Academic Skills and Development

Quick guide to

Revision and Exams

# Start early

* Make sure that your notes are complete, easy to follow and organised
* Plug any gaps – ask classmates and tutors for missing material
* Ask during the semester “is this likely to come up in an exam”? that way you can highlight it as a “key” topic

# Get organised

* Try out some places to see where you work best – somewhere you will not be distracted – your room, the library, SPLASH etc.
* Organise a study group – revision with others can keep your motivation levels up and means you cover more material between you.

# Prioritise your revision

* Prioritise the topics you are going to revise; aim for a balance between your strong and weak subjects
* For each subject identify the topics to study – check with your tutor to ensure you have covered everything

# Make a revision timetable

* Keep the schedule flexible and realistic
* Plan regular breaks and do some exercise at least once a day
* Stick to the schedule. If you can’t, try and identify why not and seek out relevant support to develop strategies.

# Revise material

* As well as writing out notes, try using mind-maps and other visual techniques or record your notes and play them back
* Make short A4 summaries for each topic being revised and test yourself on these summaries
* Make links between the different topics

# Use past papers

* Get past papers. They have examples of the types of questions that may be on the exam
* Identify recurring themes in exams on your subject
* Get accustomed to the style of questions likely to be on the exam
* Practise writing answers in set time limits
* Over-learn each chosen topic – know it so well that is boring you and everyone else

# Look after yourself

* Eat well – try and avoid “cheap” quick sugar fixes which leave you feeling more tired overall. Complex carbohydrates are good, bananas, wholemeal sandwiches etc.
* Drink lots of water! A hydrated brain is a crucial part of healthy revision
* Exercise – 20 minutes a day will make a massive difference to your ability to learn
* Sleep – try to get into a good pattern that will fit your revision needs and your body clock
* Caffeine – beware the lure of caffeine and other stimulants

# 24 hours before your exam

* Double check the start time, location and equipment (e.g. calculator) you might need
* Sleep – last minute cramming just doesn’t work, as tempting as it seems. It’s best to get some sleep. Cramming and over-tiredness will make your thinking less organised and more confused

# On the day

* Turn up to your exam a bit – but not too – early. Hanging around will make you more nervous and chatting with others can make you feel unprepared – trust yourself and your revision.

Further advice and larger text guides can be found online: [**www.surrey.ac.uk/splash**](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/splash)

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