Higher Education Examinations
A Guide for Students

Rules and Guidance for Students
Higher Education Directorate

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Prepared by Higher Education Student Services

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Introduction
Examinations are important part of the overall assessment in most higher education courses offered by South Metropolitan TAFE. This booklet provides you with information and advice to get the best result from your exams. It also contains information about your rights and responsibilities when taking exams at South Metropolitan TAFE.

Exam Timetables
- You will receive your exam timetable via email at least four weeks prior to the two exam weeks. This timetable is also available on the higher education website.
- If your classmates have received a timetable and you haven’t please contact Higher Education Student Services.
- Please check your exam schedule and report any clashes of exam times immediately.
- It is your responsibility to know the date, time and location of your exams and to be at the designated venue on time.
- The room for your exam may be different from your regular classroom.

Deferred Examinations
- If you know you will be absent for an exam you will need to complete an application for deferred assessment prior to the scheduled exam date. Your completed application will need to be signed by your lecturer and submitted to Higher Education Student Services at least seven days prior to the exam.
- If you are sick or unable to attend an exam due to emergency or special circumstances you may apply for a deferred assessment no later than three working days after the date of the exam.
- You will need to supply supporting evidence such as medical certificate and/or other relevant documentation.
- The completed application and supporting evidence will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners and you will be advised of the outcome following their meeting.
- The submission of an Application for Deferred Assessment is no guarantee that your application will be approved.

Special needs
- Special arrangements will be provided for students with disabilities or temporary incapacity.
- You should contact the Higher Education Student Services at least two weeks prior to the scheduled exam date if you have special needs.
On the day of the exam

- You should be at the exam venue at least 10 minutes before the scheduled exam start time.
- Only students enrolled in the unit, the exam supervisor and other authorised personnel may enter the exam room during the exam.
- You will be required to sign the exam attendance sheet upon entering the exam room.
- You are required to have photographic identification and make this available to the exam supervisor. If you cannot provide suitable identification, the exam supervisor will take your photo to verify your identification with your lecturer.
- On some days exams for more than one unit will be held in the same room so please be considerate of others when entering and leaving exam rooms.
- If you arrive less than 20 minutes late you may sit the examination but will not be given extra time. If you arrive more than 20 minutes late you may be refused entry.

What can and can’t be taken into an exam

Bring:

- South Metropolitan TAFE student ID card or other photo ID (for example, Passport, drivers licence)
- Water bottle
- Writing materials (pens, pencil, ruler, eraser etc)
- If the exam is open book, the required text or notes.
- Calculator if permitted.

Don’t:

- Wear caps/hats. These are not permitted in the exam room unless for religious reasons.
- Disturb others if you leave the exam early. All bags must be left near the exit door.
- Bring laptops, palm computers or other electronic devices unless they are permitted.
- Bring mobile phones. Any mobile phone brought into the room must be turned off and left in your bag or with the exam supervisor.
- Bring electronic dictionaries. Students from non-English speaking backgrounds may bring an English/foreign language print dictionary, provided it has been approved by your lecturer.

If you are unsure what you can have with you during the exam, ask your lecturer or the exam supervisor prior to reading time.

During the exam

- Examinations are of two or three hour duration.
- All exams have 10 minutes reading time.
- Your lecturer will be present in the exam room or able to be contacted via phone during reading time and may answer clarification queries about the paper.
- Do not write on the exam paper until you are instructed to begin the examination.
- You are not permitted to leave the room until 40 minutes after the exam has started or during the last 30 minutes of the exam.
- If you need to go to the toilet or require the assistance of an exam supervisor, please raise your hand.
- Only one student is permitted to go to the toilet at any one time and will be attended by an exam supervisor. Students must empty their pockets of wallets and other articles before and after going to the toilet.
You must follow all directions detailed in the exam material provided, set out in any notice displayed in the exam room and/or provided by the exam supervisor.

During the exam you must not communicate or assist another to communicate in any way with any person other than the supervisor.

Any unauthorised material found after the examination starts will be regarded as possible evidence of cheating or attempting to do so.

If you disturb or distract any other student you may be required to leave the exam.

If you consider your performance has been adversely affected by illness, disability, bereavement or other special circumstance you may apply in writing to the Board of Examiners for special consideration.

After the exam

You may not take any papers or materials from the exam room unless permitted by the supervisor.

All final results will be confirmed by the Board of Examiners before being made available to you on myCampus.

You will be advised via email of the release date of the results.

myCampus can be accessed from the South Metropolitan TAFE (SMT) website. Logging in: Enter your User Name: Student ID Password: Student Password

If you are dissatisfied with the result of an assessment you may submit a written application for re-evaluation of the result to the relevant Discipline Leader/Course Coordinator.

You must lodge your application together with the reasons or supporting evidence within 10 working days of notification of the result.

Appeals against unit results

You may appeal against the final grade awarded in any unit.

An appeal must be submitted in writing through the relevant Higher Education Discipline Leader/Course Coordinator within 10 working days of the release date of student results.

Please refer to the Higher Education Assessment, Moderation and Appeals Policy (available on the South Metropolitan TAFE website) for information on valid and not valid grounds for submitting an appeal.

Unit Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HD</td>
<td>High Distinction</td>
<td>80 – 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>70 – 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>60 – 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>50 – 59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>Ungraded Pass</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>49% or below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNS</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Did not participate in all assessments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Advice and guidance on preparing for and sitting exams

At the beginning of your course

Refer to your unit guide to find out how and when you will be assessed. If you don’t know when the exams are, speak to your lecturers or Higher Education Student Services.

Find out what marks each
assessment and/or exam is worth as a percentage of your final grade. This will help you to identify which assessments will contribute most to your final grade.

- Read widely about your subjects including reading all required texts.
- Work out a study plan and a weekly study timetable and establish regular study habits. Build key assessment and/or exam dates into this plan.
- Use your plan or timetable to monitor your progress. If you fall behind on your plan or timetable, work out how to get back on track. Avoid falling behind further as you may become more stressed and anxious. Set yourself some realistic goals at each study period e.g. to cover a particular topic.
- If you don’t understand something ask your friends, parents/guardians or your lecturer for help. You may find that you can help a classmate in something they don’t understand - you may be able to help each other. Don’t stress yourself but take action to find out answers to problems.
- There is information and advice to help you study and complete assignments on the South Metropolitan TAFE library website and on Studying at SMT site.

**Tips for studying**

- Plan your approach to studying. Your lecturers can help advise you on how you should study for their subjects.
- There are many different ways to study. Some people prefer to study in silence, some like to work in the library and others prefer to work at home. At home, make sure you have a quiet area to study with no distractions. Turn the television off.

- Some people like to make short notes, others prefer to mix topics/subjects (eg difficult or easy topics). Students have also found that using key words, memory aids and practising exam questions helps them prepare. Wherever you choose to study make sure you have plenty of room to set out your notes and books so you are organised.
- Make sure you allow yourself time for fun and relaxation away from where you are studying so that you avoid exhaustion. You are not wasting time by taking some time out to relax from your studies but are helping yourself to work more effectively. Include regular breaks into your study plan or timetable and make sure you get enough exercise and sleep to keep yourself relaxed and refreshed. If you exercise you will be able to sleep better and you will wake up refreshed in the morning.
- If you feel you are starting to lose concentration, take a short
break. Your mind is probably tired and you will waste time trying to study. The break will mean that you will come back refreshed. Research shows that taking breaks (e.g. 10 minutes for every hour of studying) will help your brain to learn and remember things and also lengthen your concentration. Don’t overload your brain in a study session.

• If you prefer to study in the evening, don’t go straight to bed afterwards because your mind will still be thinking over what you have learnt. Take some exercise, go for a walk or do something else that will help relax you from your study time.

• Test yourself on what you have learnt as you study.

Tips for preparing for exams

• Make sure you check how many exams you will have, not all units have a final exam.

• Find out whether your exam will be multiple choice, essay, or open book (this information should be in the unit guide). Different types of exams may require different preparation.

• Make sure you leave plenty of time to revise and prepare for the exam so that you don’t have to cram at the last minute. If you plan you will become more confident and will be better prepared so you should also be more relaxed. Include some flexibility in your plan in case something happens and you fall behind your timetable/schedule.

• Look at previous exam papers for the unit. These are available in your campus library. Attempt to write answers to previous exam questions under exam conditions to identify your knowledge gaps and help you focus your revision. They will also help you get used to the way questions are asked and how they should be answered. The more you practice, the more confident you will become.

• Speak to your lecturers if you have any concerns regarding exam topics.

• Remember that in an exam you need to be able to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the topic. Be ready to answer questions that require you to apply principles and theories rather than rely on answers you have learnt by rote.

• The night before the exam, make sure you have your calculator (if needed), your pens and pencils, your photo ID and a watch so you can monitor the time during the exam. Your lecturer can advise you on what you are allowed to take into each examination.

Staying healthy

• If the exams are making you feel worried or depressed, talk to your friends, your parents/guardians or your lecturers. Don’t bottle things up. You’re not the only one to feel
worried about exams – we’ve all been there. Remember, everyone reacts in different ways to exams.

- Exams might seem like the most important thing you have to focus on right now, but they are only a small part of your life. There are thousands of successful people who didn’t do as well as they wanted in their exams. It’s great to do well but remember that you can only do your best and that is what your lecturers ask of you.
- Fizzy drinks, tea and coffee contain caffeine and this can mean that you’re not able to think as clearly. You can keep your mind active by eating healthily and regularly. If you don’t drink enough you could dehydrate and you may suffer from headaches, tiredness and poor concentration.

On exam day
- Instead of trying to learn new topics on the day of the exam, look over your notes/key points.
- Don’t Panic. Exam nerves are natural but panicking will only make things worse and you may not be able to think clearly.
- Believe in yourself. If you prepare for your exams properly you should do fine. Your lecturers have worked hard to make sure you have studied everything you need to for the exam. They believe you can do it and so should you. If you believe you can do it, then you can.
- Have a healthy meal to sustain you during the exam. Go for something like wholegrain cereals e.g. bran, egg, toast which are slow energy burners.
- Dress appropriately for the weather. You do not want to feel hungry/cold/hot during the exam.
- Don’t leave yourself short of time. Work out how you are getting to the exam and make sure you have plenty of time to get there so that you are not rushed. If you have time, you may want to find a quiet place to relax rather than waiting outside the examination centre with the accompanying noise and tension from your classmates.
- Taking several long, slow, deep breaths will help to calm you down and help you feel more relaxed. Tell yourself that you are calm and that you will do well. Remember positive thinking!

During reading time
- Remember reading time is about planning your approach.
- Read the instructions very carefully and work out how many questions you need to answer.
- Analyse the questions you will attempt. What specifically is the question asking?
- Check how many marks each question is worth and allocate your time so that you spend most time on the questions worth the most. Here is a technique to work this out: Take the total marks and total time for the paper. Subtract 10 minutes from the total minutes. Divide the remaining time by the marks and you get time per mark. For example: If there are 100 marks for a paper and you have 180 minutes, subtract 10 minutes. This will give you 170 minutes which works out at 1.7 minutes per mark. Try to allocate 10
minutes at the end of exam to review the paper thoroughly.

- Decide the order in which you will respond to the questions. Start with the ones you can answer easily. This will build your confidence to tackle the others.

**During the exam**

- Answer all parts of a question.
- Write answers in blue or black pen.
- If your mind goes blank, don’t panic! Panicking will just make it harder for you to remember what you learnt. Everyone panics. Put your pen down and go back to taking several long, slow, deep breaths until you feel more relaxed again. Try to stop any negative thoughts and keep telling yourself you can do it. Eventually you will settle down again and you will be able to continue with your questions.
- If you find that you are stuck on a question, take a deep breath, move on to the next question and come back to the other question later when you have more time to concentrate on difficult questions. Do not waste all of your time on one question when there are others you could easily answer.
- Make sure your answers are readable. Any unreadable parts will be deemed incorrect.

**After the exam**

- If you found part of an exam difficult, don’t panic or get annoyed. You are not the only one. You will only know how you did when you get the results. You may be surprised!
- Exams are mostly about technique and the more you do, the better you get. Some students prefer to leave the examination centre immediately so they don’t have to discuss their answers with other classmates after the exam.
- Yes, exams are important but if things don’t go as you had planned you have so many options open to you. Talk to your lecturers and other support people and ask for their advice on what you should do. They are on your side and are there to support you.
- Stop wasting time criticising yourself for where you think you went wrong. You’ll probably find that you have done better than you thought. Focus on what you did right and learn from your mistakes. Don’t dwell on questions you think you didn’t do well in or waste time comparing your answers against other students. Wait and see what the results say.