

Think about the difference between in person and online finals...what do you need to change, if anything, about the way you prepare for and take your finals? Here are a few key tips to keep in mind.

1. You will prepare for your online final just as you would for your in-person final.

Regardless of the modality, studying for your finals is a lot of work. You must be organized, make a game plan, and gather the information you will need to study beforehand. Use our success tools on the [Online Student Success](#) website to get prepared.

2. Ask your instructor some basic questions about the format, including:

- Where will I access the final exam? If you have questions about the software (D2L, Respondus), please ask your instructor well in advance of the exam date and time.
- How much time do I have to complete it?
- Do I need to take it at a specified time, or within a window of time?
- Can I annotate (highlight, scribble, underline, etc.) in the exam software, or will I need scratch paper next to my computer?
- Can I have other tabs open in my browser?
- Can I use my notes and class materials?
- Will I be able to ask you questions during the exam, and if so, how?

3. Know when your exams are.

This seems like a no-brainer, but online exams may have a block of time you can complete them within, for example, all day on Monday, or even all of Finals Week. Knowing that you have to log in, for instance, at 9am on Monday for one final, but will have all of Finals Week to complete another final, is crucial to your planning and your success!

Make a finals calendar for yourself, and if you have a block of time within which to complete your final exam, go ahead and **set your own date and time**.

4. Don't wait until the last minute to take your exam.

If you have an exam that can be taken at any time during a specific day, or any time during Finals Week, do not wait until the last minute. It's very tempting to say, "Well, I don't have to have that final done until Friday, so I will wait until then because it gives me more time to prepare." But, what if your Internet goes out on Friday? Give yourself adequate time to complete the exam so that if you do need to work with tech support (and your instructor) you have enough time to do so.

5. Create the right exam environment.

With in-person exams, the exam environment is created for you. You simply show up to a quiet classroom. But with online exams, you have to create that environment yourself. As you do, consider these questions:

- What is my household like? Can I feasibly take a test here, or do I need to find another location?

- When is the best time to schedule my exam based on the other people in my house (and their schedules)? **You may need to ask family members not to schedule video conferences during a specific time to ensure you will have enough bandwidth to complete your exam.**
- Who do you need to talk to in your household to ensure the environment is quiet and you are uninterrupted? Consider putting a sign on your door when your exams are in session, so people know not to disturb you.

Part of creating your own exam environment also means keeping an eye on the clock. Often, during in-person finals, professors will do this for you and call out how much time is left. But in online exams, you will need to do this yourself.

6. Make sure you have your own computer, and check that it works.

Now is not the time to be sharing computers with friends or family members. Make sure you have your own technology during Finals Week. If you are having technology issues, contact IT for support in Building A or at 785-670-3001. Before the day of your exam, check your computer for any potential connectivity problems, and ensure that you have the right hardware and software to complete your exam.

7. Don't be fooled by open book/ open note exams.

Some of your instructors may give you this option, but in most cases, there will be a time limit on your exam, and if you look up every answer you will run out of time. Open book/ open note does not mean easy! Make sure you prepare well enough for these exams to master about 70% of the material and know where to find the other 30%. Organization and information literacy is incredibly important for these types of exams!

8. Save, Save, Save.

Save your answers after every question. This will prove extremely helpful if you have technical problems during the test.

Oh, and don't leave the test page! If you are permitted to search the web for information, do not use the same tab (*and we suggest not even the same browser*) that you are taking your test in. Open a new browser or new tab to conduct your search.

9. Technical Problems? Don't Panic.

But do contact your instructor immediately. If you can, **screen shot any error messages** or what you're seeing and send those to your instructor as well. When you email your instructor, detail the exact problem that occurred and the exact error message (if any).

10. Don't psyche yourself out.

Taking your exams online is not inherently a disadvantage. In fact, some students prefer this format because they can control their own testing environment. Students often get distracted or concerned if they see other people finishing the exam before them, or become fixated on that person three rows in front of them who is incessantly clicking their pen. Sound familiar?

The online environment allows you to focus on your own progress, at your own pace, and limit the kinds of distractions that might cause you anxiety.

Online exams that can be taken within a block of time also allow you to be really strategic about when the ideal time is for you to take the test. Remember that exam you had to take at 9am on a Monday morning? Or two exams in one day? Ouch!

With online exams, you will likely be able to schedule your exam for when you feel most alert in the day, whether that is mid-morning, or later at night, and around other exams you need to take. The flexibility of online really allows you to take control of your schedule and set yourself up for success!
