focus on your abdomen and repeat the cycle. Focus on your chest and back and repeat the cycle.

Relaxation sanctuary
Focus on the inner screen of your mind’s eye. Imagine your ideal safe, relaxing place. In your mind, send yourself there for 15 to 30 seconds. Breathe easily and enjoy the relaxation. Close your eyes. Go there anytime you need a quick relaxing break.

Mindfulness of breathing
Focus on the tip of your nostrils. Notice the air only at that point. Cool going in and warm going out. Notice the sensation of the contact of air against your skin. Notice if your breath is fast or slow; deep or shallow; rough or smooth and easy.

Smile!
Really feel that smile spread throughout your body. Take a deep breath and exhale through your mouth.

If exam anxiety persists even after using these methods, please contact University’s Counselling Services at counsel@uoguelph.ca for further assistance and support.

Original article published online at http://lss.athabascau.ca/counselling/exam_anxiety.php/anxiety_reduction
More important info that you WILL find useful!...

- Exam schedules are set during the Add Period of every semester. It is YOUR responsibility to know where and when your exams are and to ensure that you do not have any exams scheduled at the same time on the same day.

- The Honey badger, Africa’s most fearless animal is listed as the “most fearless animal in the world” in the 2002 Guinness Book of Records.

- During EXAMS I don’t have drop in hours, but I’ll be in my office most of the day any way. Let me know if you would like to meet!

- Double check the date, time and location of your exam at the beginning of the exam period. Do it now...I’ll wait.

- Honey badgers are reputed to go for the scrotum when attacking large animals.

- Marks are usually available on WebAdvisor 2-3 weeks after the end of the exam period.

- Badgers eat insect larvae, beetles, scorpions, lizards, rodents, birds, leguans, crocodiles (1m), pythons (3m), venomous adders, cobras, black mamba, springhare, polecat, foxes, jackals, antelope and wild cats. Hard core.

- Please get at least one other student to read this newsletter. Seriously, I don’t make these things for my health. (although it is kind of fun)

Not sure where to find information online?

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!!

www.uoguelph.ca/bas

Another option is to click “Current Students” on the UofG homepage...check out all the links!
Too tired to STUDY?

Feel like gravity seems to be working extra hard to shut your eyelids? Have you been reading the same sentence in your textbook for 15 minutes and you still don't know what it says? Get a whiff of this.

The scent of peppermint is like a drill sergeant, telling your brain to "Wake up and focus!" New research shows that you pay better attention to dull - but must-do jobs when this scent is around. So the next time you're mentally sluggish, grab a candy cane, chew a stick of peppermint gum, or inhale the scent of mint-infused oil, and then listen to your brain say, "Can do!"

Science has confirmed it: When there's a hint of mint wafting through the room, workers perform better on jobs that demand accuracy. In a study, participants made fewer typing mistakes and alphabetized things faster when under the influence of peppermint's aroma compared to tasks performed in a scent-free zone.

Using a scent for therapeutic purposes -- whether to boost your attention to detail, soothe your psyche, or help you lose weight -- is what aromatherapy's all about. It typically involves either inhaling the fragrance of scent-infused oils or applying diluted versions to the skin. The premise? Some scents stimulate brain activity that produces biological responses such as relaxation or mental clarity. Until recently, evidence supporting aromatherapy has been largely anecdotal. But more and more research now suggests that aromatherapy may have real psychological and medical benefits. Starting can be hard. What're you waiting for?! Sniff away my little workers bees!

“The bitterness of studying is preferable to the bitterness of ignorance” - Author Unknown