Exam Hints and Tips prepared by Mike O'Malley of Central Queensland University.

Please Note: Students should pay particular attention to tip #25 below.

1. If you have consistently followed the "Tips for Passing This Course" throughout the term, then you should have absolutely no problems with the coming exam. See "Week 1 Lecture Material" on the Course Web page. If you have consistently worked through and understood the Tutorial Questions, and the examples and exercises in the lecture slides, and understand the material covered, then you should have absolutely no problems with the coming exam.

2. If you have followed the "Tips for Failing This Course" during the term, then you can expect to find the exam difficult, and it is possible, or maybe even likely, that you will fail this course. See "Week 1 Lecture Material" on the Course Web page.

3. Exam Information (Duration, etc): See the Exam section of the Course Profile.

4. Exam Format: The exam format is as follows:
   b. Part B: two sections worth 20 marks each, and each with multiple questions, covering Java commands and programming, pseudo code, flow charts, UML Class Diagrams, short answer questions, theory questions, and possibly any other topics covered this term. The bulk of the marks for Part B will be for questions that require you to write Java code to perform specific processing and/or solve specific problems.

5. Exam Vs Practice Exam: The format and style for the real exam is similar – but NOT identical – to the Practice Exam(s), available on the Course Web page towards the end of term. The questions will, of course, be different to the practice exam(s). In addition, the Practice Exam(s) tend to be harder and more work than the real exam. This is intentional because it eliminates any possibility of "the practice exam was easier than the real exam" arguments.
6. **Exam Content:** Any material covered in the lecture slides, tutorial questions, quiz questions, study guide (if any), resource materials (if any), course web site, or the relevant chapters / sections of the textbook(s) books could be in the exam for this course. CQU Staff are not allowed to give hints or tips that are more detailed than this about what may or may not be in the exam.

7. In the Exam, use your **perusal time** wisely:
   
a. To work out exactly what each question requires. Read the question.

   b. To determine whether you have any questions / issues that require resolution. If so, ask the exam supervisors to help you. If the exam supervisor cannot answer your question, then they will phone the Course Coordinator to try and get resolution.

   c. To determine the order in which you will answer the questions.

   d. To choose questions that you know you can do, and do these questions first when the exam starts. This will help build your confidence, and get you moving forward.

   e. To work out how much time – according to marks / break down – that you can spend on each question, and then keep a close eye on the clock during the exam to ensure that you keep within these time limits. Doing this will ensure that you do NOT spend 2 hours on a question worth 3 marks! (Don't laugh, this does happen).

   f. N.B. In perusal time, you can underline, circle, or highlight key words (and this can be very useful !!), but you cannot start work on answering any question until perusal time is over.

   g. The perusal time can be the most important part of the exam !!

8. **Read the question carefully**, and make sure you know exactly what is required before you devote any time to answering it. Underlining or highlighting keywords can help.

9. If you are provided with part of a program or method and asked to finish / complete the program or method, **do NOT re-write out the code that you have already been given** in your answer. This will NOT earn you any marks, and you will just be wasting valuable time.

10. **Don't do work that isn't specifically required to answer a question.**
    For example, if you are asked to write a Java program, then supplying
5 additional pages of diagrams, structure charts, flow charts, and pseudo-code will not earn you any more marks.

11. However, with that said, it is always wise to carefully plan your solution and ensure you understand the question fully before committing time to a full answer. Using some diagrams and pseudo-code can help a great deal with this.

12. You are expected to produce a high standard of syntactically correct Java code.

13. Comment your code to show what you are trying to achieve – but don't go overboard – short 1 line comments are usually sufficient. These will aid your writing of any code, and will make the marking easier. If your code is slightly wrong but your comments are right, then you might obtain part marks.

14. Don't look for overly elegant ways of solving any problems you are given. Take a straightforward approach that you know will work. Remember you have limited time.

15. Part marks are given for any reasonable attempts or partial attempts at answering questions.

16. If you are writing code that is very similar, then it is acceptable to use ditto ("), etc, or similar. For example, the following code fragment would be perfectly acceptable:

```java
if (Day_of_Week == 1)
    Day_Str = "Monday";
else if (Day_of_Week == 2)
    Day_Str = "Tuesday";
else if
    //
    // etc for Wednesday to Sunday.
    //
```

17. You will not have time to read entire pages or entire chapters from the text book or your notes during the exam, you will only have time to quickly look up things. It is recommended that your text book, notes, etc are all well indexed with Post-It Notes or similar to aid fast access to information.

   a. Hint: The Text Book has an index to help you find information! Also, the Lecture Slides also have an index (as a separate text

COIT 11222 - Visual Programming - Exam Hints and Tips
file, see the Course WEB Page) to help you find information!
You can (and should) add items to any of these indexes to help you find the information you need as quickly as possible.

18. Ensure you do systematic revision prior to the exam. Tutorial questions and end of chapter text book questions are very good source for this revision. Do as much reading as you can and work through, trace, dismantle, extend, and enhance questions, examples, etc contained in the lecture, tutorial, etc material to ensure your thorough understanding.

19. If you have any problem areas / questions prior to the exam, make sure you obtain help from the Teaching Team or Course Mailing List well before the exam.

20. Do not leave your revision until the night before the exam. Trying to get questions answered at 11 PM the night before the exam is NOT a good revision strategy.

21. **Double Check your Work in the Exam:** If you finish the exam early, then use the extra time to double check your work.

22. **Messy / Hard to Read or Poorly Labelled Answers** might lose you marks because the exam marker cannot understand what you have done or why, or because they cannot tell which question is being answered, or because your exam is taking so long to mark because it has to be deciphered first. Keep your writing as neat as possible, use meaningful names, and lay your answers out neatly.

23. **No Solutions to Past or Practice Exams:** Practice and/or Past Exams allow students to test their knowledge before the exam, and providing a solution could spoil this learning process. To ensure that students are thoroughly revising and do understand the material covered, **NO solutions to past or practice exams will be made available.** However, if students have specific questions, or have made good attempts at the questions but not been able to complete them, or would like to check their answers, and cannot find a tutorial solution or other example that is similar, then they can discuss the question on the Course Mailing List or contact their lecturer / tutor or the Course Co-ordinator.

**Please Note:**

a. Yes, students can discuss Practice Exam questions on the Course Mailing List - this is not assessment, but practice for assessment, so doing this is perfectly OK.
b. It is likely that the Teaching Staff will stay out of these discussions - to allow students time to work together on the mailing list and work things out for themselves.

c. If Teaching Staff do reply, then it will probably only be with hints and tips, and probably only when students are stuck, or things are going off on the wrong track, or if students seem to be agreeing on an incorrect answer.

24. **Ambiguities, Errors, Omissions in the Exam:**
   a. If there is something you do not understand in an exam question,
   b. or, if there is something that does not make sense in an exam question,
   c. or, if there is an error in an exam question,
   d. or, if there is something that is irrelevant in an exam question,

Then ask the exam supervisor to see if they can help resolve the issue, and then immediately continue working on other questions. Do NOT sit there doing nothing while waiting for an answer. If you cannot obtain satisfactory help or a satisfactory resolution to an issue during the exam, then make a reasonable assumption and document this assumption in your answer and continue work. Do not let any omissions, ambiguities, errors, or similar problems in any exam question slow you down or prevent you answering questions. As long as your assumption is reasonable, then you will not lose marks.

25. **Do NOT aim to scrape by with a pass in the exam.** You must pass the exam to have any chance of passing this course. If you aim to scrape by with a pass in the exam, then you could easily fail the course if you get any exam questions wrong. As such, you should aim to get as close as possible to 100% of the marks in the exam, so do sufficient work to ensure that you have the best possible chance of achieving this.

26. **Standard CQU Disclaimer:** Do NOT assume that any tutorial, assignment, exam, example, or any other solution provided to you is 100% correct. Always ensure that you thoroughly check any solutions / answers before relying on them. Use any tutorial, assignment, or solutions to any other question at your own risk.