



Coping with Examination Anxiety

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Supervised examinations are part and parcel of your academic journey in UniSIM. If you experience panic, muscle tension, headache, cramps, blurred vision, negative self-talk, stomach ache, sweaty palms, sleepiness, inability to concentrate either before or during examinations, you might be suffering from examination anxiety. While studying regularly is one of the best bets for preventing anxiety during the examination, you also need to do things right before and on the day of the examination to avert an unexpected onset of anxiety.

In particular, during the examination period, you may want to:

- a) Rest and eat well;
- b) Participate in the usual activities that help you relax while not affecting your examination preparation;
- c) Clarify any doubts you have about the learning materials with your instructor;
- d) Avoid cramming in the hours leading up to the examination;
- e) Give yourself sufficient time to reach the examination venue;
- f) Do not go to the examination venue with an empty stomach; and
- g) Bring along a sweater to the examination venue in case you feel cold while doing the examination.

If you start to feel anxious during the examination, you may want to:

- a) Close your eyes, take slow deep breaths, and focus on each breath. Repeat the process until the anxiety lessens. This is a form of meditation to reduce stress and anxiety.
- b) Visualise yourself in a peaceful place (such as the by the beach, on a picturesque mountain top, or beautiful countryside). Incorporate the accompanying smells, sounds, tastes and touch of that place in your visualisation process. Such imagery relaxation can help calm your mind and reduce the anxiety you are experiencing.
- c) Contract your shoulder muscles (or any other sets of muscles) for 15 seconds and then relax them. Focus on the difference in the muscle tension during contraction and relaxation process. Repeat the exercise by getting the muscles to relax longer until the anxiety lessens. As your body starts to relax, your mind will calm down too.
- d) Take a short toilet break to clear your mind and get away from the examination paper and venue.

In summary, different students may experience examination anxiety of varying levels. Therefore, it is important that you are aware of your anxiety level during the examination period. More importantly, you need to know how to deal with the anxiety when it is triggered during the examination.