



Open-Book Examination **by Dr. Henry Khat, UniSIM**

Some of the courses at UniSIM require you to take open-book examinations. Open-book examinations allow you to bring your own study materials into the examination halls. Using the materials you brought in, you are required to finish the examination within a stipulated amount of time under supervision. The examination questions are either given to you in advance or are unseen before the examination. Open-book examinations usually test you on higher-order thinking processes that include analysis, synthesis and evaluation in Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive skills. Below is a set of measures that you might want to consider adopting when you are preparing for an open-book examination.

- a) Make a list of the pages of relevant materials that might be helpful in answering the examination questions. Make sure that you note down why the listed pages are important. Use headings and subheadings in the list so that you can easily skim through your notes for the relevant pages during the examination.
- b) Prepare concise notes of all concepts, ideas, theories and formulae tested in the examination. You may use index cards, post-it notes etc., based on your individual preference.
- c) Prepare brief summaries of topics covered in the examination.
- d) Prepare commentaries (supported with literature review) of anticipated examination questions.
- e) Ensure that you have a simple and quick way of locating relevant materials during examination. You may use sticky notes, coloured flags, or highlighters for easy retrieval. Try out your retrieval system before the examination to test its efficiency and effectiveness. During the examination, you'll want to be able to locate the relevant materials at the shortest time possible.
- f) Memorise the key concepts so that you can locate answers to the questions faster.
- g) Use quotations from the course books to support arguments that you've written to answer the examination questions.
- h) Do not copy chunks of text direct from the relevant materials to answer the examination questions as that is plagiarism.



While this set of measures may be helpful to you in preparing for an open-book examination, it is important that you understand the course content so that you're able to use the materials you have prepared more effectively and efficiently during the examination.