

Student Guide to Online Assessments

Due to the Coronavirus situation, exams and assessments will take place remotely. Your department will send you specific information regarding any changes to your course or modules that are being introduced to best reflect your achievements. You should check their instructions in the first instance. The aim of this guide is to support all King's students adapting to new assessment approaches and, as these will vary across faculties, departments and programmes, feel free to select only those sections which apply to you.

What are you being assessed on?

Your first step is to find out what you are being assessed on. Key questions to consider will be:

- **Which modules am I being assessed on?** This list may be different to what was originally outlined. You may not be being assessed on each module you have taken this year while some programmes may adopt an approach where key learning outcomes from more than one module are assessed in a single assignment.
- **Which topics am I being assessed on?** Topics that could not be covered due to the Coronavirus situation may no longer be included in your assessment. Where topics that are essential (as specified by Professional Bodies, for example) have not been covered, please check with your department.
- **What are the learning outcomes upon which you are being assessed?** It may be that where departments are looking to streamline the assessment processes by assessing at the programme (rather than the module) level, some of the learning outcomes of a particular module will now be covered elsewhere.
- **How many assignments will I have?** Where possible, programmes will look to reduce the number of assessments while ensuring that this does not compromise the value or validity of your degree qualification.

How are you being assessed?

Check the format of your assessments. Are you now sitting an online Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) exam as planned or something else? Is it a 24 hour open-book exam rather than a 2 hour exam? Perhaps you are being asked to complete an extended essay instead of a project, a narrated PowerPoint instead of a presentation or a literature review and proposal rather than an empirical dissertation.

When are you being assessed?

The assessment period has been extended and will now take place between 27 April (as originally planned) and 26 June.

- Check information from your department or programme about assessment deadlines. Please don't simply assume that your assessments dates will change. The extended assessment period is to allow for increased flexibility and for alternative arrangements to be made but this does not mean that all assessments will be delayed – where possible the deadlines will stay the same.

- Check precise details regarding online assessment dates and times. King's is committed to ensuring that no-one is disadvantaged due to their individual circumstances (such as being in a different time zone to the UK) but please make sure that to check the time-period in which you can access, complete and submit your exam.

STUDYING AND REVISING ONLINE

The type of exam will affect how you prepare. Make sure you find out as much about your exam as possible beforehand; this will help you structure your notes and organise the information you need for your exam. Multiple-choice questions require the ability to recall information and make decisions quickly under pressure. Essay type questions require you to apply your knowledge so that you can demonstrate your understanding. For open-book exams you may be asked to apply knowledge from many sources but unless you are well-prepared and your information is well organised it can be easy to overlook information or get overwhelmed.

There are a few different ways that you can structure and save your work in an organised way that makes it easy to recall or find for your exam. Try a few of the ways mentioned below to see what works for you.

Preparing your material for an open book exam

For open book exams, there is less emphasis on memorisation and recall than for standard exams. This means that you can have resources to hand to refer to during the online exam. As noted above, you still need to revise and prepare as there won't be time to research an unfamiliar topic (even in a 24 hour exam).

Some things you can do to save time during the exam include:

- Having key online texts open, or at least produce a list of hyperlinks to key resources so that you can access them quickly. To do this, make sure that you've check King's Libraries and Collections' guide to [accessing eResources](#) which, crucially, includes information on how to access these from off campus.
- Some online eReading platforms or bibliographic software tools allow you to make notes or highlight key sections of books or articles. Make sure that you do this so you can quickly find key points during your exam

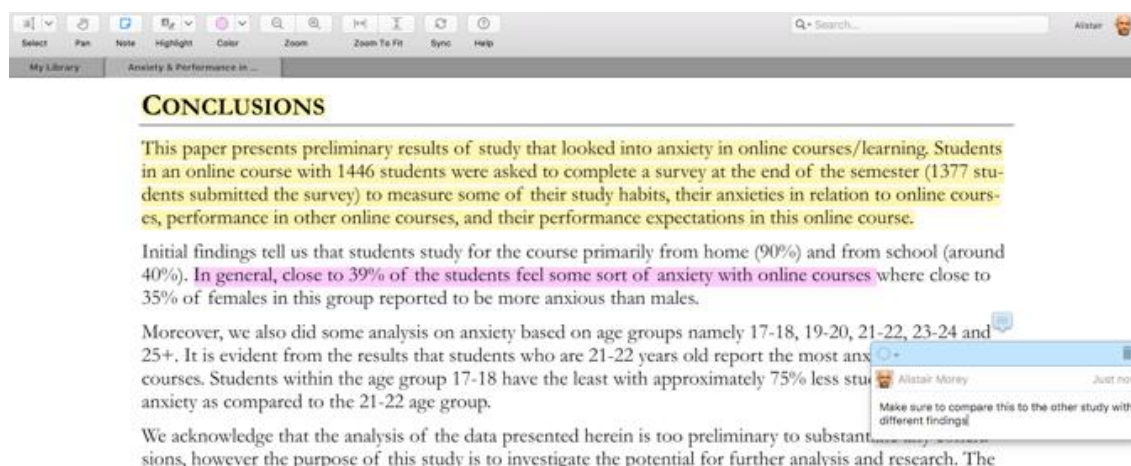
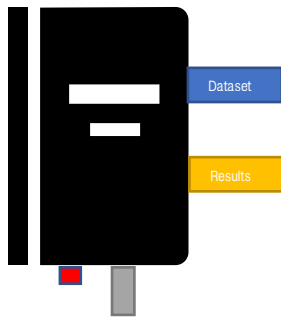


Figure 1: example of highlighting/notemaking using Mendeley

- If you are using photocopies of articles you can of course do something similar. However, be careful to avoid highlighting too much – be selective.

- If using physical books, it can be useful to use post-it notes to identify key pages. You can also produce a summary highlighting where key sections, diagrams, quotes etc are.



Remember, in an open book exam *you can use your revision notes!* To do this, you will need to make sure that they are short enough to be useful. Flash cards, which many people for revision, can be helpful prompts in an online exam setting. Even a short phrase, diagram or equation can help prompt your thinking and allow you develop your answer. They also allow you to reference your core texts quickly and find the information more easily.

- Mind maps or concept maps can be really useful ways to present information in a visual, non-linear way. These can be really helpful tools for planning assignments in general, but can also be useful for revision or as prompts in open book exams.

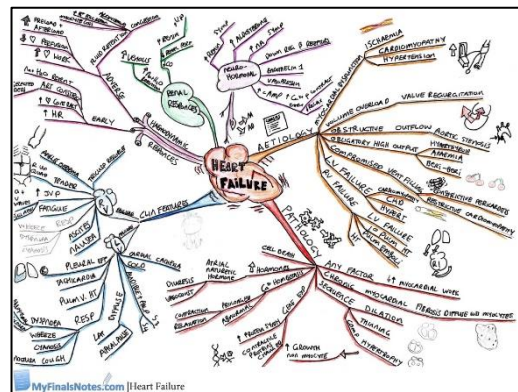


Figure 2: Example mindmap source

- Another way of preparing is to make visual notes with key information included. This method of studying is useful when revising a specific topic and when you need to group ideas together. Try to make each page you create unique; this will help you remember where you wrote about it and make it easier to find when you are looking for it. When using this method, you should select only the information that is relevant (e.g. quotes, research, case studies, formulas).

It might be easy to get complacent about doing online exams and open-book exams at home, but remember, it is important to revise as thoroughly as you normally would to get the best possible marks you can. If you are given a longer time period in which to complete your exam, make sure you finish well within the time limit that gives you time to submit.

Further Revision Resources

SkillsForStudy is a website that you can access via single sign on using the *Institutional Login* option and your usual k number and password. It contains lots of different academic skills resources, but some of the most relevant are:

- [Revision](#)
- [Performing in Exams](#)

COMPLETING AN ONLINE TIMED EXAM

Make sure you understand EXACTLY what is expected of you:

- How long do you have to complete the exam?
 - Is it comparable to a 'standard' exam in that it last 2 or 3 hours or is it a '24 hour' exam?
 - Does any time limit start at a set time (e.g. 9.00 British Summer Time) or is it a fixed period of time from when you open the exam (e.g. you must open your assignment between 0.00 and 23.59 BST and then have 2 hours from that point)?
- How many questions do you need to answer?
 - In most cases, online exams should be close to standard exams in terms of amount of the work involved. However, it is good to check the specific guidelines you receive for 2020 exams rather than assuming that the format will be the same as in previous years.
- Is there a word limit?
 - While there would not be a limit in exams, there may be one in place now. In part this is to ensure online exam answers are comparable to what could be produced in an exam room; even if you have 24 hours to complete the exam, you are not expected to be working for 24 hours!
- Are references required?
 - Given that for online 'open book' exams you will have greater access to literature than you might normally have, you might be expected to include references where you would not normally in an exam. Please check the guidance for your exams.

Managing the environment and distractions

Individual circumstances vary and some will have more control over their study environment than others. Consider the following principles, when creating a space for completing an online exam or assessment.

- Identify or create a learning space for the duration of your exam, if you do not have one already.
- If you know the timing of your exam(s), discuss this with people you share your accommodation with to minimise noise or distractions.
- De-clutter the space as much as possible as this will help you focus, ensuring that you meet any exam requirements for access to your books, notes etc. Remove anything you may find distracting.
- The ideal temperature for study is around 18-21°C and fresh air is usually beneficial (but check the pollen levels if you suffer from hay fever).
- Use headphones with quiet music or white noise to help you filter out distractions. If you have noise-cancelling headphones, all the better. Be aware that lyrics can be a distraction.
- If possible, use a wired connection to your computer/device. If this is not possible, make sure your device is fully charged before you start and that you can easily connect to a power source if your battery runs low.
- If possible, use wifi (or a wired connection) rather than 3/4/5G signal.
<https://www.myfinalsnotes.com/heart-failure.html>

Managing the time

To manage your time effectively, it is essential that know how long you have! If you have two or three hours from the time you open the assignment, it makes sense to treat an online exam exactly as you would a normal exam. If you have 24 hours, you have a bit more flexibility.

- Standard length exams (e.g. 2 hours from when you start)
 - Have a plan for how long you are going spend on the various questions/sections based on their weighting and stick to it

- While it's not a bad idea to clear your mind between questions, don't be tempted to go and make a drink or get a snack during the exam – make sure you have these nearby before you start
- Don't waste time online. It is a benefit of open book exams that you can look up key information if you are struggling to remember something but don't be tempted to try to do extra research during the exam time; if you're being assessed as if you were in an exam hall, the questions will have been prepared to reflect that and you're not going to have time to do research.
- For 24 hour exams
 - You are not expected to spend 24 hours completing the exam! It's likely that most people will choose to spend more time on the assignment than they would for a traditional exam, but please don't put excessive pressure on yourself. The amount of work expected and the assessment criteria should still be comparable to the standard exam that is being replaced.
 - Work mostly at the time of day that you are most effective, within the time limits set. There is no point trying to become a morning person if you aren't already one just so you can start as soon as possible; if you are most effective in the early afternoon, plan to do as much of the exam then as possible.
 - Consider whether there will be times when your internet connection will be slower/less reliable. While you may be able to work offline for some of the time (depending upon the type of assessment), as a minimum you will need to be online to start and then submit your work. Try to avoid times when others are using the internet and if you share WiFi, try to encourage others not to use up too much bandwidth while you are taking your exam.
 - One advantage of this more flexible format is that it does allow you to take breaks. It's a good idea to move around between sections/questions or maybe go outside (subject to local guidance). Don't be tempted to take too long, though, as you will lose focus and momentum.
 - As with standard-length exams, there is not time to research unfamiliar topics, so revision remains important. However, you will have an opportunity to spend a bit more time finding quotes or data than you might otherwise. The consequence of this is that the expectations in terms of accuracy and referencing are higher than they would be for a 2-3 hour exam.
 - Given that the expectations are maybe going to be different, try to allow yourself time to check and proof read your work before uploading it.

Avoiding Collusion

Make sure that you avoid collusion when undertaking your online exam. King's defines collusion as 'when two or more students collaborate, without permission, to produce individual assessments that when compared significantly overlap in content, order, structure and/or format' (King's [Academic Integrity and Honesty Policy](#), 2019). You should treat an open book exam like any other exam and use only your own resources or ideas. To avoid the risk of accidental collusion, it is best to avoid contacting your classmates during the 24 hours. Once the 24 hours has passed, you can celebrate with your peers and discuss the answers just like you would after an exam!

Technology requirements

Do you have the technology you need to complete your online exams or assessments?

Laptop / WiFi access

There is a limited stock of King's loan laptops and Mifi sticks (WiFi dongles) that can be sent to students who do not have access to a laptop/computer or Wi-Fi/internet to study online. All students can request equipment. However, due to a limited stock we will be prioritising students who are in receipt of the King's Living Bursary, are in a priority group or receive support from the King's Disability Support Service.

For further details, check [Student equipment loans during remote study](#)

Download Office 365

If you haven't done this already, make sure you have an up to date copy of Office 365 to enable you to use Word, Excel and PowerPoint to complete any assignments, OneDrive to store your assignments securely before upload and Outlook to keep in touch with your department.

For further details, check the [King's IT](#) pages.

OneDrive

Save your work to OneDrive to ensure that your files are backed up and accessible from different devices. If you cannot easily see how to save your file from Word, Excel or PowerPoint, seek help from [King's IT Help and Support](#) who can help you with synchronisation.

Word

You may be very familiar with using Word to write your assignments. Remember to save regularly or use AutoSave. When preparing a document to be uploaded for assessment, check the format. If you are requested to upload a file in PDF format, make sure you know how to do that from your particular device. If you need to include images or equations, see also the guide to [Compressing Images in Microsoft Word](#)

PowerPoint

As it will no longer be possible for you to present in a physical classroom, you may be asked to record your presentation. There are various ways to do this, but here is a guide to [creating a narrated PowerPoint](#).

OneNote

OneNote is very useful for organising your revision notes using the sections. For example, here is a [student's perspective on using OneNote](#), including using the built-in Math feature.

Other software or hardware considerations

If you require specialist software to enable you complete your assignments (for example LaTeX for scientific writing or SPSS for statistical analysis) please make sure you have downloaded this in advance.

If your assignment requires audio or visual input (maybe for a presentation or *viva voce*) make sure that you have the appropriate software installed and check that the camera, speakers and microphone work.

IT help

If you have any software questions or technical issues with your laptop or other device, check [King's IT Help and Support](#). While this includes a 24/7 Helpdesk, please allow sufficient time for your query to be dealt with.

Online assessment platforms and formats.

You will probably be using KEATS to access and submit your assignments. Make sure that you are familiar with the process of submitting the assignment before you start so that you are not rushing to work out how you need to upload your work just before the deadline.

Even if you are familiar with online submission for coursework, please check the new King's guidance covering:

- [Submitting a Turnitin assignment](#)
- [Submitting a KEATS assignment](#)

Managing exam stress

You may be feeling anxious about taking your online assessment, especially if the form of the exam is unfamiliar to you. It is also understandable to be affected by the wider issues at the moment. Student Minds have created some useful resources for dealing with exam stress:

<https://www.studentminds.org.uk/examstress.html> or download their [Exam stress pdf](#)

Some useful tips for managing stress related to study can be found here

<https://www.macmillanihe.com/page/university-mental-health-day/>

You can also skill access [King's Student Support and Wellbeing](#) remotely.

Finally, KCLSU are organising a [Take Time In](#) campaign between 14 April and 22 May to promote wellbeing during this particularly challenging exam period.

King's guide to assessment

King's has produced a student FAQ document on [assessment](#) which includes detailed information about exam arrangements, how your grades will be calculated, what to do if you are unable to take your exams.

If your questions are not addressed there please contact your department.