To: All students in MATH11246 (Quantitative Methods A)  
Subject: Exam Hints

This is mostly about how to handle open book exams, organise your time, and some details specific to this course's exam.

Remember that the exam is open book. This is good because it means you don't have to memorise all the formulae etc, you just have to know where to find them. Use post-it notes or index tabs to locate key information in your study guide and highlight important formulae that you are likely to use. You should bring the textbook along and any other workshop problems or worked questions you like. Open book does mean that you are allowed to bring in ANY printed materials you wish, which does include materials not specific to this course (ie. textbooks from the STEPS program or any other courses, Maths B and C textbooks from high school, etc.). That said though, try to focus on just the study guide, as it has everything you will need to know to pass the exam. This will also stop you from being distracted by having too much information to wade through.

Make sure your calculator is in good working order. You are allowed any calculator including graphing, programmable, and scientific (but it must be non-communicable). Sometimes it pays to bring along some spare batteries just in case. You'll also need a ruler for the graphs (graph paper will be supplied). Writing in pen is better than pencil (it is easier for us to read). If you make a mistake just cross it out and start again afterwards. Except for the graph, we won't be marking the neatness of your work (but we do need to be able to read it!!!!). Avoid using red pen if possible as that makes it easier for us to mark. Also avoid the glittery metallic pens because these are often very hard to read, particularly since you will be writing on the pink exam paper! If you need other colours, use standard blue or black (or green if it is for small areas).

Make sure you read the other information on the course website about the exam as well.

The exam questions will be similar in difficulty level to the sample exam. You will find that a few (but not all!) of the assignment questions are more difficult than the exam questions will be. In the exam we will be marking your working (so you must show it!!!!), which means that if you are on the right track or if your answer is partially correct then you will still get marks. We will check to see if you have made a small arithmetic error and if that is the case you will still get most of the marks for that question. You also need to write out (in full) the formulae that you are using (eg quadratic formula, present value annuity formula, etc) because marks will be awarded for using the correct formulae.

Make sure you divide up the time you have available to you for the exam. So, for example you know that you have 180 minutes (3 hours) and 60 marks on the paper, you might want to allocate 180/60=3 minutes per mark. So if a question was worth 8 marks, you would allow yourself a maximum of 24 minutes to do it and then no matter what point you are up to on it, you would stop and move on to the next question. This stops you from being bogged down with more difficult question and losing marks on questions you find easy but didn't have time to get to and it makes you feel better when you are accomplishing things... Spend the 15 minutes of perusal time...
working out which questions to do first and how long to spend on each. See the sample exam on the website for the mark weightings breakdown. Based on this, I'd probably do the following:

- 4 mark questions - allocate 10 minutes (there are three 4-mark questions, or 30 minutes total)
- 6 mark questions - allocate 15 minutes (four questions, or 60 minutes)
- 8 mark questions - allocate 20 minutes (three questions, or 60 minutes)

If you use this amount of time, then that will leave you with time at the end of the exam (another 30 minutes if you stick to this) to go back and finish any questions you know you can get done and not waste time on those you know you are struggling with. It helps to do the questions you find easy first.

Please feel free to contact your campus lecturer or tutor, the course coordinator, or post to the mailing list, if you have any further questions about the exam or QMA in general.

Best wishes for your studies.