

How can I succeed in online open book assessments and digital exams?

An online open book assessment, or digital exam, is a way of testing your knowledge and understanding using an online system. You will have set questions for which you must submit your answers during a specified time period. The assessment period can range from one or two hours up to three days; if you are given a longer period you are not expected to spend all of that time working on the assessment.

Top tips and checklist.

Read the guidance:

Open book exams often focus on analysis and application, rather than description or explanation, look for the 'action' words in questions and make sure you answer appropriately.

1. What am I being asked to do?
2. Are there additional resources I need to use?
3. Are there any restrictions on what resources I can use?
4. How many questions do I need to answer?

Revise as you would for any exam:

Produce concise notes that you can refer to easily when writing, and use relaxation techniques to manage your stress as you would for any exam situation.

5. What are the core topics that will be examined?
6. What are the topics that I feel most and least confident on?

Gather the materials you need:

Make sure you have access to a reliable laptop, PC or other device which allows you to save your work and use the programs, apps or websites you need for your assessment. You will need to have your notes to hand, and any books, journals or hard copy materials that will help you.

7. How do I submit your work?
8. In what format do I have to submit my work?
9. Where do I need to submit my work?
10. Who can I contact if I have technical issues?

Set up your study area:

If you live with others, let them know when your assessment is taking place and ask for them to respect your need for space and/or silence at this time. Turn off alerts, notifications and other distractions on your phone. If you struggle to stay focussed, you may want to turn off your phone or leave it in another room.

Make sure you have prepared snacks, meals and drinks during your assessment period. It's hard to concentrate when you are hungry!

11. Is there anyone I need to tell in advance about my assessment times?
12. What do I need to be comfortable and to concentrate fully on my assessment?

Learning Development

Plan your timings:

Think about the length of the assessment period, and realistically how much time the tasks will take.

Make yourself a timetable for the duration of the assessment period, including all the activities you would usually do during that period. For example, if the assessment takes place over 24 or 48 hours, make sure you allow time for sleeping, cooking, eating and taking care of yourself.

Don't get distracted by reading and researching, you will only be assessed on what you submit, so make sure you start writing in plenty of time.

13. What time of day am I most alert and productive, and is therefore the best time to focus on my assessments?
14. How much time will I spend on each question?
15. When is the final deadline for submitting my work?

Further resources.

Technical support with Blackboard and Turnitin:

<https://libguides.northampton.ac.uk/Learntech/students>

McMillan, K., and Weyers, J. (2012) Succeeding in exams. *The Study Skills Book* (3rd ed.). Pearson: Harlow.

https://nelson.northampton.ac.uk/permalink/f/1cgbp40/TN_pq_ebook_centralEBC5173731