

Planning revision

Exams are a fact of life. Some students feel intimidated by the whole exam process. This leaflet provides some advice on how to plan your revision so that exams become less stressful.

Why are exams necessary?

Exams give you a chance to make sense of your learning and to apply your knowledge under time-limited conditions. In a sense, this is the kind of skill you need in the workplace; rather like 'thinking on your feet'.

The benefits of effective planning

The best advice is to make a habit of reading through your lecture notes at the end of each week. This helps to consolidate the concepts in your mind. It also helps you identify areas where you might need more information.

In reality, we often leave revision until the last 2-3 weeks before the exam period. It is still possible to give a reasonable account of yourself provided that you follow a structured and organised approach to revision.

How to plan your revision

Good planning can make the whole revision process less stressful and much more effective. Students often find planning their revision difficult because they're not clear how to answer the following questions:

1. What do I need to revise?
2. How should I allocate and use the time I have?

➤ *Before you begin your revision make sure that you have answered these two questions for each of the modules for which you have an exam.*

Identifying what to revise

For University exams you may find that there is more material available than you can cover and it may not be clear what you need to focus on. You should work out a revision plan that will help you to target your effort.

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Here's a list of some of the things you might need to know to make an effective revision plan.

➤ *Find the information for each of your modules:*

What do I need to know?	Where will I find the information?
➤ What is the assessment strategy for each module?	✓ The module specification.
➤ How long is each exam?	✓ Exam timetable.
➤ What will be covered in the exam?	✓ The learning outcomes listed in the module specification and assessment strategy. ✓ Lecture outlines. ✓ Exam guidance.
➤ How many sections are in each exam paper? ➤ How many questions do you have to answer? ➤ What types of questions are there – multiple choice, essays etc? ➤ Will there be a choice of questions? ➤ Are some questions compulsory? ➤ How long will you have to work on each question?	✓ Past exam papers (<i>but check with the Module Leader that the format of the exam paper has not changed</i>).
➤ Do I understand common exam question wording?	➤ The <i>What does the Question Mean?</i> advice sheet could help you.

Once you have this information you can decide what topics to revise and in what depth for each module.

The next step is to identify how much time you have available for revision.

Making the best use of your time

A revision plan will help ensure that you make effective use of your time.

To develop a revision plan you will need to calculate how much time you have to revise and then identify how the tasks you want to get done will fit into the time you have identified.

➤ *Follow the two steps below to develop your revision plan.*

Step 1 – Identify how much time you have to revise

➤ *Fill in the grid below to work out the total amount of time you can give to the revision for each exam:*

Areas to consider	Your answer
Note down all forthcoming deadlines	
Note down when you will relax and do things you enjoy	
Identify some 'free time' in case something goes wrong	
Count up roughly how much time you have for revision	

Step 2 – Work out a revision plan

Once you know how much time you have available for your revision you can work out a revision plan.

Make sure that your plan is realistic. For example, if it takes you 2 hours to work through the notes from each lecture and you have 60 lectures to cover, but only 50 hours to revise for the exam then you need to think again!

➤ *You can find an example revision plan at the end of this guide. Use this revision plan to note down:*

- ✓ When you will revise for each module.
- ✓ What you will revise for each module.
- ✓ When you will have breaks.
- ✓ Your exam dates – identify when, where and how long each exam is. Add a code to show what equipment you can take in.

Remember that no one manages their time perfectly so don't worry if things don't go exactly to plan!

The importance of relaxation

Make sure that you build relaxation time into your revision plan and remember:

- ✓ For every hour you work, take ten minutes off.
- ✓ Don't work longer than 3 hours at a time. Do something completely different e.g. play sport.
- ✓ Breaks refresh your mind and aid concentration.
- ✓ It's easier to think about revising when you know you'll have regular interruptions.
- ✓ Breaks help learning and offer fresh insights because we absorb information and make links during breaks.
- ✓ Keep doing things that you enjoy and that relax you; for example, sport, meeting friends, going to the cinema.
- ✓ Try to keep to a sensible diet and sleep patterns.
- ✓ Don't go straight to bed after revision – relax first.

Other study guides

Other study guides you might find useful can be downloaded from: <http://lib.bue.edu.eg/wiki>



<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/uk>

Adapted from from Loughborough University and Edinburgh University.

Revision planning grids – module revision plan

Identify: Topics to be revised, tasks to complete, details of the exam including date, times and room.

	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Module 5	Module 6
Week 1						
Week 2						
Week 3						
Week 4						
Week 5						
Exam week						

Revision planning grids – weekly revision plan

Identify: Topics to be revised and tasks to complete each week.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7-8							
8-9							
9-10							
10-11							
11-12							
12-13							
13-14							
14-15							
15-16							
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