

## How Can I Do Better On My Exams?

### ORGANIZE, ORGANIZE, ORGANIZE

- **Assess how well you are handling the material.** About a week before the exam, decide if you need to see your professor, teaching assistant, or tutor for a review session.
- **Create a special study schedule** to make sure that you cover all the material. Post this schedule above your desk, and refer to it daily!
- **Organize your study materials** into a set of exam notes. For engineering, math, and science classes, create a formula sheet.
- **Create a study group** if you don't already belong to one. With your study group, teach each other difficult concepts, and review old exams.
- **Find some quiet AND pleasant places to study.** If you are facing a long week of test preparation, select a special place to study for each exam.

### PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

- **Use a practice exam to assess what you know and what you need to review.** After you've studied, use a second practice exam to test your readiness for the real exam. Practice exams are often provided by the professor or teaching assistant. Use only what will be available on the exam. You want to test if you know the material.
- **Don't underestimate the difficulty level of a multiple-choice exam.** College professors write multiple-choice exams that go far beyond asking literal information. Make sure that you really know the information. Don't expect to recognize answers on the test items.

### REWARD, REWARD, REWARD!

**Reward yourself at the end of each study day and after the exam.**

If you feel that you are constantly sacrificing

everything else in your life to study, you won't stick to your study schedule. Rewards can be as simple as talking with a friend or as involved as a weekend trip. No one else will reward you for sticking to your study schedule, so be your own best friend.

### REHEARSE, REHEARSE, REHEARSE!

- **When exams are returned, don't just pay attention to the grade.** A graded exam, even one with a low grade, will help you prepare for the next exam. If the professor doesn't return the exam, make an appointment to review your exam during office hours. Ask the professor to go over the exam with you.
- **Decide how much time you really did study for the exam.** Did you stick to your study schedule?
- **Were you anxious when you took the exam?** Arrange to see a staff member in Educational Services for Students or University Counseling Services to learn some strategies for handling stress in and out of the classroom.
- **Review your exam with an ESS staff member.** Together, you may find a pattern to your test taking. Questions to ask about your test performance include the following:
  - Did the exam questions come from class notes, reading notes, homework assignments, or group assignments?
  - Did you miss more questions from a particular source of information?
  - What types of questions did you have problems with? For instance, did you have problems with questions that used the word "except"? Did you miss questions that required you to interpret or apply the information?

Together, an ESS staff member and you can develop a strategy for the next exam. Discuss your plan with your professor who may also have some other suggestions.