# Revision Planning and Strategies

## Good Revision

## Is targeted e.g. focuses on exactly what you need to revise.

## Is structured e.g. planned out/timetabled.

## Makes use of effective memorising techniques.

## Takes place within a suitable environment.

## Ends in exam rehearsals to practice performing under pressure.

## What to Revise

1. Start by looking at:
   * Course outline/syllabus (learning outcomes)
   * Recommended reading lists
   * Essay & assignment topics
   * Topics emphasised by lecturers/tutors
   * Past papers (available on the Past Papers Repository on Moodle. Ask your school for information)

1. List all topics & identify ‘core topics. Within core topics you are likely to be revising key elements such as:

* Facts (dates, events, people, data)
* Concepts/themes
* Theories
* Terminology/key words
* Legislation
* Equations/formulae/rules
* Debates
* Definitions
* Processes/sequence of events
* Case studies/examples/passages

## How much to revise

**Exam format**

How much to revise depends on the exam format for each module, therefore, try to find out the exam format first e.g.:

* 4 essays in 2 hours
* 3 essays in 3 hours
* multiple choice
* problem questions
* exercises
* short answer questions

## Revision Estimate

* Essay questions (choice of questions) - revise approximately 60 % or 8 topics (depending on exam format)
* Short answers/exercises & multiple choice - revise all topics (depending on exam format)

## When to revise

Deciding when to start revising will depend on; how many exams, when they are, your understanding of the topic etc. But you should aim to…

* Start as early as possible.
* Study regularly – treat it like a 9-5 job.
* Revise when you are ‘receptive’ and ‘productive’.
* Plan realistic study blocks (concentration tends to wane after about 20 minutes of focused work).
* Stick to your schedule as much as possible. Move on to other topics as planned but if it flows, let it flow!

**Tip:** Your brain is cognitively more alert at the beginning of your day (whether this is at 7am or 2pm) – do the harder stuff first (understanding concepts etc)

## Manage your time

**Develop a schedule**

Using a time planner, plan out your time. Ensure everything is on your time plan so you can see how all tasks in your life and studies fit together.

**Make your schedule work for you**

* Early bird or late riser?
* Quiet or social study?
* Able to cope or not cope with distractions?

**Make use of ‘dead time’ e.g.**

* Travelling/commuting
* In-between lectures
* Waiting for something or someone

**Prioritise what you focus on first**

The following method can help you to decide the order of revision:

**Important –**

Urgent

Q1. Important & Urgent

Not urgent

Q2. Important but not urgent

**Not important –**

Urgent

Q3. Urgent but not important

Not urgent

Q2. Not important and not urgent

## Keeping your focus

* Pomodoro method: 20-min focus, 5-min brain break.
* Remove distractions (phones, productive procrastination).
* Set realistic, achievable targets.
* Monitor progress, test yourself – are your strategies working?
* Revise schedule as needed.
* Allow time for socialising (in moderation), relaxation and exercise.
* Set alarms for breaks etc.

## How to revise

Method effectiveness will vary. Key suggestions are:

* Decide what you need to understand and what you need to remember.
* Divide the material into manageable chunks.
* Organise in a logical way (chronological, sequence of the module).
* Find techniques that work for you e.g. mind maps, having someone test you etc.
* Vary activities to keep your brain engaged.
* Keep repeating

## Revision methods

**Memorising**

* Repetition
* Reciting
* Mnemonics (for example, the order of planets: ‘My very easy method just set up nine planets’)

## Freewriting

This method can help you identify the topics you need to revise

* Pick a word or idea (e.g. ‘Benefits of theory X’).
* Use the word/phrase in a sentence.
* Repeat last sentence if stuck.
* Don’t stop until you run out of words (keep writing for at least five minutes).
* Don’t be too concerned about grammar and punctuation.

## Module Audit

Take the module outline and break it up into short phrase/single word topics. Put the topics in the appropriate columns:

* Strong topics
* Not sure
* Weak topics

## Change it up

* Record yourself and listen back/listen to lecture recordings.
* Use colours, tabs, graphics etc to give emphasis.
* Read aloud or explain a topic to a friend.
* Try mind maps, spider diagrams, posters etc to visualise topics.

## Notes

* Post-Its - Limit to quick facts.
* Index cards - Key facts/ideas on smaller topics.
* Print and annotate lecture slides.
* Write out by hand (kinaesthetic memory – the process of writing triggers memory).
* Convert info into tables/charts to make it easier to digest.

**Tip:**Make notes portable (short documents you can print, phone notes, index cards etc) so you can keep them on you and have a look during ‘dead time’ – waiting at the doctors, getting the bus to campus etc.

## Group study

* Pick a topic and become a specialist and then teach your peers the key points, do a Q&A or take turns to create pop quizzes.
* Split into teams and debate an issue/theory.
* Working with friends on other courses? Set yourselves targets for a session and check in at agreed points – quiz each other.

## Monitor your progress (test yourself)

You could work with a friend testing each other or test yourself on what you have read by devising a question and seeing if you can answer it (in writing or orally). Alternatively, answer questions from past exam papers under timed conditions. Review these answers from an examiner’s point of view and be honest with yourself:

* How many good points have you made?
* How many have you omitted?
* Have you answered the question fully?
* Is your handwriting legible?

Working on past papers also means that the format will become familiar to you, and so less intimidating when you sit the exam for real. However, remember that in a fresh exam, even if the topic area is the same as in a past paper, the angle is likely to be different so ensure you read the question carefully!

## Exam Calm Podcast

You may wish to listen to the following podcast on revision tips from a range of Kent staff:

[Exam Calm • Kent Voices](https://open.spotify.com/episode/1LpiEdUEXJwFADGNPACTQk?si=4f183d3f21034226&nd=1&dlsi=29ee2f8e2fab4879)

Scan the QR code to book appointments, view our events calendar, watch skills videos and more…

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