

Final Exam Prep Tips

The key here is to start planning early.

If you know you have multiple tests or big assignments coming up one right after the other, try to start well in advance, ideally 10-14 days before.

10-14 days before:

- Review previous exam and analyze mistakes
- Make list of topics that will be on exams
- Organize your notes by topic
- Gather study materials and begin creation of study guides
 - Schedule an appointment with SC for tips on how to make a study guide - www.cmc.edu/successconsultants
- Plan study time in your calendar/planner (office hours, taking practice tests, when to study for each subject)

7-8 days before:

- Finalize study guides so you can begin using them to better understand the material.
- Review your planner and your planned study time; if there are any changes to your schedule or you feel like you need more time for a particular topic, adjust accordingly.
- Review notes thoroughly and deliberately; don't just read through them, explain them aloud to yourself (or a peer), and/or re-write them down without looking – familiarity doesn't equal comprehension.
- Do practice problems, like homework problems or study questions, and/or outline any answers to potential essay questions.
- Write down any questions or ideas you're unsure about; bring these to office hours and discuss with your professor.

4-8 days before:

Use this time frame to continue reviewing your study materials; here are some strategies to practice:

- Create questions from your notes to quiz yourself
 - Developing your own practice test helps you think about what kind of questions your professor will ask
- Use mnemonic devices or visual aids
- Study in chunks if possible -- 2 hour blocks with 15 minute breaks is recommended

3-4 days before:

- Take a practice test with the same time and material constraints as the real thing; work in a quiet place with no distractions, time yourself, and simulate real test conditions as accurately as possible
- Correct and understand your mistakes, then bring your questions into office hours
- For multiple exams, stagger the practice tests throughout the day or within a day of each other so you're not taking one right after the other

1-2 days before:

- Continue to review your study materials; test yourself using your study guides and practice any challenging problems until you grasp the concept
 - Target your weakest areas, don't waste time on things you already know
- Go to any review sessions or office hours with remaining questions

Test Day:

- Take deep breaths from your stomach and a swig of water before you sit down.
- Brain dump bits of general information that will help throughout the exam
 - Example: equations, mnemonic devices, key definitions, etc.

BONUS! Some general tips for increased success:

- If your exams are on different days, give yourself a little time to relax after the first before you begin the final prep for the next.
- When studying for finals, it is crucial to get a good amount of sleep and to eat well – you will retain information better while studying and be able to recall information quicker during the exam and your brain will thank you
- Believe in yourself – you've prepared hard and are ready to tackle these tests.