EXAM PREPARATION STRATEGIES
Different Types of Exam Questions

Many exams have a mix of multiple choice, short answer, true/false, and matching questions. While there are certain approaches you can use to prepare for each type of question, it’s not recommended you focus on just one, or even a few. Prepare using several different study approaches to learn the material inside and out. Find more tips prepare on our resource page!

Adapted by the AAC from http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/assistance/learning_services/handouts/essay_exams.cfm

Multiple Choice Questions
The multiple choice format is commonly used in testing because the exams are relatively easy to grade and the questions effectively evaluate students' knowledge of facts & understanding of concepts. This is an objective form of testing since, if the questions are well written, there is only one correct answer to each question, leaving little room for interpretation.

- **Go beyond recognition:** A common error made in preparing for multiple choice questions is to study only to the point where correct answers can be recognized. Multiple choice questions test both your ability to recognize facts and your ability to apply the information.

- **Prepare for facts & understanding:** Multiple choice questions test recall for factual information while assessing understanding. When studying, pay attention to detail and ensure you have a thorough understanding for the course material. Use previous tests to identify the type of questions that might be asked (factual details, conceptual understanding or a combination of both).

- **Underline key terms and phrases** to help you identify what material you should study. When writing the test these familiar phrases may show up in the multiple choice answers.

- **Use mnemonics and other techniques** when studying lists and concepts requiring a specific order. Reciting these mnemonics during the test will help you identify the correct multiple choice answer.

- **Practice:** Write your own questions and locate relevant multiple choice questions (textbook, professor, online, etc.) to practice. This will help you review the concepts and identify information you still need learn.

- **Time yourself:** Practice answering questions within a limited time frame. Try to budget your time according to how much time you will have on the exam. Remember to carefully read the question once and select the most appropriate answer. You can use additional time to reread and review your selections.