# Examinations

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Abstract – An Examination can be defined as a measure of skill and knowledge of a candidate in the concerned topic. We are here talking about in particular about the examinations taking place in school. Examination can have the following forms. It can be a paper based or a computer based examination. In some cases an oral test may also take place. Examinations can be taken in various ways as needed by the Instructor. Depending on the choice of the Instructor it can be a Open Book or a Closed Book Examination. In an Open Book examination the candidate has access to books, calculators and other relevant materials which might help in answering the questions. A Closed Book examination needs the candidate to depend on the understanding of the course material taught in the class. An Examination is usually taken under somebody's supervision so that no foul means are employed to cheat.

#### Keywords – Cheat, Examination, Knowledge, Skill

## **INTRODUCTION**[1]

The very word "Examination" creates a sense of nervousness or sometimes results in pounding heart or sleepless nights. Examinations have become an important part of our life since ages. The first regular Examination was conducted only for boys in 1858 as an approach taken by Cambridge and Oxford University for assessment of students. Girls did not take school exams until 1867 monitored by Cambridge, and Oxford started from 1870. Girls did not take school exams until 1867 monitored by Cambridge, and Oxford started from 1870. The University of Cambridge response was its Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) on 11 February 1858 with the first exam held on 14 December 1858 in Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Grantham, Liverpool, London and Norwich. The Junior exam was for pupils under 16 years old and the Senior exam was for students under 18 years old. Examinations were held locally in schools, church halls and village halls. These first examinations established the predominance of academic subjects. These included Arithmetic, Chemistry, Drawing, English Language, English Literature, French, Geography, Geology, German, Greek, History, Latin, Law, Mathematics, Music, Physical Sciences, Political Economy, Religious Knowledge and Zoology. The nineteenth century was the age of the developing academic discipline and its rules, following on from the Enlightenment. In the 1860s examinations were monitored by presiding examiners who traveled from Cambridge to exam centers. They carried the examinations in a locked box. They wore academic dress and must have been a serious sight for pupils. Examinations were timetabled into blocks of six or seven consecutive days and held throughout the day, including in the evenings. The first examinations stressed recall of information. Pupils had to remember the names of monarchs and their families, list historical events and draw maps. Science meant details of findings and Scripture examinations involved knowing biblical verses. Collecting and possessing basic facts was seen as the foundation of knowledge. Arithmetic was simple and straightforward. Instantly it was clear in examination reports that students who had crammed knowledge successfully did not necessarily understand what they had remembered. Answers were uniform, reflecting the source of the learning. There was a lack of enthusiasm in the learning for the subjects. Nevertheless it was thought that the unfamiliar system would work, and that regulated examinations and open competition would be a system of reward for individuals and schools. As a result examinations introduced more analysis as well as factual recall. Understanding has been examined as well as simple knowledge. The examination system was also a school inspection system, so that Cambridge Assessment inspected some schools. The Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board began in 1873 in addition to their own examination boards.

#### IMPORTANCE OF EXAMINATION

Examination plays an important role in one's educational career. Examination's are so important that sometimes students fear them. Passing an examination with a good score is indeed commendable. It shows that the student has understood the course material and is well able to convey his or her thoughts through the examination. It also shows the amount of knowledge and skill the student has gained from the class lecture. Even if a student's ability, knowledge and skill is not up to the mark, Examination helps to prepare well for the other Examinations coming in the future. A student's success in the Examination is a measure of mental ability. According to critics it has been sometimes argued that Examination is a measure of certain kind of skill. They say that the students who only have good memory tend to excel, though they lack the ability of original thought and explanation. But it should be noted that today the level of examination has been modified in such a way that a student can not solely depend on memory to answer the questions. A good amount of reasoning and logic is required too. The student needs to have fair knowledge of the subject to reason , think and make use of intelligence to solve problems. Therefore the ability to pass an examination highlight a candidate's mental power and ability to understand the course material. Examinations compel the students to read as much as they can and absorb knowledge. Further, it helps the Instructors to remain confined to a specific syllabus. A syllabus just contains enough material which is sufficient for the basic and foundation knowledge of the subject. Examinations are therefore an important part of academic studies.

## HOW TO TAKE AN EXAMINATION

- 1. Adequate time must be spent in the preparation of the questions of the Examination. The question should be formulated in such a way that it measures the fundamental concept that the student is expected to know.
- 2. Precaution must be taken to avoid cheating during Examination.
- 3. The questions should match the content of the class lecture notes. Nothing must be out of context.
- 4. An Examination is valid if the results help in making decisions about student's achievement. An Examination is reliable if it accurately and consistently evaluates a student performance. The Examination should be balanced which means that it must cover the important and basic concepts of the course.
- 5. A change in the pattern of the Examination, such as making use of short answer question or essay question helps in measuring student's mastery in specific knowledge and details.
- Research shows that most Examinations administered by the Faculty rely on student's recall of information.
  [2] Fuhrmann and Grasha have adapted Bloom's taxonomy for test development.
  [3] Here is a condensation of their list:
- To measure *knowledge* (common terms, facts, principles, procedures), ask these kinds of questions: Define, Describe, Identify, Label, List, Match, Name, Outline, Reproduce, Select, State. Example: "List the steps involved in titration."
- To measure *comprehension* (understanding of facts and principles, interpretation of material), ask these kinds of questions: Convert, Defend, Distinguish, Estimate, Explain, Extend, Generalize, Give examples, Infer, Predict, Summarize. Example: "Summarize the basic tenets of Inheritance."
- To measure *application* (solving problems, applying concepts and principles to new situations), ask these kinds of questions: Demonstrate, Modify, Operate, Prepare, Produce, Relate, Show, Solve, Use.

Example: "Calculate the deflection of a beam under uniform loading."

- To measure *analysis* (recognition of unstated assumptions or logical fallacies, ability to distinguish between facts and inferences), ask these kinds of questions: Diagram, Differentiate, Distinguish, Illustrate, Infer, Point out, Relate, Select, Separate, Subdivide. Example: "In the president's State of the Union Address, which statements are based on facts and which are based on assumptions?"
- To measure *synthesis* (integrate learning from different areas or solve problems by creative thinking), ask these kinds of questions: Categorize, Combine, Compile, Devise, Design, Explain, Generate, Organize, Plan, Rearrange, Reconstruct, Revise, Tell. Example: "How would you restructure the school day to reflect children's developmental needs?"
- To measure *evaluation* (judging and assessing), ask these kinds of questions: Appraise, Compare, Conclude, Contrast, Criticize, Describe, Discriminate, Explain, Justify, Interpret, Support. Example: "Why is Bach's Mass in B Minor acknowledged as a classic?"

# **TYPES OF EXAMINATION**

- 1. Multiple Choice Examination: Multiple Choice questions can be asked to test both simple as well as complex concepts. Since such exams can be answered quickly, questions can be asked from a variety of topics in an exam of short duration.
- 2. True False Examination: Because random guessing will produce the correct answer half the time, true-false exams are less reliable than other types of exams. However, these items are appropriate for occasional use. Some faculty who use true-false questions and add an "explain" column in which students write one or two sentences justifying their response.
- 3. Matching Exam: The matching format is an effective way to test students' recognition of the relationships between words and definitions, events and dates, categories and examples, and so on.
- 4. Essay type Examination: Essay exams enable to judge student's ability to organize, integrate, interpret material and express themselves in their own words. Research indicates that students study more efficiently for essay-type examinations than for selection (multiple-choice) tests: students preparing for essay tests focus on broad issues, general concepts, and interrelationships rather than on specific details, and this studying results in somewhat better student performance regardless of the type of exam they are given.[4] Essay questions help to assess student's quality of thinking , depth of understanding and difficulties they may be having.

- 5. Short Answer Examinations: Short-answer questions can call for one or two sentences or a long paragraph. Short-answer tests are easier to write, though they take longer to score, than multiple-choice tests.
- 6. Oral Examination: During the oral exam, the professor probes students' level of understanding of the theory and principles behind the theorems. He reports that about eight students per day can be tested.
- 7. Take Home Tests: Take-home tests allow students to work at their own pace with access to books and materials. Take-home tests also permit longer and more involved questions, without sacrificing valuable class time for exams.
- Open Book Tests: Open-book tests simulate the 8. situations professionals face every day, when they use resources to solve problems, prepare reports, or write memos. Open-book tests tend to be inappropriate in introductory courses in which facts must be learned or skills thoroughly mastered if the student is to progress to more complicated concepts and techniques in advanced courses. On an openbook test, students who are lacking basic knowledge may waste too much of their time consulting their references rather than writing. Open-book tests appear to reduce stress[6] but research shows that students do not necessarily perform significantly better on open-book tests.[7] Further, open-book tests seem to reduce student's motivation to study.
- 9. Performance Examination: Performance exams ask students to demonstrate proficiency in conducting an experiment, executing a series of steps in a reasonable amount of time, following instructions, creating drawings, manipulating materials or equipment, or reacting to real or simulated situations. If you use performance tests, Anderson recommends that you do the following (I have slightly modified her list)[5]:
- Specify the criteria to be used for rating or scoring (for example, the level of accuracy in performing the steps in sequence or completing the task within a specified time limit).
- State the problem so that students know exactly what they are supposed to do (if possible, conditions of a performance test should mirror a real-life situation).
- Give students a chance to perform the task more than once or to perform several task samples.

## **PREPARATION FOR EXAMINATIONS**

- 1. Final few classes must be attended because in those classes the Instructor focuses on some of the important topics of the course. Tips may be given what to study.
- 2. A good night's sleep is very essential. Last minute cramming is not a good practice.

- 3. Care should be taken that all the materials like pen, pencil , eraser and other relevant materials are in place.
- 4. Revision of the important topics is essential. The important topics should be book marked so that time is not wasted at the time of revision.
- 5. Effort may be made to collect previous questions concerned with subject to get an idea of the expected questions.
- 6. Students can also discuss some of the key points with each other.
- 7. No matter the questions are tough, the student must remain calm and avoid looking here and there in order to make full use of time alloted.
- 8. Easiest question should be answered first.
- 9. For essay questions , underline the key words. Effort should be made to write to the point. Student should not be misled if the questions carries more marks.

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