Managing exam anxiety

During the semester

• Anticipate and prepare for exams – preparation reduces anxiety.
• Start preparing for exams from the first day of semester. Avoid cramming at the last minute.
• Schedule weekly exam revision into your semester study program – practice questions, revision discussions, consultations with your tutor, making summaries, etc.
• Exercise, eat well, and take regular breaks. Drinking water helps hydrate and relax your body.
• Take action to understand – discussing material with a study group or the tutor/lecturer can help you develop confidence in what you know.
• Develop a range of revision strategies – intense study, developing flow charts/diagrams, discussion and explanation with peers, consultations with tutors – to avoid monotony and maintain motivation.
• Access resources which can assist in developing strategies to prepare for exams and manage anxiety, eg:
  — ASLC exam podcasts
  — ANU Counselling Centre sessions
  — consultations with tutors/lecturers
  — study group support.

For the day

• Know where and at what time the exam will be.
• Know what materials you can/cannot take into the exam.
• Arrive early.
• Relax before you go into the exam room – read non-exam material.
• Wait apart from others if there is a lot of exam hype and anxiety.

When the exam paper is before you

• Read through the whole paper first – scanning for the kinds of questions you will be asked.
• Read all instructions very carefully.
• Develop a time management plan – and stick to it.
• Outline your answers.
• Breathe – and continue to breathe.
• Think positively: this is your opportunity to demonstrate what you have learned.