Exam techniques for multiple choice exams

Following these instructions will help you use your exam time more efficiently and increase your chances of passing.

1. System of rounds

1. During round one, only answer the easy questions. Skip anything you do not know.
2. During round two, answer the more difficult questions. Skip the most difficult ones.
3. During round three, answer the most difficult questions. Then make sure you have filled in everything.

This way you use your exam time most efficiently.

2. Other exam techniques

Generally, the rules with multiple choice (providing a choice of four possible answers) are:

1. One out of four is clearly incorrect.
2. A second one appears to be incorrect, following some deliberation.
3. You must now decide which of the remaining two is the best answer. The following tips may help:

- Read the question and answers carefully. Look out for key terms. Read carefully but do not assume too much. Many of the questions are not set with the purpose of being 'deep'.
- The key is to choose the best answer, but the answer does not need to fit perfectly. The other answers are at times "total nonsense", at other times merely "less correct".
- If you have prepared well for the exam and you have read the question carefully, then your first impression is usually the correct one. Do not change your mind unless you are absolutely sure!

3. Coping with doubt

1. You are convinced which answers are the incorrect ones, but you still have doubts about the remaining two answers.

   Rule of thumb

   1. Read the question and the choice of answers carefully and compare any key terms in the question with those in the remaining two answers. The answers will both appear correct to a certain extent.
   2. Choose the best possible answer; the perfect answer does not exist.
   3. Do not read too much into the question and follow your first impression, once you have read everything carefully.

2. First, one particular answer seems correct, but once you look at the question and choice of answers again (for example when you are double-checking), you start to doubt your choice of
Rule of thumb

1. Multiple choice is all about recognition of things you have learnt. If you are well prepared and you have read the question and choice of answers carefully, your first impression is often the best.
2. Stick to your first choice, unless you have gained new insight. Some students tend to ‘correct’ their answers in order to quell any unrest or doubt they may have, rather than on the basis of a newly gained insight into the question. ‘Correcting the answer’ basically then means ‘ruining your chances’. If you think you are ruining your exam, it is better to hand it in and go home.

Summary of exam techniques multiple choice exams

1. Work according to a system of rounds.
2. Look for the 'best' answer, not the 100% 'perfect' answer.
3. If in doubt: if you are well prepared, your first impression is usually correct.
4. Change your answer only if you have gained a new insight and never change the answer if you know from previous exams that you tend to make mistakes in this way.

You are allowed to take this summary of exam techniques with you to the exam.