



Getting Answers to Questions About Exams

1. Do an Exam Analysis

Professors' old exams or sample questions are great resources for you in preparing for exams. Not only can you use these questions as practice exams, but they also provide insight into the professors' exam style.

- Try to find themes or issues that the professor repeatedly uses.
- Notice the "calls" of the questions and the format used by the professor.
- Read the instructions if they are available.

2. Ask Your Professor

Obviously, the best source of information about the exam is the professor. If your professors haven't already told you, consider asking the following questions:

- Is the exam open-book or closed-book?
- What is the makeup of the questions (i.e. multiple choice, essay, short answer)?
- Can we take the exam on a computer?
- How long is the exam? Are the questions evenly weighted?
- Do we need to cite to specific cases or statutes in our answers?
- If there are red herrings (i.e. things that distract attention away from the real issue) in the fact pattern, do you want us to address them in our answers?
- Do you prefer answers that just present the strongest argument or do you want an explanation of every possible argument?
- What should I do if I find myself running out of time? Will you give partial credit if I make a quick outline of the issue and argument?
- How important are policy discussions in the exam answer? Will there be an essay dedicated to policy issues?

3. Talk to Your Teaching Assistant

TAs can give you valuable insight into the professor's style and exam structure from the student perspective. They should also have ideas about how you can prepare specifically for this professor's exam.

