

Exam Skills Refresher

How to survive a Passive House Institute exam
without losing your mind

Before the Chaos Begins

Organise or Die (Metaphorically)

If you have to dig for it, you don't have it. Bind your notes. Abuse highlighters. Use sticky tabs. An unorganised stack of paper is just a heavy paperweight.

Banish Distractions

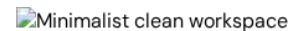
Lock the door. Bribe the kids. Tell your flatmates to vanish. You need absolute silence for the full duration. Defend your sacred space.

Sanity Maintenance

Sleep. Seriously. Cramming until 3 AM is a rookie mistake. Your brain needs to work, not just stay awake.

Clear the decks. Don't intend to run errands right before. Don't book a meeting right after. You will be useless to everyone.

Calculator Muscle Memory. If you're fumbling with buttons, you're losing marks. Know your tools better than your own phone.

 Minimalist clean workspace

Game Day Rituals



Fuel the Machine

Your brain eats glucose like Pac-Man eats dots. Don't starve it. Breakfast is mandatory.



Build the Fortress

Get set up early. Arranging your desk 2 minutes before the timer starts is a great way to induce a panic attack.



Emotional Support Snacks

Water? Yes. Favourite chocolate? Absolutely. Keep the energy topped up.

Mindset & Movement

Shake it out. You're about to sit still for an eternity. Move around now while you still have the freedom.

Don't Panic. (Easy to say, hard to do). Use whatever relaxation hacks you have. Panic is the enemy of logic.

Thinking Aids. Got a lucky pen? A spinning chair? A fidget spinner? Use them (within reason).



The "Don't Panic" Checklist

- ✔ **Comprehensive Notes:** Organized, bound, and tabbed.
- ✔ **Phone:** Ready in a secure spot with a good view of your desk and screen. Charger or powerbank plugged in.
- ✔ **Stationery:** Note paper and a couple of reliable pens.
- ✔ **Calculation:** Calculator with spare batteries.
- ✔ **Reference:** Printed PHPP of Wolfgang Feist's house.

Lost in Translation



Read. Everything.

Read every single question first. Don't get blindsided by a 20-point question on the last page.



Mind the Language

Beware of translation quirks. If a sentence looks weird, re-read it. German-to-English can be a wild ride.

Choose Your Strategy

The Snowball

Start with the quick, easy questions (fewer marks) to get warmed up and build that sweet, sweet momentum.

The Avalanche

Start with the biggest, scariest question (most marks) while your brain is still fresh and caffeinated.

Rule #1: Read EVERY question first. No surprises.

In the Trenches

Bank the easy points. Do the stuff you know inside out first. It feels good to see the scoreboard ticking up.

Don't get stuck. If you don't know it, move on. Don't let one hard question destroy your timeline.

Guess if you have to. A partial answer is better than a blank space. Use the process of elimination and hope for the best.

Trust Physics: When in doubt, go back to first principles. Passive House logic usually holds up (usually).



Finishing Strong

"The Idiot Check: Spend the last 5 minutes checking for silly mistakes. Decimals in the wrong place are heartbreaking."

— Your Future Self

Don't expect to be 100% finished when the time is up.

These exams are designed to stretch you.

This isn't a race to the pub.

The Aftermath



Recover & Recharge

Exams fry your brain. Schedule some low obligation time afterwards.

Do not—I repeat, DO NOT—jump straight back into work deadlines. Give your poor brain a break. Even if a break looks like cleaning the coffee machine and restocking the printer.

⚠ The Interface (A Warning)

PHI's exam interface is... special.

It confuses people. It crashes. It smells fear.

The 'imitation excel' sections are the very opposite of user friendly. Practice the shortcuts and opening images in the trial exam.

Expect it to stress you out. Expect it to crash.

Stay calm, and don't let the software make you choke.



Questions?

Good luck with your preparation!

Read. Every Question. First.

Image Sources



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