

Tips for Reading Period and Final Exams
Compiled from Peer Advising Fellows

Making a Schedule

Get on a regular work and sleep schedule. Be awake during the day. Waking up for a 9 a.m. exam is more difficult if your body is used to going to sleep at 4 in the morning!

Keep up your day-to-day routines. Don't feel like you need to shortchange all of your daily tasks for purposes of studying, as these will help you maintain your focus.

Fill the hours you would spend in class with study time, and then add a bit more.

Do what is right for *you*. Make your own schedule; don't be too influenced by how others approach their exams.

Do some physical activity at least every other day. It will help you relax and focus on your work.

Set personal deadlines that are earlier than the official deadlines. Leave time for possible error.

If you have a class that meets during reading period, use it as a landmark around which to build your schedule.

Final projects are often more demanding than regular assignments, even if they are given the same title.

Schedule study time in three-hour blocks to replicate the exam environment.

It likely won't be effective to study for longer than 4 hours at a time. Build in breaks!

Do one fun thing every day. Build in downtime away from your study space. It won't feel like a break if you're in the same place. Explore Boston or walk around Cambridge!

Keeping a Schedule

Study when it is time to study, and relax when it's time to relax.

Build in flexibility. It's okay if you don't adhere to your schedule 100% perfectly.

It's easy to spend 3 hours in Annenberg. Beware of extended meals.

If Facebook is too tempting, get a friend to change your password for a while. If you're really addicted to the internet, turn off your wireless when you study.

Double-check the exam schedule. Better yet, have a friend re-check the exam schedule for you!

Study Strategies

Study actively. Simply re-reading notes might not be the best way to absorb material. Consider copying your notes to engage with them.

Redo - don't just reread - problem sets. Cut them up and do the problems in random order.

Make sure study groups are useful.

Think about using less crowded study areas. Do you really want to be in Lamont with 500 of your classmates? Try the Widener stacks for a more private setting. Or try one of Harvard's ~90 other libraries (find them here: <http://lib.harvard.edu/>).

Keep all your courses in mind. Prioritize your courses as appropriate, but don't over-focus on one exam if you have several. If you have back-to-back exams, study for the second before the first is over.

Visit <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~exams/> to see old finals for many classes.

Many courses will have extra office hours. Use them!

Attend review sessions. Or make sure someone you trust attends them. They might give a hint of the material on the final exam. However, make sure to prepare before review sessions because many review sessions are question-answer based.

Study Guides

Make use of study guides as appropriate. However, note that material in a group study guide might not always be correct, so be sure to check it yourself!

Make-Ups and Extensions

Make-up exams are administered by the Registrar's office and extensions on written material past final exam period can be granted only by the Ad Board. If you think you might need a make-up or an extension, you should talk to your Resident Dean.

Exam Eve

Arrange for a wake-up call from a friend, as a backup to 2 alarms. Cramming the night before isn't helpful. Schedule time to relax the evening before an exam. Oh, and sleep!

Taking the Exams

Remember to bring all important materials--pens, pencils, calculator, water, snacks. Don't forget any allowed course material.

Eat breakfast!

If You Are Sick

If you feel too ill to make it to the exam, you must have documented proof of a visit to UHS in the 24 hours prior to the start of the exam in order to petition for a make-up.

If you become ill during your exam, don't try to finish – tell the person administering the exam. Someone will escort you to UHS where you will be held incommunicado until you are able to resume your exam.

If You Are Late/Oversleep

If you are late for a final exam, you should report to the exam room up to the hours of 9:45am for a morning examination, or 2:30pm for an afternoon exam.

After those times, you should contact your Resident Dean as soon as possible to petition a make-up exam.

Being Mindful of Others

Talk with roommates about what your room will be. Will people study there? Socialize there?

Remember that people have different reading period and exam schedules.

Keep in mind that there are exams on Saturday. Your friends and roommates might have plans different from yours on Friday night.