

Common Exam Errors

Success in exams depends on good revision and exam technique, but it can also depend on less academic issues such as forgetting or getting basic things wrong. Use the following checklist to ensure that you do not make mistakes that many students unfortunately make each year, and may have a serious impact on their exam results.

Related guides: [‘Revision and Exam Skills’](#), [‘Creative Revision Strategies’](#) and [‘Exam Stress’](#).

Have you checked the details of the exam?

- **Time.** Have you checked the date and time of the exam? Are you sure you know what day of the week or month it is on? Do not rely on other people to tell you; make sure you have checked it yourself, as they may be wrong. No special arrangements can be made if you miss an exam due to your own mistake, and you cannot enter the exam room more than half an hour after it has begun.
- **Location.** Are you sure which venue the exam is held in? Arriving at the wrong venue can cause you to miss the exam or arrive late and flustered – you may find it helpful to locate the venue before the day of the exam.
- **Journey.** Do you know how to get to the venue and how long it will take? Do you need to think about how you will find a parking space or what to do if a bus is late? You should allow additional time for your journey to account for unforeseen delays such as traffic congestion or vehicle breakdown. You should arrive at the exam venue at least 20 minutes before the start time.
- **Alarm.** Have you remembered to set your alarm so that you don’t oversleep? Do you need to set a reminder for an afternoon exam?

Have you got everything with you that you need?

- **Campus card.** You will need this to prove your identity.
- **Spare pens.** If you only have one, it may run out or stop working. Remember that you should write your exams in black ink, unless specified otherwise.
- **Watch.** If you usually use your mobile phone or other device to check the time, you will not be able to bring it into the exam. You will need to remember your watch so you can keep an eye on the time.
- **Dictionary, calculator, “open book” materials.** Unless the specific exam prohibits their use, you may take a calculator or, if English is not your first language, a simple translation dictionary into the exam. Don’t forget them! You will not be permitted to use

an English, technical or electronic dictionary. If your exam is “open book”, don’t forget to take your book or notes.

- **Spare batteries.** If you are allowed to use a calculator in the exam, you are responsible for making sure that it works. Run-down batteries are a common reason why your calculator might let you down in the exam.
- **SpLD Stickers.** If you have a Specific Learning Disability and are entitled to place a sticker on your exam script to indicate this, then remember to collect your sticker from the Dean of Students’ Office and bring it to the examination. You will not be given another sticker in the exam room if you forget it.

Have you got anything you’re not allowed with you?

- You are not allowed to take your bag or coat into the exam and should leave them in the area provided outside the exam room. You should also make sure that you do not have anything prohibited in exams, such as a **mobile phone, MP3 player or any other electronic devices**, in your pockets – please ensure that these are switched off and either left with your bag and coat or handed to the invigilator at the front of the exam room.
- **Notes.** You may have forgotten that there are notes, scribbled on or tucked inside items such as pencil cases, dictionaries or calculator cases. For these reasons, it is not a good idea to borrow items such as dictionaries and calculators from others. The only thing you are permitted to write on such items is your own name. Anything else, even if it has nothing to do with the exam, may be presumed an intention to cheat. Your calculators and dictionaries will be checked in every exam.
- **Non-approved dictionary or calculator.** The university has strict regulations about which dictionaries and calculators may be used in exams, and has a list of those which are approved. Check that your dictionary or calculator is appropriate with the university’s regulations or with your School.
- **Books.** Bringing books into exams is against university regulations, unless the exam specifically states that you may.
- **Writing Paper.** You should not bring writing paper into exams. If you need extra paper for your answers or for rough work, you should ask the invigilator for an additional answer booklet.

Have you read the exam paper carefully?

- Have you read the ‘**rubric**’ (instructions) on the front of the exam paper carefully? You can look at past papers to get an idea of what it will be, but if so, double-check in case it has changed since previous years.
 - Do you know how long the exam is?
 - Are you certain how many questions you should answer, whether you should do all the questions or have a choice of question, from which sections you should choose the questions and whether you should answer them in separate answer booklets?

- Have you made sure you have turned over **all the pages** of the exam paper, and not missed any? It is sometimes easy to overlook the final page on an exam, or turn over two pages together.
- Have you **completed the front of all your answer booklets and tagged them all together**, including any additional pages (e.g. graph paper, answer cards), so there are none missing, and are they in the right order? Make sure you are handing in the whole of your script.
- **Do not communicate** with other students in the exam, to ask questions about the exam paper or to borrow anything. You should talk only to an invigilator.
- Listen carefully to any **announcements** given by invigilators before the exam begins. Typos and other small errors in the exam paper are announced prior to the exam.
- Make sure the **exam paper** in front of you is the correct one – check the module title and number.

Want to know more?

If you have any further questions about this topic you can make an appointment to see a **Learning Enhancement Tutor** in the **Student Support Service**, as well as speaking to your lecturer or adviser.

- 📞 Call: 01603 592761
- 💻 Ask: ask.let@uea.ac.uk
- 🔗 Click: <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/student-support-service/learning-enhancement>

There are many other resources to help you with your studies on our [website](#).

Your comments or suggestions about our resources are very welcome.

	<p>Scan the QR-code with a smartphone app for more resources.</p>	
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