



Final Written Examination - Techniques

The purpose of this information is to help you to prepare for your final written examination.

Make sure you have thoroughly read and understand the content of the learning materials for each module! Also, look at the objectives for each learning and assessment objectives for each learning unit – check that you are able to provide answers to each!

Examinations are one way of assessing whether or not you have learnt the theory, facts and are able to relate your knowledge to your own workplace, and that you are able to apply your knowledge to particular questions.

Evidence of manipulation and application of the theory into workplace practice is more important than simple repetition of facts and figures. Just think about what you do at work, how you carry out your responsibilities, the documentation and procedures you are expected to work to, and that you understand how any relevant legislation or regulation that applies to any given situation related to the funeral service.

Few people like doing exams, but they have been around for a long time, so they must be, at least to some extent, a good way of carrying out final assessment. They test how well you can think, draw upon your knowledge and whether you can work quickly and under pressure, all of which are both important skills to develop.

Be mindful of your spelling too.

Preparation

The best preparation for exams is to attend all your face to face workshops with your tutor (where reasonably practical), do all your coursework conscientiously and use the student learning resources for each Module stored on Moodle.

Have self-belief in your capabilities.

Difficulties arise when you have not worked hard enough during the year and then try to “revise” (i.e. learn your course materials in a few days or weeks at the end of the course.

Make sure that you do any revision effectively; you can't afford to waste time.

The NAFD and your tutor want you to do well.

Listen carefully to the guidance given to you by your tutor.

Make sure you are clear you understand all assessment procedures.



Find out as much as you can about the format of the exam, either by checking with your tutor or by looking at examples (where applicable) of exam questions contained in the student learning materials.

Think about such things as:-

How long is the exam?

How many questions have to be answered?

What type of questions are asked?

How much choice do you have?

Do some questions carry more marks than others?

What are the regulations on taking materials into the exam?

The more informed you are, the less pressure you should feel on the actual day.

Get together with other students in your group either face to face, online or by using conference calling to discuss possible topics, questions and answers.

Don't stay up late revising the night before the exam. If you don't know it by then, you probably never will.

It is much better to have an early night so you are fresh in the morning. On the actual exam day, you should make sure you arrive in plenty of time and have a good supply of pens, pencils, rubbers etc. Check about taking in refreshments, and make sure that mobile phone is switched off!

During the examination

Don't start writing straight away! You are given time before the exam to read through the paper, make sure you use this time effectively- don't panic.

Check;-

- **the examination instructions.** How many questions do you have to answer? (There's always someone who tries to answer too many!) Is mark weighting indicated? Where should the answers be written?

- **the questions.** Scan them for questions you feel more confident with. Maybe jot down a few initial thoughts to help you make the final decision on which ones to answer. Don't just focus on the main topic.



Think **about what the question is actually asking you to do - carefully**. You must answer the actual question set. It's a very common mistake to zoom in on the general topic and start writing everything you know about it or to start answering another related question. Spend time looking very closely at the question:

- **what's the instruction?** (list? describe? explain? outline?) – if the question asks you to describe a situation, then describe it. Listing or using bullet points is not acceptable.

- **what aspects of the topic are you being asked to consider?** (dates? places? people? other key words?)

- **how many sections are there in the question?** A 'question' may often in fact be two or three questions.

Understanding the Questions

Work out the structure of your answer. Don't panic if you see everyone around you writing away; a well-structured answer will usually get higher marks, and if you are unable to finish an answer, but you make notes to indicate clearly what you were intending to write, you may in some circumstances get credit for this.

Remember the basic structure: introduction; clear paragraphs or sections, each devoted to one process; improvement; or summary. And when you're writing your answer, keep the objective of the question in mind, and keep asking yourself if you are answering the actual question- or drifting! Your answer must be 100% relevant to the question – **exam answers are short, and there is absolutely no room for waffle or inconsequential information.**

Timing is important. Divide up your time equally, allowing for question analysis and planning, and also for checking what you've written when you've finished for relevance, structure, cohesion, accuracy etc. You may want to answer the question you're most comfortable with first, partly maybe to help settle your nerves, but don't get carried away with it – keep your eye on the clock.

What the Examiners look for:-

- how you have **answered the question**

- the accuracy of your answer

- evidence that you have **applied what you have learnt** during the module

- you have **answered all the questions**

- a **well-structured, logical and relevant** response, not in note-form



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- **legible handwriting.** If your handwriting is really untidy, and practice writing neatly.
 - Check any calculations and your spelling too!

After the exam

Relax!