



## CONCEPT MAPS FAQ

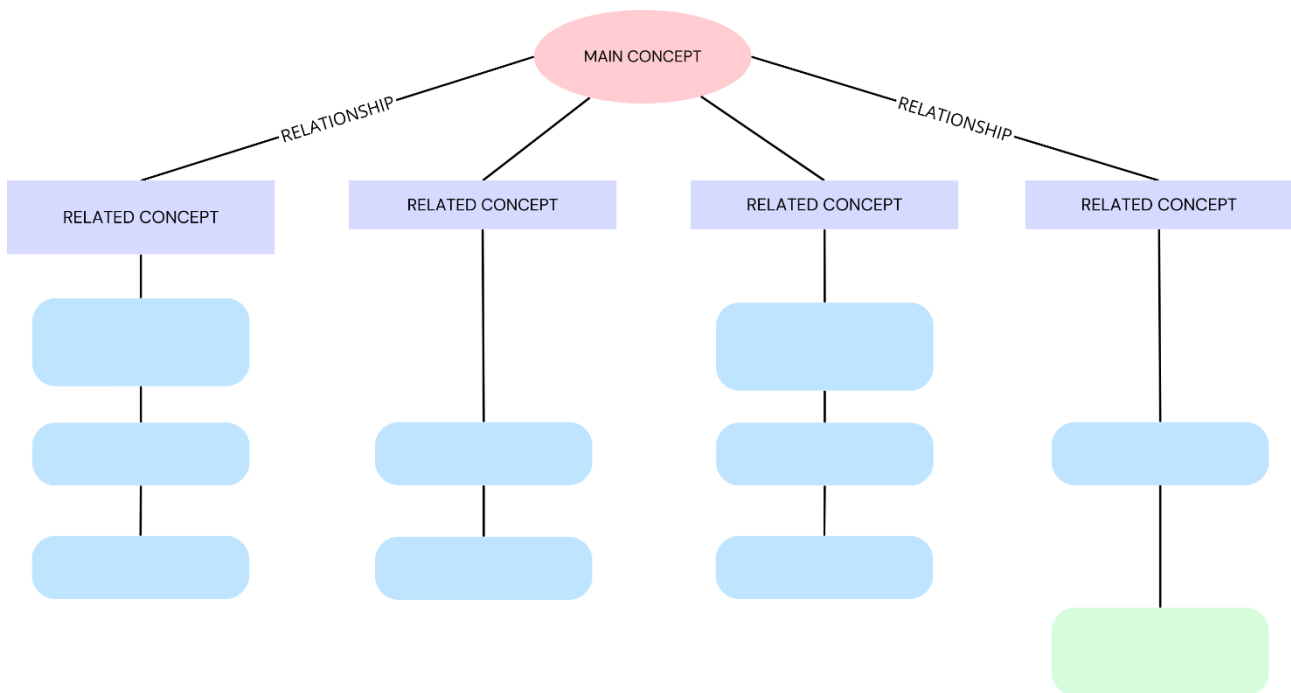
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## 1. What are concept maps?

Concept maps are condensed visual representations of concepts (concept-words) within a geometric shape (node), which are then associated using lines or arrows that represent these relationships through these word-connections (Gineprini, Guastavigna, 2004).



Processing information presented during courses with concept maps **is one of many possible study strategies** that students can choose, based on their individual needs and learning style. Concept maps are very personal representations, and can be created using various tools and techniques: on the computer, on a tablet, drawn by



hand, on a post-it note, using colors, images, drawings and other types of content that are organized in a way that is meaningful for the individual.

As such, concept maps can be a powerful tool both for studying and during exams because they offer a visual, comprehensive representation of all of the concepts learned using meaningful, logical connections.

## 2. Why do the regulations in support of students with SLD and other special needs include the ability to use concept maps?

A concept map is a tool that aids in understanding, and it is included in the regulations in support of students with SLD (Specific Learning Disorders), or other disabilities or disorders that have a negative effect on the ability to memorize and recall information.

Students affected by such disorders often have significant difficulties with their working memory, which makes it challenging to recall detailed information (like names, dates, formulas or technical terms), as well as to organize and connect various pieces of related information. For this reason, the use of condensed concept maps can help in compensating the problems related to this issue, without giving the student any specific advantages during exams.



### 3. How can students request to use concept maps during their university studies?

The use of concept maps is an adjustment included in the [Service Charter of the Service for Students with Disabilities and SLD](#), following an evaluation of the utility of this tool relative to the needs of each individual student.

This evaluation is performed by the Service for Students with Disabilities and SLD, taking into account the specific documentation presented by students and the insights gathered during a preliminary interview.

### 4. What's the difference between concept maps "for studying" and concept maps "for exams"?

#### FOR STUDYING

When studying, concept maps, like charts and summaries, can be useful for facilitating the comprehension and memorization of information.

They support students during pre-exam study sessions and help reinforce students' abilities to memorize concepts.

#### FOR EXAMS

In order to be used during both written and oral exams, concept maps must be basic and extremely brief, limited to key words and their connections, providing a clear



visual representation of the complicated concepts studied that are to be recalled using this form of assistance.

Concept maps that can be used during exams cannot contain clear, explicit answers to possible exam questions; for this reason, they must always be reviewed and approved by the faculty member leading the course before the exam.

Concept maps are personal representations and cannot be created by other students or teaching staff.

## 5. Do exams need to be adjusted when using concept maps?

No, the exam must use the same questions. The learning objectives that the exam is designed to verify must remain unchanged.

## 6. How are concept maps evaluated by faculty members?

Concept maps must be used to assist in information recall, and not a tool to facilitate the passing of exams.

Faculty members verify that concept maps do not include any explicit answers to possible questions that are intended to be used in the exam.

For this reason, only the faculty member running the course can verify if a concept map is acceptable for the type of exam that they intend to use.



More specifically, it must be evaluated whether or not the concept map submitted allows the student to pass the exam without studying, i.e., without a sufficient understanding and mastering of the information presented during the course. If this is the case, it is legitimate for faculty members to deny the use of a specific concept map, requesting the student make a version that is condensed further.

## 7. Can concept maps be used for all types of exams?

Concept maps cannot be used during exams that do not permit a preventative evaluation of acceptability, for example during exams administered by third-parties (like the TOLC and SAT exams, national competitions, etc.).

In addition, concept maps are unlikely to be accepted for exams that require concepts to be memorized in detail, or exams for which it would be difficult to develop support materials that do not contain information that will be included in exam questions. For example, during an art history course, if the exam involves recognizing works of art and identifying the title and artist, such information cannot be included on a concept map; or, in the case of a botany exam that tests students' memory of the precise scientific names of plants, such information cannot be included in concept maps that are to be used during the exam itself.



## 8. When do concept maps need to be submitted to faculty members?

Any requests for adjustments to exams must be presented at least 15 days before the planned exam date.

This is the minimum amount of time necessary to allow for faculty members to plan the necessary adjustments and, in the case students request to use concept maps, to verify the acceptability of these support tools.

At their own judgment and discretion, faculty members can set different deadlines regarding the review of concept maps, requiring students to send materials more than 15 days before the exam date. As such, students who request to use concept maps during exams must deliver the materials by the deadline defined by the faculty member.

Concept maps cannot be used without advance approval.

### Further information

- [Guidelines for students with specific learning disorders right to study \(section 6.7\)](#), annexed to Ministerial Decree no. 5669 from 12 July 2011.
- [CNUDD guidelines](#)