

PAT Revision Guide

The PAT is the required test for Engineering, Materials Science, Physics, and Physics and Philosophy.

1. First step is to check out this website: <https://www2.physics.ox.ac.uk/study-here/undergraduates/applications/physics-aptitude-test-pat>. It has the syllabus and past papers with their reports. The reports can give you an idea of how many marks you should be aiming for.
2. Revise! Sounds crazy, I know, but it works! This is the easiest way to refine your exam technique, get used to the questions, and improve your mark. Always mark your work, even if you don't do it under test conditions, and note down the areas where you are weakest so you can work on them. This website provides solutions that are really good for the PAT papers. <https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/admissions/pat/>
3. Check the syllabus! Simple enough, it's on the Oxford PAT website, and they try to use as much of the syllabus as possible on each test. It's really unlikely that you're already familiar with all of the material, so this is vital to doing well on the PAT. If there's anything confusing, ask a teacher, they're probably more than happy to help you, and if it still doesn't make sense, an hour or two on YouTube should sort you out.
4. Look at the marks! If a question is worth 2 marks, and your answer is getting really complicated, you're probably going down the wrong route, so it's probably best to move on and continue picking up marks elsewhere. Conversely, don't worry if you can't see where a question worth 9 marks is going right away; even if the method is slightly wrong to begin with, you'll probably still pick up some marks later. Remember, you can always go back to harder questions once you've finished everything that you're confident with.
5. Check your units! Sometimes, a multiple-choice question that's difficult to figure out can be made simpler by seeing if the units of the answers make sense. This also applies to the long section, although typically helps by showing if your answer has the correct units.
6. If you know someone else who's taking the PAT, then it's probably worthwhile to work together, and give each other tips on what kind of thinking is useful for solving questions. Since you'll probably also be learning some new maths and physics together at the same time, this makes it doubly effective, as you'll be able to understand the new concepts quicker.
7. Lastly, do NOT take part in limbo the day before the test. Okay, I know that seems a bit rogue, but stick with me. The day before I sat the PAT, I took part in a limbo competition at school (weird school, don't judge). What I found out the next day, was this would turn out to be the most intense abs workout I'd ever done, and the muscle pain was distracting all through the exam. Of course, what I'm really getting at is routine – for most applicants this will be the hardest test they'll have ever sat, so feeling comfortable is really important. Get into a good sleeping routine a few nights before, be rested, plan to arrive early, bring some water with you, have a good breakfast, and most importantly, don't take part in a limbo competition.

Well, that's all I've got to say, good luck with the PAT, revise hard, and if all goes well, you'll be studying in Oxford less than a year after the exam.