



Answering Examination Questions Effectively

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Supervised written examination is an important component in the assessment of most courses in UniSIM. While ample and consistent study is essential for you to well in the examination, it is also important that you are organised and know what to do during the examination proper itself. Below are some helpful suggestions and advice for you to consider when tackling a supervised examination.

Setting a Time Plan

To prepare for an examination,

- Find out from the tutor about the structure of the examination.
- Predict as many questions as possible from each topic you will be tested on. Alternatively, you can check out the types of questions set in past years' examination papers.
- Formulate an answer outline for each predicted question and memorise the required key points and facts.
- You can form a study group to share the workload in answering the list of predicted questions.

During the examination, decide on the time plan for each question.

- The amount of time you spend on each question would depend on the marks allocated to each question.
- Always give 10% to 20% of the total allocated time to review your answers. For a 2-hr paper, you should set aside between 10 to 25 minutes to review and check your answers.
- You might need more time for papers that require a lot of calculations in the answers.
- For a 2-hr paper, after setting aside 20 mins to review and check through your answers, you'll have 100 minutes for writing your answers. So you should allocate roughly one minute per mark for a 100-mark paper.

Handling Examination Questions

- Identify the key words or phrases in the question.
- Understand what is required of each question.
- Refer to the table to understand what is required of you when different key task words are used in the question.
- The key task words are derived from Bloom's Taxonomy.



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- You are advised to go through the past years' examination papers and assignments to familiarise yourself with the types of key task words used in your courses.
- If in doubt about the meaning of any Key Task Word used in your courses, do check and clarify with your instructors.

When writing your answer to each question,

- Ensure that your handwriting is legible.
- Be precise and concise.
- Do not add in personal opinions or feelings unless requested by the question.
- Each paragraph should address one of the required areas needed to be answered in the question.
- Start with the first paragraph to introduce all the key points associated with the question when answering the essay.
- Each of the paragraphs should contain only a key idea and its details. Do not assume general facts without providing supporting data.
- Support your points you raise with sources or references.
- Leave the last paragraph to summarise all your general points and re-state the topic sentence.
- Leave a few lines after each paragraph in case you want to add in additional information after reviewing your answer.
- If you encounter an unfamiliar question or a topic that you did not revise, attempt all the other questions that you are able to answer first.
- Come back to the unfamiliar question and try to figure out if there are overlaps between that question and the other questions that you were able to tackle.
- Answer the question specifically to that overlap part and you might get a partial credit for it.
- After writing all the essays to the questions:
 - Review your essay against the outline to ensure that you have not missed out any points.
 - Check for errors in grammar, sentence structure, punctuations and spelling.

Below is the list of key task words you might encounter in your examination questions. All the best in your examinations!



Definitions of Key Task Words Encountered in Assessment or Assignments

| STAGE OF BLOOM'S COGNITIVE SKILLS | KEY TASK WORD | WHAT IT GENERALLY MEANS |
|---|--|---|
| KNOWLEDGE (Recalling ideas) | CLASSIFY | Arrange ideas into groups according to shared values, characteristics, qualities etc. |
| | DEFINE | Stipulate the requirements for inclusion of an object, word, or situation in a category or class; set up criteria for classification. Elements of one or both of the following must be included: (1) the characteristics of the words, objects, or situations that are included in the class or category, (2) the characteristics of the words, objects, or situations that are excluded in the class or category |
| | IDENTIFY | Establish the identity of |
| | LIST | Write down the relevant characteristics of the idea |
| | NAME | Supply the correct name, in oral or written form for an object, class of objects, persons, places, conditions, or events which are pointed out or described |
| | NARRATE/TRACE | Give a description of a series of events related to the idea in chronological order |
| | STATE | Write down meaning of the idea |
| COMPREHENSION (Understanding ideas) | DESCRIBE | Give the details about the characteristics that make up the idea; name all of the necessary categories of objects, object properties, or event properties that are relevant to the description of a designated situation |
| | EXAMINE | Consider closely, critically discuss in terms of definite criteria |
| | EXPLAIN | Write how and why the idea comes about |
| | EXPRESS | Represent in words, state |
| | IDENTIFY | List and detail the key characteristics of the idea; indicate the selection of an object of a class in response to its class name, by pointing, picking up, underlining, marking, or other responses |
| | INTERPRET | Explain or tell the meaning of |
| | LOCATE | Stipulate the position of an object, place, or event in relation to other specified objects, places, or events. Ideational guides to location such as grids, order arrangements and time may be used to describe location |
| | OUTLINE | Emphasise the major features structures or general principles, omit minor details |
| | PARAPHRASE | Restate in another form or other words, often to clarify meaning |
| | REPORT | Write or provide an account or summation, make or present a formal or regular account |
| RESTATE | State or affirm again or in a new way / in different words | |



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| | SUMMARISE | Write the important characteristics of the idea with explanation |
| | TRANSLATE | Transcribe one symbolic form to another of the same or similar meaning |
| APPLICATION (Putting ideas to use) | APPLY | Show how the idea works in an example |
| | DEMONSTRATE | Show the idea through an example |
| | DETERMINE | Come to a decision as the result of investigation or reasoning |
| | DEVELOP | Lay out (as a representation) in or evolve (as an idea) into a clear full, and explicit presentation (as in a drawing or specification) |
| | ILLUSTRATE | Provide examples with details of the idea |
| | IMPLEMENT | Apply and pursue to a conclusion |
| | INTERPRET | Give views about the idea, translate information from observation, charts, tables, graphs, and written material in a verifiable manner |
| | PROVE | Give evidence and reasons to support the idea |
| | SOLVE | Use ideas to find solution to a given problem |
| ANALYSIS (Breaking down an idea into parts) | ANALYSE | Divide the idea into parts and show their relationships |
| | CATEGORISE | Put into a category or class |
| | COMPARE | Write down the similarities between two ideas |
| | CONTRAST /DIFFERENTIATE / DISCRIMINATE | Write down the differences between two ideas; to compare in respect of differences : exhibit especially antithetically the differences and relative worth of |
| | DIAGRAM | Construct a drawing with labels and with a specified organization or structure to demonstrate knowledge of that organization or structure (graphic charting and mapping are types of diagramming) |
| | DISCUSS | Write all relevant issues and evidence (pros and cons) about the idea |
| | DISTINGUISH | Identify under conditions when only two contrasting identifications are involved for each response |
| | EXPAND | Express at length or in detail |
| | EXPERIMENT | Conduct a test or investigation |
| | INFER | Make a conclusion supported with evidence and logical reasoning about the idea |
| RELATE | List and explain the interrelations between ideas | |
| SYNTHESIS (Extracting relevant ideas to address a novel issue or create new ideas) | CONSTRUCT | Come up with a novel idea supported by evidence |
| | COMPOSE | Formulate a written composition in written, spoken, musical or artistic form. |



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| | CREATE | Bring into existence : make out of nothing and for the first time |
| | DECONSTRUCT | Break down into components; Write about or analyse (e.g. a literary text) following the tenets of deconstruction |
| | DESIGN /PROPOSE | Develop a strategy with regards to the idea |
| | FORMULATE | Come up with a systematic way to use ideas to explain a situation |
| | HYPOTHESISE | Make a specific prediction about a situation |
| | ORGANISE | Arrange by systematic planning and coordination of individual effort |
| EVALUATION (Arriving at a judgment about an idea in relation to topic addressed) | APPRAISE | Estimate the value, importance, quality, nature etc. of an idea |
| | ASSESS | Analyze critically and judge definitively the nature, significance, status, or merit of : determine the importance, size, or value of |
| | CRITIQUE | Give informed judgments of the ideas, supported by evidence ; to act as a critic : consider and estimate worth or value |
| | CONCLUDE | Infer from evidence or reasons : deduce from premises |
| | ESTIMATE | Assess the dimension of an object, series of objects, event or condition without applying a standard scale or measuring device. Logical techniques of estimation, such as are involved in mathematical interpolation, may be used |
| | EVALUATE | Discuss the pros and cons of the idea and make an informed judgment about it; To classify objects, situations, people, conditions, etc., according to defined criteria of quality. Indication of quality must be given in the defined criteria of each class category |
| | JUSTIFY | Argue with evidence in support of your judgment made |
| | MEASURE | Apply a standard scale or measuring device to an object, series of objects, events, or conditions, according to practices accepted by those who are skilled in the use of the device or scale. |
| | PREDICT | Use a rule or principle to predict an outcome or to infer some consequence. It is not necessary that the rule or principle be stated |
| | TEST | Apply a test as a means of analysis or diagnosis |



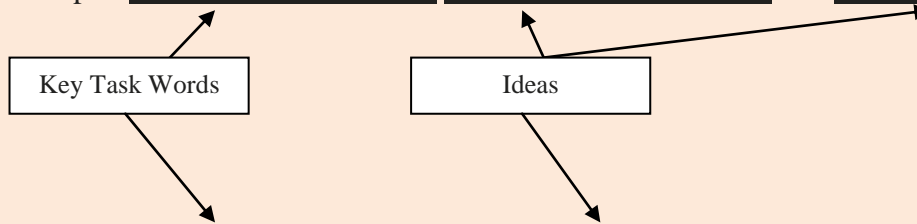
*The list of **Key Task Words** is not exhaustive. It includes the commonly used ones.

** Some **Key Task Words** can be used in two or more cognitive categories, depending on the nature and the aim of the questions set in assignments or examinations.

***Students are advised to go through the past years' examination papers and assignments to be aware of the types of key task words used in their courses.

****When students are in doubt about the meaning of any **Key Task Word** used in their courses, they are advised to check and clarify with their instructors.

Example: Compare and contrast Rational Choice Theory and Routine Activity Theory.



Example: Critically evaluate the research methodology outlined in the proposal.

References

Bloom B. S. (1956). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: The Cognitive Domain*. New York: David McKay Co Inc.