

## Two Key to Maximise Your Career Exam Results

If you are undertaking a career exam, here are two suggestions to help you along the way. In a nutshell, they relate to **your attitude and your strategy**.

### KEY #1

The first key to maximise your career exam requires you to **develop an exam performance mindset**. In my book, *Passing Exams*, I suggest that sitting an exam is like giving a performance, just like you may give a music, drama or sports performance. The key to doing well on the day is correlated to how much time and effort you put into preparation. Take note of the **5Ps - Prior Preparation Prevents Poor Performance**. So it is not about how naturally academic you are that makes the difference; it is about how well you prepare.

A performance mindset requires a number of attitudes geared towards wanting to achieve and then extend on your personal best. One attitude is the *desire* to want to achieve well. With this positive intent comes the motivation, energy and drive to actually sit down and do the work. If you simply do not care, then you will engage in different kinds of avoidant behaviour, such as procrastination.

A second attitude, coupled with this, is knowing the value of having clear set study goals. In order to make the most of your preparation time, you need to set mini-goals for each revision session as well as know what result you are aiming for. This, again, helps maintain motivation.

A third performance attitude relates to your academic self beliefs. How you see yourself and your ability to achieve, directly corresponds to your motivation towards learning that topic. For instance, those students who see themselves as 'highly academic', usually perceive themselves as having the ability to achieve those standards and are therefore more likely to want to achieve those standards.

Obviously, the reverse is true as well, but my research has shown that academic self-concepts can be enhanced through a mental conditioning process that quickly leads to higher efficacy and in turn higher standards. While this process is beyond the scope of this article, I discuss it fully in Chapter Four of *Passing Exams: Thinking Strategies for High Performance*.

### KEY #2

**Having a practical step-by-step exam revision strategy** is the second key skill you need to develop in order to make the best use of your career exam preparation time. I have developed a five-step revision approach based on the latest meta-cognitive (learning *how* to learn) knowledge and performance psychology. This is the basis for *Passing Exams for Dummies*.

The first step is about self-awareness: to realise you have a lot more academic ability than you may currently think possible. When you learn how your brain and mind works and how your learning potential correlates to this, insights into this knowledge leads to insights into how to improve thinking strategies that foster your personal best.

Steps two to five are the practical steps of what to do when you sit down to revise.

Step two is to do a relaxation exercise to slow brain-waves down so that your brain is more receptive to receiving information. Step three is to select and review the information required for your career exam.

You need to set a mental intent of what to cover in any one revision session and then skim read material before doing any study reading. Highlighting key words and rewriting them into more visual formats such as colour-coded mind mapping and other concept mapping is also required.

Step four utilises some memory techniques to help memorise those aspects of a subject that require it.

Step five requires rehearsing your recall and mentally rehearsing your desired exam performance. Rehearsing recall can be matched to your dominant learning styles (as mentioned above) and rehearsing performance uses visualisation techniques to condition the ideal mind/body response required when sitting the exam. This is particularly useful if you suffer from exam anxiety.

In summary, there are many tips and techniques to help us revise for exams and because of our individual differences, no one way is the best. There are however, some key skills that will help improve your exam results, regardless of the content you are revising.

These two keys applied, will help you maximise your career exam results.

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