

Computerized Testing Anxiety

Taking tests on the computer can cause some additional stress for some students. Below are some helpful tips in dealing with anxiety due specifically to computerized testing.

Understand the Computer System

1. Get on line and utilize WebCT
 - Make sure you know what is available through WebCT (syllabus, important dates, quiz grades, practice tests, etc.)
 - For Help, visit the IT Support Center found in room 116 of PGH or call 713 743-1411
 - Take computerized practice tests to familiarize you with the material and the computer
2. Become familiar with the differences between Homework and Practices Tests and real Tests
 - You can scroll through homework assignments, but tests may be presented one question at a time. Find out for certain you can go back.
3. How do you utilize the “Question Status” Box?
 - Learn the difference between:
 - ✓ Unanswered
 - ✓ Answered
 - ✓ Answered not saved
4. Pacing yourself
 - Use the keyboard number pad
 - Plan ahead on time per question

Computer Pitfalls

1. Harder to pace yourself as you don't have the entire test in front of you to glance at.
2. You can't write on your computer screen the way you can on a paper test (though some have tried), so you have to use scratch paper they give you.
3. Many people find the computer screens tire them and cause eyestrain.
4. Tendency to not check answers later
5. Inconvenience if an answer is related to an earlier question.
6. You can't cross off an answer choice, so you have to be disciplined about not reconsidering your choices you eliminated.
7. You may have to scroll through passages, graphs and instructions, which means you won't be able to see the whole thing on the screen at once.

Visit the Testing Site

1. Instead of fearing the unknown, FIND OUT! Go to the testing site before your exam. Knowing the site helps reduce anxiety.

2. This room can be intimidating if you have never seen it before
3. Learn the Rules of the Testing Site
 - ✓ What can you bring to the test and to your work station?
 - ✓ Cell phones must be turned off
 - ✓ Your belongings will be checked in (this includes purses)
4. Learn the Procedure of Taking an Exam
 - ✓ Checking yourself in
 - ✓ Checking Your belongings
 - ✓ Scratch paper

TURN YOUR CELL ALL THE WAY OFF! Do not just put it on vibrate. Turn it all the way off.

Please bring all of your belongings to the back desk.

Please go to the desk with your course number on it. You will need to present your COUGAR ID to the proctor at that table so don't put it away yet.

SAVE ALL OF YOUR ANSWERS!! An unsaved answer is the same as no answer at all.

On the free-response paper:

- Please put the key code in the boxes.
- Stop writing when
 - ✓ Time expires
 - ✓ You close your exam

Please open your exam all the way so that it fills the screen.

Please have your own writing utensils and erasers.

If you have any questions, please raise your hand and a proctor will help you as soon as possible.

Rumors and Facts

RUMOR: The more practice exams I take, the harder my actual exam will be.

FACT: The exam questions are chosen at random. The number of practice tests that you take is not in the system and, therefore, will not affect the difficulty level of the actual exam.

RUMOR: The computer will recognize my answer only to a certain decimal point. If I type in too many figures, my answer will be marked wrong.

FACT: Answers are checked to a specified number of significant figures with a 3-5% allowance for calculation rounding. You can't get it wrong with too many significant figures, but you may with too few.

RUMOR: The answers are CAPS Sensitive and I could miss a question by typing lowercase letters.

FACT: Capital letters are important as far as they would otherwise alter the answer. For example, If I type "k" as the symbol for Potassium, it will be marked wrong because the symbol for Potassium is a "K"

RUMOR: I could get a short answer marked wrong by entering units when the unit is already displayed.

FACT: Answers may be marked wrong if you enter units and the unit is already displayed. However, the instructions for every such question warn, "Do not enter units!"