

Exams in Higher Education

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about the purpose and significance of exams. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. The Purpose of Exams in Higher Education

The exam (short for “examination”) or “test” is probably the aspect of higher education that students dread most. Even the name examination or test implies a potentially stressful situation—the scenario in which it will be determined whether you know what you are supposed to know.

However, instructors don’t normally give exams to intimidate their students. Rather, an instructor generally devises an exam to be a relatively objective and fair assessment of whether students are absorbing and retaining the content of a course.

Students have different aptitudes and attitudes concerning test-taking, but if you are properly prepared for your exam, you put yourself in the best position to succeed. Exams can be an opportunity to demonstrate all the hard work you’ve put into your course.

2. How Midterm and Final Exams Impact Grades

The percentage of your grade devoted to exams will vary depending on the instructor and the course. Be sure to take note of the value of exams in the grading breakdown of your syllabus when you begin a course and plan accordingly.

While you should be as prepared as possible for any exam you take, it makes sense to adjust your time commitment based on how the exam grade is weighted in the course. In some courses, exams are just one element of your grade among many, while in other courses, exams are the primary means of student assessment and account for the majority of your grade.



SUMMARY

Exams in higher education are one way your instructor can tell if you have learned what has been covered in the course. Look at your syllabus to determine if and how **midterms and final exams will impact your grades**, then manage your study time accordingly.

