



Preparing for the Exam

Learn the Module

Make sure that you are comfortable with sections within the 'Learn the module' areas of the course. Re-read any parts that you are not sure about.

Test yourself

Take the pre-module, questions on the module and post module test. These are written by experienced ISEB examiners and give a great insight into what the structure of the examination is like. If you get a question wrong, check back into Learn the module to see where you have gone wrong.

Spaced Learning is Better than Massed Learning

If you are in the position where you have a tight schedule and can only afford to spend minimal hours studying for the exam. One common question is whether you should "mass" the hours together right before the exam (to keep the material fresh in memory), or whether you should "space" the hours apart over a few weeks. Quite a bit of research suggests that spaced practice is generally superior to massed practice. For example, all things being equal, you will get more out of three 2-hour blocks than one 6-hour block, even though the total amount of time studying is identical in both cases. So if you have a particularly busy schedule and can only spend a few hours studying, be sure to use them well. Late-night cramming is usually a recipe for poor retention, mental and physical fatigue, and careless mistakes on the exam.

Don't 'Psych' Yourself Out

It's been demonstrated that when you carry extra emotional baggage -- "I've got to pass this exam" or "If I screw up, I'll never get my Diploma" -- performance suffers, so don't lose the big picture. The most constructive approach is to focus on the task at hand, put in as much time studying as you can afford, and just do your best.

A certain amount of anxiety is normal (or even useful) when studying for an exam, but if you feel overwhelmed or feel that uncontrollable emotions are interfering with your exam preparation, you may be suffering from test anxiety. If you think this is a possibility, try to reduce your anxiety by attempting to relax, taking a break or by moving to a quieter room.

Taking the Test

Look Over the Test and Pace Yourself

When you first get the exam, don't just plunge into answering test items. Instead, thumb through the pages and get the lay of the land.

Once you've looked through the entire test, try to estimate what pace you should maintain in order to finish approximately 5 minutes before the period is over. That way, you'll have a little time at the end to check for mistakes like skipped questions or misread items.

Some of the worst problems occur when students forget to check the clock or when they spend too much time on one or two difficult questions. If you have problems with this, you could scribble the desired "finish time" for each section on the test booklet. That way, you'll be prompted to check the clock after completing each part of the exam.

Take Short Breaks

Try taking a few breaks during the exam by stopping for a moment, shutting your eyes, and taking some deep breaths. Periodically clearing your head in this way can help you stay fresh during the exam session. Remember, you get no points for being the first person to finish the exam, so don't feel like you have to race through all the items -- even two or three 30-second breaks can be very helpful.

Don't Skip Around

Skipping around the exam can waste valuable time, because at some point you will have to spend time searching for the skipped questions and re-reading them. A better approach is to answer each question in order. If you are truly baffled by a question, mark the answer you believe to be right, place a question mark next to the

question, and come back to it later if you have time. Try to keep these flagged questions to a bare minimum (e.g., fewer than 10% of all items).

Don't Be Afraid to Change Your First Answer

Even though first answers are often correct, you shouldn't be afraid to change your original answer if, upon reflection, it seems wrong to you.