

Exam tips

Reading Scenarios and General Exam Advice



The plan for today

- Short lecture on answering university level questions
 - what to revise and how to answer the style of question
- Work through a past paper exam scenario



The Exam

- Written exam with **2 questions**
- DIFFERENT FROM LAST YEAR!
 - ONE hour not TWO hours
- All questions are Compulsory!!
- Will release a podcast on the exam closer to the time



Q1: Short Answer Questions

- Test your surface knowledge of the subject
- Covers the major topics of the course
 - Similar to the style of questions used in last week's pub quiz
- Each question worth between 2 and 5 marks



Q2: Extended answer questions

- Use the provided scenario
- Testing applied skills or deep learning
- Application of knowledge as opposed to testing your recall
- Worth proportionately more
- Full and detailed answers
- Opportunity to show additional study



Ways you can mess this up

- By not answering both questions
- For mixing up functional and nonfunctional requirements
- By writing a two line answer for the essay questions
- By not reading the scenario closely
- Spending too much time on lower percentage mark questions



Past Papers and Practice

- Available through the library tab on the portal
- Remember that these papers are 2 hours long and not one hour
- The structure of the exam has changed



Exam survival

tips and tricks for answering exam q's



Top exam tips - Number 1

- *Don't be afraid of exams*
 - Revising the lecture notes and have done a bit of extra reading will be helpful
- Questions are designed to be **fair**, not to catch you out!!
 - my exam is not 'easy', but i hope its fair
 - there will always be one or two harder questions



Top exam tips - Number 2

- Be *careful with your timing*
- Different parts of the questions are given different mark allocations
 - Higher mark questions are designed to take longer in the FSE exam
- Dont spend all your time on Q1, get it good enough, do the rest and come back to Q1 to do refinements once the essays are done
- Take more time with the Extended Answer questions



Top exam tips - Number 3

- *Read the given scenario carefully before you start to answer the questions*
- Make notes and highlight the critical parts of information
- Try and relate the scenario to examples you have seen before
 - As you are reading the scenario think in your head how you might design the system
 - Think about how you might manage the implementation process



Top exam tips - Number 4

- *Get to the point, elaborate where needed*
- For the design question, don't waste time on writing beautiful essays – just write down facts you want to tell me with clear justification
- If its an extended answer question, make sure it you write and present the information in a structured way
 - you can use **subheadings** if it helps you clear it up



Top exam tips - Number 5

- *Plan what you want to say as each question is worth a lot!*
- Order your thoughts before you put pen to paper
 - ensures you've not forgotten everything critical
 - allows you to organise your thoughts making your answer clearer for me to mark.
- Can just be a simple list of keywords you want to use
- The back cover of your exam booklet is ideal
 - clearly cross out any 'rough work'



Top exam tips - Number 6

- Never ever ever leave an exam early!
- Very strong negative correlation between time student leaves the exam room with performance
 - i.e. those who leave early get worse marks
- Use the time to perfect your answers
 - if you finish early add more examples to your answers and spend time thinking “did I add enough detail to my extended answer??”



Top exam tips - Number 7

- *Paper in exams is free!*
- When you are writing your answers space them out comfortably.
 - makes your answers easier to read when I'm marking
 - gives yourself space to add extra info at the end
- There are no explicit marks for spelling, grammar and punctuation, but the clearer your answer is the more likely I am to give you better marks - *have confidence!*



Jools' Top Exam Tip - Number 8

DONT PANIC!

also try not to oversleep!



And finally.....

- **ANSWER THE QUESTION!!!**
- One of the most common mistakes made in exams it to just do a ‘brain dump’ on the keywords of a certain topic
 - likely to actively lose marks for this
- E.g. compare and contrast the v model with TDD
 - has to be about TDD, not agile!
 - have to write some sort of **comparison**



COMMON QUESTION VOCABULARY

analyse	break down into constituents and explain how they all fit together
annotate	draw a diagram and add some detailed notes
compare	point out sim/diffs in a logical order
contrast	point out the differences
describe	write down what you know about x
discuss	present arguments for and against x
distinguish	identify differences between x and y

evaluate	how good something is through discussing its positive and negative attributes
explain	means give reasons, not just a definition
justify	valid argument as to why something is achieved in a particular way
outline	Give the main principles/features of a particular topic, not too much fine detail
summarise	same as outline
suggest	produce a range of suggestions (sometimes numerically stated)

Remember....

-do what the question asks of you
- If it asks for an illustration, draw a diagram
- If you need to do *three* parts, do *three* parts
- If you write nothing, there are no marks I can give you, but don't write *stupid* stuff else I'll take marks away
- First class answers demonstrate knowledge above that what is given to you in the course!



Lets practice now.

ENGINEERS Preparation Before Exams



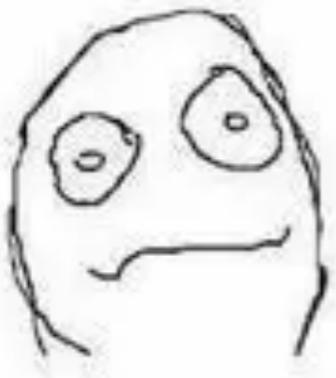
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one hour for each chapter