

# **Study and revision skills**

## **Exam technique**

### **Guidance**

**CTSI Qualification Framework (QF)**

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# Study and Revision Skills

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# Study, revision and examination skills

## Preface

We are all very different in our make-up and personalities. In looking at studying or revision, similarly, there is not a one size fits all solution. In the body of these notes are a number of tips to help with study techniques similarly tips to aid revision and examination skills. Many readers will find some of them superb, others a waste of time. Not every suggestion will suit everyone, but many will, it is a case of read it, try it and see what it works for you.

A word or three of caution: there is no easy way to study or revise. Some people are gifted and have tremendous powers of recall but they need to read it first and then develop an examination technique that allows them to bring out all those assimilated facts. So being able to read it once and regurgitate it is all very well and good, but these examinations require application and analysis and that takes practice and technique.

Others are not blessed with 100% recall, I am guessing most of you at this point, not to worry, you too can achieve your goals, by dint of hard work and persistence.

Some folks can cram last minute and pick up reasonable marks, they may not have a good understanding of the subject, but can put down enough facts to pass the examination. However, a practitioner also needs to be able to apply what they have learned on to day to day situations.

You may have been recruited late, or some money may have been found at the eleventh hour to fund your examination fees. You can still pass! You will however, have to work much harder in that shorter time.

For those of you who have started studying, well done in reading these notes. It shows commitment and an intention to help yourself, because no-one else can do it but you.

Work hard, study hard and practice examination questions. Success, sometimes, does not come first time. In my experience that just means you need to change your methods, adapt and work a little harder and smarter for the next time you sit.

Good luck in your endeavours!

# Study and revision skills

## When do I start?

Now is good! As soon as you decide to study for any qualifications then that is not only when you start to study, but also when you start preparation for the examinations as well.

Examinations are a strange phenomenon that many organisations use to determine whether you can attain a certain level or standard. It is rare in life that we are faced with situations where we can only rely on what we can remember at that point in time, without recourse to other sources of information. However, whilst few people have a natural ability in examinations, like most other skills, it can be learned.

If you are working in any environment where you encounter trading laws then you have probably already started on your journey, as you are working with certain pieces of legislation that you will come across in examinations.

Working with others in a group environment, talking with experienced colleagues, asking questions of the subject area and listening to others asking questions can also be very informative.

## Worries before the off

There may be many reasons why you are worried; these are just a few of the fears that have been expressed:

*'I have started a new job and I feel that I know nothing and everyone else is so knowledgeable, but I am not;'*

*'I left my studying behind years ago before we had children and a mortgage;'*

*'This subject is so technical I will never get my head around it;'*

*'I am the youngster in this office everyone else knows how this stuff works but me;'*

*'I have not studied anything since I left school, how can I manage all this new material?'*

*'I am well past my studying; there is no way I can remember all of this at my age.'*

The answer to all of them is that they can do it. All it takes is hard work and application.

OK a modicum of intelligence as well, but you have that, otherwise you would not have got the job.

You all have your individual circumstances, BUT there are many people in your situation, whether you are studying seriously for the first time, or are picking up the threads of a long forgotten memory.

Most of us worry to some degree and having an examination at the end of the journey is not a cause for panic, but knowing this, it is a time to put strategies in place to cope with what lies ahead.

## **Set your priorities**

This means in your social, domestic and working life.

Taking on study will mean that something else has to give a little. If you lead a full life with a hectic social calendar, you work all hours and you also have a family to look after then you may well be used to fitting it all in and organising. Nevertheless, you will need to allot time to study.

At the other end of the spectrum, you may tend to take it easy after work and unwind with a glass of something and watch the television. You too have to change your habits and devote some of that leisure time to studies. You do have to make sacrifices and planning time to study is imperative to success.

Ask if there is any possibility of studying at work, or does your authority have study leave (this may apply nearer exam time)? The worst that can happen is they say no. Work may also have some books on the subject that your predecessors have used; again, a polite request could pay dividends. Study time at work is a bonus, however, few people will get the opportunity and it will be down to using your own free time.

## **Time and timing**

Making a list or schedule of your available study times can be invaluable. Many folks will keep to a timetable if it is in black and white. Write down your available times to study, keep it handy, stick it on the fridge, or somewhere you will see and take notice of it. The more subjects you are studying the more vital it is to write out a schedule and spend equal amounts of time on each subject.

You do not have to live the life of a recluse and a little time for yourself is extremely important, otherwise you can become demotivated, but set that goal for the end of your study period, in two or three hours I will watch TV/have a glass of wine/go for a walk.

Break down your study period into manageable chunks and vary what you do over that time. Doing one particular task over 2 or 3 hours could become rather boring and it is only when your head hits the desk you realise you have nodded off. Most sources seem to think that 40-45 minutes is the optimum time to spend with study, or revision, before taking a short 10 minute break.

If you devote 2 hours to study, then perhaps the first 40 minutes you spend reading and taking notes. Allow yourself a walk to the kitchen, make a soft drink and return to your studies but vary the task; the next 40 minutes practice answering some exam questions. Another short break and then use your books to compile a good answer to those questions. This is just a guide, 40 minutes may be too long, or short, for you. Try it and see what suits you best and vary it accordingly.

It may be months before the examinations but you need to start the regime straight away. Time really does appear to pass more quickly. It is like climbing a hill with the exams on the other side, yet in this case you reach the top quite quickly; time will now seem to speed up as you get nearer to the examinations. The longer you leave it to start, the greater the pressure you heap on yourself.

## **Things to do, and not to do, when studying**

Turn off your mobile phone and the television. They are a complete distraction. Your mind needs to be on the task in hand not on social media.

Music can assist but usually not too loud, more in the background. If music helps then put some on, if you like complete quiet put yourself in a quiet place away from day to day distractions.

Ensure you have all your books and materials to hand. A lap top, tablet or pc are ideal for you to make a record of your notes. However, remember your examinations are hand written, (there are exceptions if you have learning difficulties) hence, practicing your hand writing by making written notes is not old school, but a positive advantage.

If you have a young family you will have to gear your study around their needs and often study time is when they are in bed and you are probably not at your best. If you have an understanding partner, then they make take the burden from you for a couple of hours on a regular basis, to give you the time you need. Talk to them about it, you really could use their help.

What I have found, in many years of experience, is that you can always find an excuse for not doing it. If you are determined you will find time to put in the study time, no matter how tough your situation.

## **Skills you need**

If you have not studied for a while then you will need to brush up, or learn new skills. We live in an information rich environment. Anyone can spend an inordinate amount of time on the internet looking up websites that are mines of useful information, but where do you stop?

The answer will first lie in the contents of the syllabus you are studying, secondly, what do your tutors advise? They will provide notes and probably useful websites and reading lists to look at. However, if you are studying a subject that has a deal of legislation in the syllabus you will have to bite the bullet and attempt to read it. Note that important parts are often those sections that explain the definitions, offences and powers. These may well be highlighted in the lecture notes, leaving you to fill in the gaps and read around the subject.

## **Writing**

Most of us rarely write these days; nearly all communication is carried out on some form of technology. Once upon a time your parents or grandparents would have sat down to write long letters to friends and family, you too if you are an older learner. However, in this day and age the pen has taken a backseat to the 'tablet,' pc, laptop or mobile phone.

The examinations are written and you will need to be able to write for a possible two-hour period. Start practising by summarising or expanding your notes. You need to build this up so that you can cope with two straight hours of writing. Initially your fingers and wrist will ache, but like fitness, the more you train that part of your body the more it will be used to the task you require it to carry out.

## **Reading**

You may read for relaxation; you may read for work, but now you need to read for study. If you are recommended textbooks to read, it is not necessary to sit down and read them cover to cover, as you would a novel. It is best, like medicine, taken in small doses. Read passages or chapters that are relevant to the area you are currently studying. If you are attending a course and the topics are provided, then read the chapters concerning those areas, so that you have an understanding of the subject matter.

All of the QF examination papers are divided up into two sections. Section B are larger, more essay style questions. In order to answer such questions, you need to try and read around the subject areas to increase your knowledge. Rarely are notes given by lecturers sufficient in themselves. Reading supplements that knowledge. Tie both together when reading, by making notes on the passages you are reading, this will increase memory retention and practice your writing skills.

## **Course notes**

As has been stated earlier, these are rarely enough in themselves to pass an examination, but they are an excellent start. Your tutors are experts in their fields and have practised the subject they teach. Your course notes will be a kernel of information, so do not ignore them.

On the day you read them for the first time, it is unlikely that you will be able to recall much of the content. However, the more often you visit those notes the more they will stick in the memory.

Try and read them again within a short space of time, after you have been given them, preferably within a few days. You will probably find that you have made your own notes in the margins, or on separate pages, whilst the lecturer expounded on his subject. Rewrite the notes incorporating your own text. These then will be more comprehensive than the original notes.

Read them again a week or so later and try and answer a few questions on them. You will be surprised, the more you revisit them, the more you retain. If there are also pages or chapters of a textbook that cover the topic then read that and make notes on relevant points that help to explain or expand the subject. Incorporate those notes by rewriting once again to include your amended originals. You should now have an excellent set of comprehensive revision notes and some of them will be etched in to your brain.

Invariably, on any course of study, there will be a recommended reading list. Try to get all of the available sources, or have ready access to them. The more you read the more you will understand.

It is rare that a tutor expects a student to read the books cover to cover. Take it a chapter at a time. In contract law books for instance most tomes will take you through the law of contract, perhaps starting with how one is formed and the component parts of offer, acceptance, intention and consideration. You can read it chapter by chapter and build on your knowledge.

Better yet, if you are attending, or taking a training course, when you deal with a particular topic in the notes, go away and read it in the recommended text. This will give you a much broader picture.

Notes by tutors are never intended to be comprehensive. They are exactly what the title implies: 'notes'. Lecturers may well point you to specific legislation or sections of law. That

is their purpose: to inform you of relevant components of the syllabus and bring them to your attention.

It would be pointless making tutor notes comprehensive volumes; it would be easier just to dish out the reading list and tell you to go and learn it all.

What tutors tend to do is emphasise important parts of the syllabus. Compare it to a body; the lecturer gives you the skeleton, a framework from which you, by reading around the subject, put the meat and other component parts on to those bones.

### **Tutorials/seminars/ group work**

You may be given the opportunity to answer tutorial questions in class, or take part in telephone tutorials. Where possible actively research the subject and prepare your answers by writing them down. Tutors will often encourage as many of the group to participate as possible.

Invariably, answers by others in the group will cover things that you did not think about in your answer and wish that you had. Make a note of them. In that way you will ensure you end up with a more comprehensive answer than the one you started with.

### **Find out what you need to study**

It is important to know the limits of the syllabus or syllabi you are studying.

The syllabi will be within your online learning course. Download them or print them, as one look will not cement them to your memory and you will need to revisit and refresh yourself of the requirements.

When you read your on-line course, or take in the lectures at your attended classes, the notes will cover some of the relevant areas and many topics will be dealt with, either in detail or in brief. The syllabus will usually list each of the topics required. Possibly where you may be flummoxed is when it states that similar legislation or government policies are also included. That is when you may need to ask the question, what else is covered? Another source of topic areas are the old examination questions. The latest can be found on the CTSI website.



## **Practice questions**

As Dave Powell points out in his book "Writing for Law" you would not enter the Tour De France if you could not ride a bike. Likewise, why would you turn up at the examination without having practiced answering any questions?

You need to start off slowly. As soon as you begin to study the material, is not the time to start answering exam questions, you will be somewhat disheartened if you do. However, when you have covered a specific topic and you have expanded your notes by reading round the subject, then dig out a question or two from the data bank and have a go.

The big problem with any form of learning, whether it is on-line or face to face, is that when you are on your own, there is no-one to provide feedback on your efforts. If there are on-line questions with feedback, then have a go at them and see how you do. It gives some indication. If there are questions set between blocks and you do not attempt them then you are probably losing your only chance to get some really good feedback on your ability to answer questions.

As previously stated, taught courses will often use tutorials. They are an excellent way to learn. If you get the questions in advance then prepare well and listen to answers by others and make notes. Ask questions of the lecturer, it is an opportunity to increase your knowledge, take it!

## **Practice, practice, practice!**

As you approach the exams you should increase the frequency of attempting questions. When you start, if no feedback is available, then compare your answer to your notes. If you believe that your answer lacks in detail then use notes, books or internet to try and flesh it out.

The Examiner's report is often very informative; the current examiner's report is available on the CTSI website. The Examiner will quite often state what is expected in an answer and the depth required. It may also state where others have gone wrong, or have failed to cover particular points. So when you have looked at your answer, then add to it using all your sources. You should then have a comprehensive answer. You can do this for any number of questions.

When you start to increase your repertoire of answers you will also begin to notice that examiners are not as original as you first thought and, far from every exam having completely different questions, many topics are repeated regularly. What you will note is that the wording of some of the questions differ slightly, but the subject matter is almost the same.

As stated previously, a two-hour exam is a slog. As you get nearer to the exam instead of doing one question and looking at the answer, answer more questions, one after another, building up to attempting full practice exams. By doing this you will build up your stamina. By the time the examinations arrive, you are used to writing for two hours. You may also be able to see which questions come up more than others.

Practicing questions on a regular basis will not only improve your exam technique but also give you confidence. Always remember to read through your answer and compare it to the question asked.

## Study groups

In all probability you will be studying alone but, if you have the chance, try and team up with one or two others to share tips and ideas. Study groups of like-minded individuals work very well. You can set exam questions as tutorials and then discuss your answers together. It is surprising how much you can learn, someone will always bring something new to the table.

Even if you have no-one to share with in your authority you may get names and contact details from courses you attend, or from Branch meetings. These days, with a variety of media on which to interface, you can share knowledge and ideas.

## Tips to aid the memory

Some students find that sticking facts about the syllabus in various places around their flat or house using 'post-it' notes helps: perhaps facts on the constitution in the toilet, separation of powers in the lounge and the rule of law in the bedroom. It does not work for everyone but as long as it works for you it is worth doing.

Some learners find that by setting out their notes in a particular manner they can recall the structure of the notes and think of the headings as they sit in examinations.

Others use mnemonics to help. This is a device to aid the memory. It is usually the practice of using a word, where each letter of the word represents another word or phrase.

Reading out loud can help memory retention.

This technique can also work by recording your own notes and playing them back, when you are travelling.

Repetition of reading and practicing questions seems to work best for the majority of students.

**Try them all and keep the methods that suit you.**

## In summary

- Sort your priorities and schedule regular study periods;
- Once you have a schedule stick to it;
- Prepare to study by having all materials to hand;
- Learn to write for long periods, practice until 3 hours is easy;
- Read around the subject;
- Read your course notes immediately after the class;
- Write theme out again, adding your own notes;
- The more you read and write, the more it will stick;
- Find out the extent of the syllabus;
- Do inter-block exercises to get feedback;
- Try and join a study group, real or virtual;
- Practice questions with increasing frequency leading up to the exams until you feel you can answer them all.

# Exam Technique

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## **Exam technique**

### **The night before**

There is no real right or wrong on studying the night before an examination. It all depends upon your learning style. Some people find that they can make use of those last few hours to cram more facts in to their brains. Others find that, if they do that, they remember only what they crammed that night. It is better to study steadily for many months, to drip feed knowledge and that helps retention. The best method is to work hard up to the examinations, then the night before try to relax a little and get an early night. However, there is no method that will suit everyone and if you tend to panic and think that you have not done enough, the only way you will settle yourself is some last minute studying.

You may not have had the length of time to prepare as you would have hoped, perhaps because last minute money was found to train you, or enter you in to the examinations. In that case, last minute studying, perhaps using notes to list main points, may help keep them in your mind. Some research studies have shown that topics looked at before sleep can lodge in the mind.

You may wish to unwind with a drink, but for obvious reasons do not overdo it. Equally try to rest well so you are relaxed and refreshed the day of the exam. This is not always easy if you are in an hotel having travelled to the exam centre, but do what you can to ensure you are calm and settled the night before.

### **Exam day**

Set at least one alarm and give yourself time to have breakfast, or lunch for an afternoon exam. You need to keep up your energy levels to get the brain working. Many schools now run breakfast clubs before examinations to ensure children are properly nourished; you need nourishment likewise for brainpower.

It is a self-evident fact that this day is important, yet still people are late to exams, or worse go on the wrong day or time. Check and double check the date and time and ensure you know where the venue is located. If you are driving or getting public transport leave time to get lost, or find a car park, or be delayed.

Exam nerves are normal but absolute panic is not. If you become so wound up before examinations that you are crying and failing to hold down any food, it may be necessary to have a word with a health professional to see what they can suggest. If you are in poor health when you turn up at the exam venue then inform the Invigilator so they can keep an eye out for you.

Most candidates will have that flutter in their stomachs, but, believe it or not, those nerves can help you be on top of your game. Have all your details with you; such as exam number and enough equipment to write and drawing equipment, if relevant, for exams such as metrology. You still see people outside the exam room borrowing a pen.

## Reading time

All the CTSI examinations allow ten minutes reading time; students should make full use of this time to carefully read all of the questions.

Ten minutes may not be enough time to read every question thoroughly, but do not worry. You can afford a few more minutes to fully read and try to understand the diet of questions on offer. It is during this time that you will probably pick the section questions that you will attempt. Do not worry that others around you are staring to write their answers. **Ensuring you fully understand the question, BEFORE you answer** is vital to passing. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of reading and understanding before you start to answer. **So many students fail to answer the question asked.** They answer what they think might be the answer without any planning, structure or format.

## Timing is everything

You may well have taken far more than your allotted ten minutes reading time. What you need to do is calculate how much time you have left and work that out so you have a proportional amount of time for each section or question.

The front of the exam paper provides you with a suggest time allocation for each session of the exam. Try not to go over your allotted time. If you have not finished after nine minutes leave a space and come back to it later, if you have time. You will gain more marks by starting a new question than you will by plugging away trying to finish the old one. This is especially true for the longer questions. Stick to your time limits rigidly and start on a new question. Come back to it if you have time left when the others are completed.

Many students underestimate the consequences of spending so much time on one question that they fail to attempt all questions on the exam. It is particularly problematic when you fail to attempt a 35 mark question. By failing to attempt this you have limited your maximum marks to 65. If you have gone off track for one of the other questions you will now be struggling to pass. Hence the reason timing is so important. According to Kate Williams, editor of a number of 'Pocket Study Skills' books by Palgrave, it is easier to get the first 50% of any question than the last 20%.

## Planning

You have read the questions and now wish to start answering them.

You need a plan. This is less important for the short mark questions but is essential for the 35-mark answers you will be attempting.

So many students go off on in the wrong direction and fail to answer the question that is asked. You have already read it carefully. Now write down your plan and mark it as such, so that the examiner is aware of it. You may decide that the answer is in six parts; your plan could be six bullet points. You may decide that it has a central theme which you write in the centre of the page then have lines, or themes coming from that in the form of a spider diagram. Whatever works for you is good!

When you begin to write your answer, if more themes or bullet points pop in to your head, then add them to your plan. Refer back to your plan and the question when you answer. One of the **biggest problems that markers encounter is that students start well and then go off on tangent, failing to answer the question that is asked, but answering something entirely different.**

**When you read back the answer, ask yourself: have I answered the question asked?**

It is important to read the question and then your answer. If you do not think you have answered the question, then neither will the examiner and your marks will suffer accordingly. Many students will think this is wasting precious time that could be spent answering another question. It really is not. It is time used effectively and wisely. However, this all has to be done within the time frame.

In an exam, it doesn't matter what you know if you can't express it clearly and concisely. Essay type questions should begin with a short introduction stating your position, followed by a series of paragraphs that each make a clear point and a short conclusion supporting the argument outlined in the introduction. There is a simplistic aspect to this, you are setting out a neat structure to your answer and telling the examiner you understand what this question is about.

Problem questions usually have a number of parts to them. In your plan identify each aspect of the question and how you propose to answer it. By doing this you are letting the examiner know you know that you understand what the question consists of and give a logical format for answering.

**Remember, if the questions ask for a conclusion, or your advice, please give it!**

### **Question choice**

In the section A questions you will either know something about the answer or not. If you understand the question then answer it in your allotted time.

There is no reason why you have to answer the questions in the order they are sequenced on the exam. When you read through the questions there may be one stand out question on a topic you feel very knowledgeable about. If that is the case, start with that question. Answering this will give you confidence. Remember to write out your plan carefully, as we discussed earlier, and refer back to it and the question as you answer to ensure you are doing what has been asked. Finish within the appropriate time ensuring that your answer is what the question required. If this sounds like repetition, it is!

Some students will start to answer a question and run out of steam after a paragraph. This will not get you many marks, you may be an expert in being succinct but this will never be sufficient to gain you good marks. However, if you have a written plan, this should inform you that you do not know enough about the topic, so leave this and attempt one you know more about. Similar to going off on a tangent, starting a question on a topic you know little about could cost you dearly. Writing those plans should keep you making the right choices.

## **How much should I write?**

This is a frequently asked question. There is no simple answer. It depends upon your answer and your style of writing. Some people believe if they write down everything they know about the subject matter of the question, irrespective of its relevance, then there must be some good stuff in there somewhere, which will get good marks. This is not true! Examiners are looking for structured answers. If you have planned and written down your answer following that structure, it may not be as long as the bombardment style approach, but will probably gain more marks. I could suggest that two to three pages is sufficient to answer a 35 mark question but 2-3 pages of rubbish will not score at all. I have known students who fill several pages and fail to score many marks, as it does not answer the question and effectively is just wordage. Equally if your writing is small, or very large, then you will need to adjust your length of answer.

There is no simple response to how many pages should I write? Examiners gear questions so that, roughly, 2-3 pages of informed text should be sufficient to cover major points in a planned, structured answer. The main reason students ramble on for page after page is because they get side-tracked. If you do not refer back to a plan then it is easy, at such a stress filled time, to write reams on a topic on which you feel you are knowledgeable. This may well give you a feeling of well-being, but if it is of limited or no relevance, then the marks you receive will be few. Sometimes students go so far off the topic that despite many pages of facts there are no marks to be gained. Make what you write concise and relevant to the question!

## **Language appropriate**

For the most part, your examinations are law subjects. In law words have specific meaning, it is important to use the correct vocabulary. If you are referring to a civil case then you would not prosecute but take an action. Examiners begin to doubt when students appear not to understand what they are talking about by using inappropriate language. When referring to an act of parliament, then it is divided in two sections and subsections. A regulation is divided up in to regulations e.g. regulation 1, regulation 2, etc. An order is divided up in to articles.

When discussing offences then the outcome could well be a prosecution. However, if you are looking at infringements under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, then there is the option to take civil action instead of a criminal prosecution. Be clear exactly what you mean and use the appropriate terms.

Only use abbreviations after telling the examiner what they are, if you use Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations (CPRs) then using "CPRs" after the Regulations, as shown, informs the Examiner that you will be using that acronym throughout the rest of the text of the question. If it is a common abbreviation or acronym then the examiner will often give you the benefit of the doubt. However, if it is rare, or one you make up, then please let the examiner know.

## **Don't be lazy**

Let us assume that you have mentioned something in question 1 and the subject matter appears later in the paper, question 8 for example; please write out the explanation again. Do not ask the examiner to refer back to question 1 for part of the answer. If you cannot be bothered to give a full explanation where it is relevant, then do not expect the examiner to trawl through the exam paper trying to find part of the answer tucked away in another section.

There may well be a slight overlap in the subject matter but your answer needs to be relevant to the question you are answering.

## **Checking and reading through your answers**

Many students will happily finish their exam and leave the room thinking how good it is to get out early. Why? If you have finished early then you can use that time profitably to check through your answers. It is amazing how often words are completely missed out of a sentence, as we are writing quickly to get down as much information that we can. For example, if you miss out the word 'not' it completely reverses the answer you wished to put down. The examiner can only mark what you have written and not what you intended. So, your hard work on that area could be negated for want of reading carefully through your answer.

You may also think of more information to enhance your answer, If you fail to take up such an obvious opportunity you may fail the exam. You may not have answered all of the first five questions. Reading through the questions and answers may stimulate your brain in to action and an answer, or at least part of one may come to you. Checking through might pick up only two or three extra marks but that could well be the difference between pass and fail, so DO IT!

## **State the obvious**

If the examiner asks a specific question then state the obvious in your answer. Do not assume that by your clever use of prose the examiner will be able to interpret what you intended to write. Examiners can only mark what you have written down, not what is in your mind when you write it. If it is implied then you will not get anything for it. By telling the examiner the facts they will have what they want and you will get marks for it.

Often in examinations you might be asked to compare or contrast one situation or system against another. For example, in the Regulatory Environment and Enforcement exam you may ask you to compare self-regulation with more formal methods of regulatory control. In order to answer you first need to explain what both are and then go on to explain the advantages and disadvantages of each. Problem questions often consist of different areas of law. State that you believe the question to be in several parts and explain what they are and how you intend to approach the answer. It informs the examiner that you know what you are talking about.

**DO NOT REPEAT THE QUESTION IN THE ANSWER!** So many students do this. Examiners know what the question is they set it and it is on the question paper so why waste all that time rewriting it, yet year on year some people will do exactly this. If you number the question clearly that is all you need to do.

## **Multiple part questions**

First, ensure you answer all parts, students often miss out on marks by failing to answer one part of the question, because they forgot, or failed to plan any answer for that part. Secondly, does it carry equal marks or do some parts attract higher marks? If they are not of equal value that may be because the lower mark questions are easier to answer, but more likely, you will be expected to spend more time on the answer with the higher marks. I know this sounds like I am stating the obvious, but it will often be the case that a student will write a paragraph on a 15-mark part of a question and two pages on one worth five marks. This is usually the wrong way round!

## **Summary**



- Eat and drink before the exam and arrive refreshed in plenty of time
- Ensure you have enough writing materials and any other equipment required
- Carefully read the paper, take more time if you need it
- Work out your timings for each answer and stick to them
- Plan your answer, write it down and refer back to it as you answer
- Read the question again and your answer. Did you do what was asked?
- If you do not finish a question in the given time, leave a space and move on
- Essay style questions should have an opening, a middle discourse and a conclusion
- If you finish inside the time check through all of your answers carefully for spelling, clarity and missing words.
- Check to ensure you filled in all your details on each answer book before handing it in.

**Good luck with your exams!**

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