

# Quiet please . . . . I'm trying to revise !

**Our Director of Qualifications recommends an active approach to examination preparation . . . .**

**Prepare early.** If you are planning to spend forty hours preparing for the examination, then it is better to do one hour a day for forty days, than eight hours a day for the last five days.

**Have a plan.** Make a revision plan you can stick to. Set targets that you know you can reach and tick them off as you accomplish them. Revise in short, sharp bursts and build in rewards.

**Assemble the materials.** You will need the specification document, past papers and Chief Examiner's reports (all freely downloadable from this website). You will also need your course notes, lecture notes and any other useful resources such as magazine articles. And don't forget lots of blank A4 paper.

**Look at past papers.** Attempt to get an overview of the examination. Consider how the examinations are structured. Look at individual questions and consider the way the same topics have been dealt with in different papers to get a feel for the kinds of question you can expect to be asked.

**Concentrate on learning outcomes.** You know what's going to be in your examination . . . a set of questions which test your knowledge, understanding and application of the specification learning outcomes. Your preparation should centre around these learning outcomes, not the course notes.

**Make your own revision notes.** The specification comprises a number of syllabus areas (accidents, fire safety, electrical safety, etc), each with a set of learning outcomes. For each syllabus area, extract the main points from your course notes and get these on to one side of A4 paper. These revision sheets should mirror the learning outcomes so, if there are five learning outcomes for accidents, then the page should be divided into five sections.

**Use mind maps and mnemonics.** Pages of solid text are a daunting prospect to learn. Make your revision sheets as visual as possible with mind-maps (for factors) and mnemonics (for hard facts).

**Learn the material well in advance.** Many candidates leave their learning far too late and have only just mastered the material when they walk into the examination room. These candidates will never do very well because they have not had time to practise the application of that knowledge using past papers.

**Learn by writing, not reading.** Studies have shown that we tend to remember things when we write them down. There is little value in just reading through your notes. The information is being held in very short-term memory and is unlikely to re-surface under the pressure of examination conditions. Plastering your notes with yellow and pink highlighter is a similarly futile exercise.

**Test yourself.** It is no use saying: “I think I can list eight areas that are covered in safe systems of work documentation.” The only way to make sure is to get a blank sheet of paper and write out those eight areas. That’s where all those sheets of A4 paper come into use. Try to recreate the revision sheets word-for-word, over and over again. Practise recalling your lists and factors.

**Practise past papers.** You wouldn’t attempt a driving test after only reading about driving a car. You would get out and practice driving, so apply the same logic to the examination – tackle each past paper. And do so under timed conditions; it’s an excellent way of getting up to speed. Attempt at least one complete paper as a mock exam; it’s easy to tackle a single question in twelve minutes, but can you do this ten times in a row . . . . and pass?

**Review the Chief Examiner’s reports.** Evaluate your answers by referring to the Chief Examiner’s reports. This will give you a good idea of where marks were won and lost in the actual exam. Would your answers have impressed the Chief Examiner? How could they be improved? Did you have all the knowledge at your fingertips? Did you answer the question set?

**Get into the right frame of mind.** Stay relaxed and confident. Remind yourself that you are well-prepared and are going to do well. Don’t revise the night before; you’re better off going to the gym or having a game of squash. Try to get a good night’s sleep and get up slightly earlier than usual to ensure that you are at your peak at 9.30am.