



# Ensuring exam success

If you haven't taken exams for a while, and find the idea of writing for three hours worrying, then this short guide is definitely for you!

The ICS designs its exams to allow students to show what they know and understand about the subject they've been studying, not to catch you out.

Our exams follow a common format so that, whatever subject you are studying, you have to answer 5 out of a choice of 8 questions in 3 hours.

For the Institute exams, each question is marked out of 20 marks, so 100 marks for the paper overall.

## Tips and Study Techniques

A lot of people find study really difficult to master, especially if you're not used to exams and have not taken any for a while. Individuals study in different ways and whilst there are no hard and fast rules about studying, there are a few things that you can be aware of to help you make the most of your exam preparation. The key is to finding what works for you, and once you have a plan, sticking to it!



- **Make sure you manage your time.**

Commit time to ensure that you have covered everything. Make a revision plan and stick to it.

- **Establish your priorities**

Looking through your material is a great way to focus learning. Don't discount other students and members as a resource.

- **Be familiar with past examiners' reports**

These give examples and hint at common pitfalls and mistakes that you can avoid in your exams.

- **Practice makes perfect**

Get used to writing answers in 35 minutes under 'exam conditions' and practice writing. This will give you a good idea on how much you can actually write in the exam.

- **Be mindful of your own learning patterns.**

There are no set rules but you should think about revision, breaks, and a comfortable study area

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## Top 10 Exam preparation tips

1. Make sure you are well rested in the days before your exam
2. Ensure a comfortable study area with fresh air and light
3. Focus on topics where your knowledge and understanding is weakest
4. Study in short productive bursts of 30-40 minutes
5. Plan and stick to a revision timetable
6. Review past papers and examiners reports
7. Practice writing answers under exam conditions.
8. Take regular breaks away from your desk
9. Read around your subject, not just your course books.
10. Seek help from work colleagues, students and tutors.

### Top 10 Exam day tips

1. *Make sure you have everything you need for the day of your exam*
2. *Arrive early and stay as calm and focused as possible*
3. *Remember your ID and student registration number*
4. *Read and re-read the question to make sure you understand it*
5. *Write clearly – the examiner can only mark what they can read and understand*
6. *Use good ‘real-world’ and up-to-date examples*
7. *Demonstrate that you know more than just the course book contents*
8. *Plan your time in each exam*
9. *If you have more than one exam in a day, take a break between them.*
10. *Write your student registration number and exam centre code clearly on the front of your answer booklets*

## Accessing Support

Studying for professional exams is quite unlike school and university and can be a very lonely pursuit if you don't take the opportunities to access support. Help is available, but you do need to take the initiative and actively access it yourself.

A great place to start finding out about the people who can support you is your local branch. Our network of members

and fellows is always willing to offer their support and expertise.

For a strong result, it is imperative that you are up-to-date with industry developments, which often means using other resources beyond your course book.

The ICS website has a range of electronic links and resources available online so it's worth

checking that out.

Most shipping companies will subscribe to regular publications of some sort and with exams looking, it would be a good time to take advantage of these resources.



## Understanding Keywords

You should always think carefully about the key words within a question.

This is merely a guide to help you think about what is required when looking at the question itself

**Define:** Identify the central qualities of something and determine its meaning

**Describe:** Using detail and examples to outline the key characteristics

**Illustrate:** Make an issue or concept clear by using examples (a simple diagram may help)

**Explain:** provide detail that makes an issue or concept clear to the examiner

**Compare or Contrast:** Identify the similarities and differences between two objects, issues or concepts

**Advantages and Disadvantages:** look at the positive and negative

aspects of an issue or concept

**Analyse:** Separate and abstract concept and critically determine its elements, features and possible outcomes

**Examine:** Scrutinize and investigate an issue or concept carefully

**Identify:** Recognise the main features of an issue, object or concept

**Discuss:** consider and examine via argument

**Predict:** Use a variety of factors to suggest a possible future outcome

**Comment:** Observations, expansions, criticisms and thoughts, based on

