

An online open book timed exam is a great examination alternative. It allows students to exercise their knowledge in a more practical situation that better reflects the professional environment, with research and referencing opportunities at their fingertips.

TECHNICAL TIPS



Adjust sitting and screen position:

- Sit upright, hips back in the seat as far as possible.
- Adjust the seat height so that your knees are the same height as your hips.

For desktop users:

- The keyboard should be close, centered with the keys you use most.
- Put the screen roughly 20 inches (50 cm) to 30 inches (76 cm) away from you, with the top of the screen at eye level.
- Relax your shoulders by using your armrests.

For laptop users:

- Use a laptop raiser or some books to raise the height of your laptop monitor. This will help to reduce the strain on your neck.
- Use an external keyboard and mouse. You'll be able to type with more natural wrist postures in relation to the screen and a mouse will help you more quickly negotiate around what's on your screen.



Use an additional screen

This will give you more screen space to organise and see any online resources you may be working with. This will save you time not having to switch between desktop windows so regularly.



Be using a preferred screen text size

Size 12 is the recommended text size for accessible content. If you'd prefer a different size, a good rule of thumb is that text should be three times the smallest size you can read from a normal viewing position. That normal position is between 20 inches (50 cm) to 30 inches (76 cm) away from you.



Check screen and text colour

Your eyes prefer higher contrast, black text on a white or slightly yellow background when working. Other dark-on-light combinations work fine for most people. Avoid low contrast text/background colour schemes.



Optimise screen brightness

You want your screen to match your surrounding workspace brightness. To achieve this, look at the white background of this page. If it looks like a light source in the room, it is too bright. If it seems dull and grey, it's probably too dark.

PRACTICAL TIPS



Keep track of time

This may be the first time you've sat an exam in this timeframe so make sure you have a way of monitoring the time nearby.



Take regular breaks

A good rule of thumb is to get up and walk around every 30 minutes, this will give your brain a quick refresh which will help you organise thoughts and ideas. This is also a good time to eat and hydrate, brain food during an open book online exam is especially important!



Control background noise

Make sure you can work in an environment where external noises won't distract you. For some students this can mean finding a place of total silence, for others this means using music or white noise to drown out distracting noise.



Check internet connection

A common fear with online exams is that the internet connection will drop and slow down your workflow. To reduce the chances of this, use an ethernet cable to connect your computer directly to your internet router. If this isn't possible, avoid having any programs open in the background that may be using internet bandwidth, such as music streaming services or online radios.



Plug in the power cable

Always be plugged in, the last thing you want is for your computer to run out of charge halfway through that really important paragraph you were writing!



Ask for guidance ahead of time

For many students, this style of examination will be new. To make sure that everything goes smoothly on the day of the exam, it is important to engage with the relevant student support services. They will be able to make you more aware of what to expect in the exam, both from an academic and practical point of view.



STUDY TIPS

Know the course

By knowing the course, you can pragmatically focus attention on relevant topics while also linking ideas together. This is important because open book exams require you to apply knowledge in a more critical and analytical way than in most traditional exam types.



Organise, organise, organise

Students with well organised notes and resources will find they are able to more efficiently locate the information that they need. Colour coding cue cards, adding sticky notes to books and creating personalised 'index' lists are practical examples of how to organise resources. Because this is an online exam, it is just as important to organise computer folders and files as well as internet browser bookmarks.