



THE EDUCATION PORTFOLIO PRESENTS OUR

# EXAM PREPARATION SURVIVAL GUIDE

A summary of our 'Exam Prep 101' Seminar

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# GENERAL TIPS

- Start preparing as early as you can. It can be difficult as the last few weeks of the semester are when final assignments fall due. However, if you start revising now, you will stress less come exams and perform better.
- Make a revision schedule and stick to it! You can develop any system you want but it must incorporate the following elements in some way:
  - **EFFICIENCY**
    - How to achieve this: structure your revision time with appropriate study breaks. Do NOT study randomly. Little bits here and there will not achieve much
  - **CLEAR AND DEFINED TASKS**
    - You need to revise, but you need to know what you are revising. Make a list of each topic, principle, case you need to develop notes for and set realistic deadlines for completion
  - **CONSISTENCY**
    - Revising everyday (or as much as practical), incorporating the study techniques stated below will allow you to remain consistent and effective in your study.
  - **FOCUSSED**
    - Study with maximum focus for a specific period of time and make sure to take a break. Avoid spending a large amount of time studying and then taking an equally long break.
  - **BALANCED**
    - Determine how many days you need to spend on each subject based on the difficulty and your level of understanding of the material.
- Aim to collate/rewrite/arrange all notes and content before SWOTVAC (or by the first week of exams at the very latest)
  - Make sure you have all notes on lecture material, cases, legislation and required readings (at a minimum)
  - Devote your time in SWOTVAC and the exam period itself to capitalising on topics/principles you do not completely understand and answering past exams; problem questions and essays
- Determine how you are going to revise each day
  - Note, random bursts will not achieve much
  - This can be achieved in a number of ways (see next section)
  - Of course, you will need to accommodate other commitments such as work, spending time with friends and breaks et cetera

# REVISION TECHNIQUES

There are a range of ways to schedule your time and revise each day. Below are some recommendations:

- Pomodoro technique (time management method)
  - Typically 25 minutes of work, 5 minute break, repeat 4 times and then take a longer break (adapt to your own style of working)
  - 50/10 technique (adaptation of the pomodoro technique)
    - Revise as intensely as possible for 50 minutes and in the 10 minute break do whatever you like
    - Eliminate distractions during the 50 minutes
      - No mobile phone
      - No social media
      - No emails
      - No web browsing that is not related to the subject (download your materials or print them out)
      - No planning for exams (no points for being busy, all points for being productive)
  - Do 3 rounds and then take a break for lunch and then more perform 3 more rounds in the afternoon
- Spaced repetition (Ebbinghaus curve of forgetting)
  - Typically this should be conducted throughout the semester, however, it can have a concentrated effect during exam revision
  - Essentially, review your content the day you learn/revise it, and then proceed to review it 2 days later.
  - Double the amount of time between reviews. For example: review topic 1 two days after you have learned it, then 4 days, then 8 days and so on.
- Active Recall:
  - Flash cards are particularly useful for remembering important principles and case law (exempli gratia facts and case names, key reasoning, judgments et cetera)
  - Blurting:
    - Spend 5 minutes writing as much as you can remember from a topic or the course on a blank piece of paper
    - This can either be in a process/checklist/list format or a mindmap
    - After the time is up, refer to your notes to see what you missed, highlight the areas you had knowledge gaps and focus on that in your revision moving forward

# REVISION TECHNIQUES CONT.

- Do this once or twice a week to ensure memorisation and understand of the content
- **NOTE:** Although law exams are open-book, and effectively there is less of a need to memorise your content, the more you are able to memorise and understand the course, the less time you will waste going through your notes to find relevant legal principles.
- Feynman technique
  - Using analogies and explaining concepts in simple terms as if you were explaining a concept to a 4 year old
- Set your environment for success
  - No phone or other distractions
  - Natural lighting
  - Comfortable setting
  - Listening to lofi beats
- Procrastination (a failure in getting started with something)
  - 5 minute rule
  - Tell yourself that you will only do a task for 5 minutes, this will get you started, and generally your momentum will build up and keep you working, ultimately dispensing with procrastination
  - See Newtons law of inertia: momentum
- Focus on systems, not goals
  - Don't necessarily focus on the goal of doing well in your exam, but rather the process of getting there
  - This requires focus on the best you can you possibly in all of your tasks leading up to the exam

# TIMETABLING

When considering these tips, it is important to note that everyone works differently and you should aim to adapt these principles in a way that works for you!

- Revise during the day
  - Start no later than 8-9am
- No revision in the late afternoon and evening
  - You'll tend to perform better during the day
  - Of course, everyone is different and has their own "high functioning work times" (cue the night owls saying they work better at 2am)
  - However, the premise behind this is that your exams are during the day, therefore you should aim to create a habit of commencing intense focused study during the day in order to prime yourself come exams
  - This technique involves *intense* and *concentrated* study so you should not feel the need to revise
- Revise one subject per day
- Devote days to a subject based on the following
  - Difficulty of the content
  - Time needed to prepare
  - How confident you feel about the course
- Schedule time off where appropriate
- Avoid Burnout: make sure you take into consideration your health and what is appropriate on your individual circumstances
- See below for an example timetable

	Monday 18/10	Tuesday 19/10	Wednesday 20/10	Thursday 21/10	Friday 22/10	Saturday 23/10	Sunday 24/10
6:00							
6:30							
7:00							
7:30							
8:00							
8:30							
9:00	Admin Law	Property	Business Valuation	Work	Admin Law		
9:30							
10:00						Property	
10:30							
11:00							
11:30							
12:00	Break	Break	Break		Break		
12:30							
13:00	Admin Law	Property	Business Valuation		Admin Law		
13:30							
14:00							
14:30							
15:00							
15:30							
16:00							
16:30							
17:00							
17:30							
18:00	Daily Review	Daily Review	Daily Review	Daily Review	Daily Review		
18:30							
19:00							
19:30							
20:00							
20:30							
21:00							

# LAW SPECIFIC TIPS

- Have all notes summarised in a document you can print out and take into an exam.
- Binders are particularly useful here as they can help with easy navigation
- Make sure you tab and highlight (colour can correspond to topics, cases, legislation, hierarchy et cetera)
  - Make sure the formatting includes the following:
    - Contents page
    - Headings and subheadings
    - Page numbers
- Summarise all cases. Follow this format (or similar) for case, legislation and treaties et cetera. Omit unnecessary parts. (see example for case below)

## ***R v Sharkey* (1949) 79 CLR 121**

**Facts:** The General Secretary of the Communist Party in Australia made seditious comments. The crime of sedition in the *Crimes Act* concerned not just the making of seditious comments in Australia *but also in other countries*.

**Issue:** Whether the *Crimes Act* fell under the external affairs power? The facts in this case did not concern comments in other countries, only in Australia.

**Held:** The law was held valid. Technically, this may be obiter as this case did not specifically relate to other countries.

Latham CJ: The relations the Commonwealth are within the subject of external affairs. 'The preservation of friendly relations with other Dominions is an important part of the management of the external affairs of the Commonwealth'

**NB:** Does the 'preservation of friendly relations' mean that laws have to preserve relations or can they affect them adversely?

- Locate and answer the following
  - Past exams (these will be your best friend other than coffee)
  - Tutorial questions
  - PASS questions
- Answer questions under exam-like conditions
  - Time limit
  - No distractions
  - Law exams are notoriously tight for time so it is important to develop this skill
  - This is most the most important component of your revision
  - Start at 1 question and build to a full exam
    - Contingent on how much time you have, how well you know the content come exam period, when your exam is et cetera