



SLU CALM Resources

Exams

Preparing for 'open-book' exams

Introduction

An open book exam is an exam in which your lecturer allows you to take in notes to help you. At first, this can seem like an easy sort of exam but many students struggle with them because they take in everything they think they will need and spend more time looking through their notes than actually doing the exam! Clearly, then, you need to be strategic about what you take in to the exam room with you.

What to take into the room with you

Prepare a set of detailed revision notes which include materials from lectures, tutorials and textbooks

These notes should include:-

- each topic studied in the subject
- definitions of key concepts
- brief outline of any key principles or rules
- past exam questions on each topic
- possible answers to these questions prepared by you under exam conditions
- flowcharts

Make sure your notes and text are easily accessible:

- colour-code
- tab each topic
- use headings, sub-headings
- index clearly

During the exam:

- read the questions carefully;
- make sure you understand what the questions are requiring you to do;
- check all marks allotted to each question and allocate your time accordingly;
- attempt to identify the issues in the questions;
- if you run out of time on a question, map out a plan of the answer

[Adapted from Helen Murphy's Business Law Site]