

December 2017 Exam Study Schedule

Student Academic Success Services
<http://sass.queensu.ca/>

Course	Hours Needed			Target Achieved?
	Catch Up	Study	Total	

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning						December 1 <i>last day of class</i>	2
Afternoon							
Evening							
Morning	3	4	5	6	<i>1st day of exams</i> 7	8	9
Afternoon							
Evening							
Morning	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Afternoon							
Evening							
Morning	17	18	19	20	<i>last day of exams</i> 21	22	23
Afternoon							
Evening							
Morning	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Afternoon							
Evening							

A study plan allows you to consider how much time you may need for different courses, distribute your review time, and ensure that all courses get some attention. A study plan reduces stress, helps you keep on track during the intense exam period, and prioritizes health and balancing activities.

Why should I start studying early? *The human brain learns academic material faster and better if done in brief blocks of time spread over longer periods, rather than a few lengthy sessions. It's better to distribute 15 hours of study over 5 days at 3 hours a day, rather than cramming during two 8-hour study days.*

How to create your exam study schedule: Each day is divided into 3 x 3 hour study blocks (one each for morning, afternoon, and evening) – that's 9 hours a day of studying! These study blocks *must* be separated by a 2 hour break, to allow for memory consolidation and down time. Studying for exams is a marathon, not a sprint! During that 2 hour break, grab some food, get some physical activity, hang out with friends, watch TV. For example:

Morning	9am-12noon: 3 hour study block
	12-2pm: 2 hour break
Afternoon	2-5pm: 3 hour study block
	5-7pm: 2 hour break
Evening	7-10pm: 3 hour study block

1. Write in when your exams are, in the appropriate timeslot. For example, a 9am exam would go in the first third of the day. Include the value or percentage of each exam. Consider colour coding for easy identification.
2. Determine how many 3-hour study blocks you will need for each exam. This will depend on the value of the exam, your goals for the course, the difficulty of the material, and how up-to-date you are in the course. Divide the course material into workable chunks, e.g. a section of a textbook, a set of lecture notes, or a topic in the course; then add a single 3-hour study block at the end for review. On average, students spend between 4-7 study blocks per course (10-20 hours). Write the number of study blocks per course into the chart on the upper-right side of the template.
3. Starting with your hardest course, work backwards from the exam date and assign study chunks to individual 3-hour blocks in the schedule (use a pencil, because you may need to revise!) Try to assign study blocks that coincide with the time of each exam (for example, study for a 7pm exam at 7pm), so that your mind is able to function well under the future exam conditions. Schedule your peak learning times for your hardest studying.
4. Repeat step #3 for each course. There is no perfect plan: just try to spread your studying over a period of 5 days or more, and reach your targeted number of study blocks.
5. Within each 3-hour study block, it is important to review, study, and self-test. First, spend a few minutes reviewing the material you studied during the *previous* study block; then spend most of your time reviewing the current chunk of material; then spend some time testing yourself on that material.
6. Be efficient. Within each 3-hour study block, use the 50/10 rule: work for 50 minutes, then take a 10 minute break. Strategically focus on key content areas (e.g. the learning objectives for each course). Focus on the material you do not know. Make summary sheets of major concepts and their applications. Repeat and rehearse to move information into your long-term memory. Read our Exam Prep module on our website for more information: <http://sass.queensu.ca/exam-prep/>.