Before the Exam:

focus on revision, not re-learning
- Prepare a pre-examination study timetable. Share your time between subjects.
- Listen for verbal clues offered in lectures and tutorials.
- Aim for understanding, not just memorising the material.
- Study actively—verbalise and visualise your revision.
- Use concept maps/diagrams.
- Identify problem areas and work on these first.
- Revise tutorial problems.
- Work in groups and individually.
- Do past exams (under exam conditions, including handwriting) and discuss your answers with your lecturers and tutors (where possible), or use annotated sample answers.
- Take effective breaks (planned and limited) - regular exercise is good for this.

organisation
- Get enough sleep - synchronise your body clock with exam times.
- Prepare your exam resources - pens, calculators, ID card, etc.
- Check the day/time/place for your exam.
- Check your transport and, if necessary, parking arrangements.
- Know what you are permitted to take into the examination room.

During the Exam

during reading time
- Read the entire paper thoroughly.
- Check instructions (optional/compulsory; short/long answers etc)
- Allocate time proportionally to the value of each question.
- Decide on the order of your answers and organise plans (mentally if writing is not permitted)

after reading time
- Tick and order the questions you plan to answer.
- Re-read the questions and underline key words and phrases.
- Write notes/brief outline answers in your exam booklet.

when answering questions
- Number answers clearly and accurately.
- Work thoroughly but rapidly.
- Answer the hardest questions first particularly if they are worth the most marks.
- Use other questions for clues.
- Notice where words/figures are emphasised.
- Find the themes, relate these to the course objectives.
- Identify formulae and equations presented in words.
multiple choice questions

- Examine the sequence of questions. Does that give you any clues?
- Read all the alternatives before choosing the answer.
- Make certain you are choosing the ‘best’ answer to the question.
- Remember that wrong options are often based on common misconceptions.
- Make an educated guess for unknown answers unless you are penalised for wrong answers.

essay / short answer questions

- Keep time allocations proportional to marks.
- Provide definitions where necessary.
- Identify key concepts.
- Give examples.
- Write clearly and simply.

problem solving questions

- Write down any formulae needed first.
- Label all working stages clearly.
- Check computational accuracy.

before the exam finishes

- Re-attempt questions you found too difficult at first.
- Make sure the examiner can read your answers and diagrams.
- Never leave the exam early.
- Use spare time to thoroughly check your answers.
- Make sure your name and ID number are marked clearly on all papers.
- **If you are running out of time** never omit a question completely. Give the examiner an outline of how you planned to answer a question/the remainder of the question.

After the Exam

- Review your exam paper if necessary and discuss it with your lecturer.
- Consider how you could improve your exam performance. Make it a learning experience!

Other useful websites
University of NSW **Exam Skills** [http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/olib.html#2](http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/olib.html#2)
Student Learning Support Service, Victoria University Wellington **Passing Exams** [http://www.vuw.ac.nz/st_Services/slss/study/exams.aspx](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/st_Services/slss/study/exams.aspx)