



Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University



Exams



†SEIRBHÍIS TACAÍOCHTA AGUS FORBARTHA
STUDENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

A Step by Step Guide
to Getting the Results
You Want





4 Steps

1. Study Preparation
2. Active Learning Strategies
3. Exam Performance
4. After the Exams



1. Study Preparation

Before you sit down to study, work through the checklists below, and it will help you get organised and create an effective study plan.

Materials

- I have gathered all lecture notes and my own notes from weeks 1-12 for all subjects
- I have lecture notes in week order in a folder with tabbed sections to separate each subject
- I have reviewed my module descriptors and learning outcomes for each of my modules
- I have past and sample exam papers to help revision
- I have enough books bought/on loan and photocopied/printed pages from books/journals/articles to supplement lecture notes
- I have printed extra information and statistics from the Internet in topic areas I know are coming up in the exam
- I have my exam timetable and know in what order the exams take place
- I have enough pens, paper and material for studying for the exams

Study

- I have a comfortable area to study with a desk that is quiet, well lit and with a power point, e.g. bedroom, library, etc... I have my mobile phone powered off
- I have an accessible study area available for early morning and late evening study sessions
- I have my study timetable set out for study sessions prior to and during the exam period
- I have factored in extracurricular activities and rest time into my study timetable
- I have enough food stocked in the house to eat healthily each day during the study period
- I have internet access for research during study periods





Your first task is to know exactly what you are going to study. Go through your module specifications, past papers and Loop notes to build a revision checklist.

Key Points to Study Preparation

Module Specifications: Check out the module specifications for each of your modules either through Loop or the Registry website. These specifications include the module description and expected learning outcomes.

Exam papers: Check out past exam papers. The link for past papers is available through Loop.

Loop notes: Gather your learning materials from Loop.

Revision Checklist: Build a revision checklist of the topics you need to cover in each module and the resources you will use to cover them.

Time: Set up a study timetable for the study period prior to the exams (see next page).

To-do list: Working from your Revision Checklist, set up a to-do list each day to manage your priority tasks.

SMART Goals: Convert the items on your To-Do List into SMART (specific, measurable, action, realistic, time) goals for each study session.

Sample Study Timetable



Monday

9.00am – 10.30am	Session 1
10.30am – 11.00am	Break
11.00am – 12 noon	Session 2
12noon – 1.00pm	Session 3
1.00pm – 2.00pm	Lunch
2.00pm – 3.30pm	Session 4
3.30pm – 3.45pm	Break
3.45pm – 5.15pm	Session 5
	Evening Free

Total Hours 6.5

Tuesday

Morning	Lie-In
12noon – 1.30pm	Session 1
1.30pm – 1.45pm	Break
1.45pm – 3.15pm	Session 2
3.15pm – 4.00pm	Break
4.00pm – 5.30pm	Session 3
5.30pm – 6.30pm	Dinner
6.30pm – 8.00pm	Session 4
	Evening Free

Total Hours 6.0

Thursday

Morning	Lie-In
12noon – 1.30pm	Session 1
1.30pm – 1.45pm	Break
1.45pm – 3.15pm	Session 2
3.15pm – 4.00pm	Break
4.00pm – 5.30pm	Session 3
5.30pm – 6.30pm	Dinner
6.30pm – 8.00pm	Session 4

Total Hours 6

Friday

9.00am – 10.30am	Session 1
10.30am – 11.00am	Break
11.00am – 12noon	Session 2
12noon – 1.00pm	Session 3
1.00pm – 2.00pm	Lunch
2.00pm – 3.30pm	Session 4
3.30pm – 3.45pm	Break
3.45pm – 5.15pm	Session 5
	Evening Free

Total Hours 6.5



Wednesday

9.00am – 10.30am	Session 1
10.30am – 10.45am	Break
10.45am – 12.15pm	Session 2
12.15pm – 1.00pm	Lunch
1.00pm – 2.00pm	Session 3
2.00pm – 3.00pm	Session 4
3.00pm – 3.30pm	Break
3.30pm – 5.00pm	Session 5
	Evening Free

Total Hours 6.5

Saturday

9.30am – 10.30am	Session 1
10.30am – 10.45am	Break
10.45am – 12.15pm	Session 2
12.15pm – 1.00pm	Session 3
1.00pm – 2.00pm	Lunch
2.00pm – 3.00pm	Session 4
3.00pm – 3.30pm	Break
3.30pm – 5.00pm	Session 5
	Evening Free

Total Hours 4

Key Points

- Sessions are broken down to 2 x 1 hour sessions or 1 x 1 1/2 hour sessions. The brain needs to keep fresh so if you are doing a 2 hour session – change the subject you are studying half way through.
- If you play sport or are planning a night out – allow for a sleep-in the next morning.. It is okay to have a social life and getting out is a good balance.
- Make sure you take at least one day off. It is also good to analyse your work to make sure you are on top of everything.
- You need study time and free time to have a healthy balance!
- If you prefer to study in the evenings, change the timetable accordingly.

2. Active Learning Strategies



Passively reading over books or notes is not enough to retain information: you must actively do something with the information to understand and learn it. Common active learning strategies include:

Note Taking

Take notes as you go on particular topics. Only jot down key facts and must-remember information. Always summarise your notes at the end to help commit the general gist of your learning to memory.

Audio/video recording

Try recording yourself summarising a topic in audio or visual form – the act of making the recording will strengthen your memory of the key information.

Mind map

Use a mind map to break a topic into keywords and themes for learning.

Diagram

Draw a diagram to visually represent a theory or model.

Mnemonics

Mnemonics create a system or pattern for learning complex information by mapping details over a familiar wording

or rhyme. An example for learning to order of the planets in the galaxy is **My Very Easy Method Just Sums Up Nine Planets**.

Flashcards

Flashcards are really useful aids for self-testing. They work by making you recall information rather than just review it.

Study groups

Many students like to set up study groups with their classmates to divide up the topics and allow space to discuss the material they're learning. It's also a sociable way to get study done!

Test yourself

Whatever strategy you use, one of the best ways to prepare for an exam is to test yourself repeatedly on the material before the exam itself.

3. Exam Performance

Exam Preparation

Your hard study is now complete and you are on the last stretch of the road. Here are important tips to prepare for the exams:

Mindfulness meditation

Mindfulness which has been proven to help relax the body and mind.

Wellbeing activities

Select a wellbeing activity to do that makes you feel good – this might be watching a film, going for a walk or having lunch with friends.

Exercise

During your study break, get out and play football for 30 minutes or go for a 30 minute walk/run. Try cycling or walking to DCU in the mornings and getting some fresh air in the evenings too.

Friendship

Make the effort to reach out to friends and family for support during the exam period.

Eat healthy

While you may not have much time for cooking in the run up to exams, healthy meals and snacks will provide you with the valuable energy you need to keep going. Remember to drink plenty of water.

Sleep

Sufficient sleep will aid your learning, memory and retention.

If you are worried about anything – talk to your lecturer, Chairperson, family or friends. Student Support Advisers are also available Monday – Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm if you have any concerns and you wish to talk.



For more details and podcasts to listen at home:
dcu.ie/students/counselling/mindfulness-podcasts.shtml

Exam Regulations



1. Check your examination timetable on your portal page and DCU website prior to starting your examinations to ensure that you are certain of all dates, times and venues. At the start of the examination you will receive an answer booklet. You will be required to enter your student ID number on a sealed flap on the answer booklet and you are then required to seal the flap securely. Your examination number, your seat number and the first four digits of your portal page password (as received at registration) must be written accurately and legibly, on the front of the answer booklet in the spaces provided. Be sure to take note of your six digit anonymous marking examination number which you will need for all examinations. This can be found at the top of your exam timetable which is available on your portal page. The examination numbers are also available outside the exam centre.
2. Ensure you are familiar with the University's Examination Regulations.
3. You are required to bring your current student identification card to all examinations.
4. Reference your seat number outside the exam centre before entering the room. (You are NOT required to sign the list displayed outside the venue.) You will receive a different seat number for each exam. Please ensure that you sit in the correct seat.
5. Some items not permitted in the examination centres are: Mobile phones/text storing or programmable calculators/notes or books of any kind (unless expressly approved)/pencil cases/paper, log tables, statistic tables, graph paper, formula (all supplied by the invigilator)/food and drink.
6. When you receive the examination paper, check it to ensure that you have been given the correct one.
7. Ensure that all of the details are completed on the front of your answer booklet before returning it to the invigilator.
8. If you have any queries during the examination, if you have forgotten an item of stationery or are feeling unwell, you can discuss these issues with one of the invigilators.

For further details on exam regulations:
dcu.ie/registry/examinations/regulations

Sample Smart Food Plan for the Exams

Breakfast

Wholegrain cereal with milk, fresh orange juice

or

Bowl of porridge with sultanas or wholemeal toast with chopped banana

or

Full Breakfast with sausages, bacon, egg and toast (Grilled)

If you are too nervous to eat a full breakfast, blend a banana, apple, pear, cranberry juice and yogurt to make a smoothie

Lunch

Vegetable soup with wholemeal scone/bread

or

Chicken/ham/egg sandwich

or

Chicken and pasta meal with a sauce

or

Tuna/pasta salad with wholemeal bread

2 glasses of water

Healthy Body = Healthy Mind

More information about balancing your diet from the SS&D Booklet 'Nutrition at University', is available in the Student Advice Centre, Glasnevin Campus or visit: dcu.ie/advice/student-guides.shtml



On the day of the Exam

Before the exam

Exam Timetable Make sure you know what rooms your exams are in and what time they start. Also, make sure you know what CAMPUS you will be on.

Exam papers

Go over the format of each exam paper in advance so you know what to anticipate.

Use your time smartly in the exam

Divide your time per question based on exactly how many marks each question is worth. If your time for a question is up and you haven't finished it yet just move on.

Last minute revision

Use blank cards for writing key notes to help with last minute revision. However, some students prefer to switch off before an exam and leave the notes at home, and that's okay too.

Last minutes worries or concerns

If you have any concerns in the run up to the exams, talk to your lecturer, Chairperson, family, friends or Student Support Advisers (available Monday – Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm).

During the exam

Solutions if things go wrong!

Panic

Take three deep breaths, in through the nose and out through the mouth. This will slow the heart down and reduce panic.

Going Blank

As above, breathe deeply for a few moments and then write down key words on the exam paper to help jog your memory or try to remember the day you studied this topic and see if this helps.

Emergency

If you have been ill during term or during the exam or an event took place that greatly affected your performance, you can submit an 'Extenuating Circumstances' form signed by your Chairperson to the Registry. Please check the academic calendar for the deadline for submission. If you are unsure what to do, contact Registry on the DCU Glasnevin Campus:
T: +353 (01) 700 5338
T: +353 (01) 700 7165 (Student Adviser)



Extenuating Circumstance Form:
dcu.ie/registry/application_forms

Academic Calendar:
dcu.ie/timetabling/ac_19_20

4. After the Exams



Unexpected Absence from Exam

Sometimes, due to unforeseen circumstances, a student may not be able to present him/herself for examination on the day. In this unfortunate event, don't worry – here's what to do:

Contact your Chairperson by email/ telephone (leave a message if necessary) as soon as possible to explain your absence and fill out the Extenuating Circumstances form. Please note the date for submission on the form.

Extenuating Circumstances

Should you feel that difficult circumstances beyond your control should be taken into consideration when the Progression and Awards Board is reviewing your grades, the Chairperson of your programme should be made aware of this. These circumstances could include illness, accident, bereavement or other personal issues. The only official mechanism to do this is to fill out an extenuating circumstances form.

Consultation Days

Make sure to book an appointment (via email / telephone or in person) with your lecturers to get feedback on exams and/or assignments during the official Consultation Days (see Academic Calendar for confirmation of dates dcu.ie/timetabling/ac_19_20.shtml).

During this period, your lecturer will be happy to discuss your performance in the exam/assignment and provide important feedback – especially if you are disappointed with your results.



Academic Integrity

Each year a handful of ill-advised students find themselves in a situation that they feel unprepared for the exams or assignments. Some students chance a few notes on the hand, in the jacket pocket or perhaps a few chunks from somebody else's essay. They feel that this might give them that additional edge that they need to get through a particularly difficult subject. Being a member of the Disciplinary Committee of the University gives me the unfortunate duty of having to deal with students who are found to fall for the fallacy that this is the right thing to do and that the 'risk' is worth it.

In order to uphold the academic integrity of the University – and the validity of and respect for a DCU degree, the University takes this major offence extremely seriously. Students will be penalised and will put their entire degree in jeopardy.

Take it from somebody who has seen the distraught students sitting in front of the Committee, suddenly realising this was the wrong thing to do – don't even contemplate it. Speak to your lecturer or to me directly if you are really feeling unprepared... there are always better ways of solving this problem.

Dr. Claire Bohan

Director of Student Support and Development

Useful Contacts

Absent from Exams/Deferral of Exams

**Registry
Glasnevin
Campus**
T +353 (01) 700 5338
E registry@dcu.ie
W: dcu.ie/registry/current.shtml

**Registry
St Patrick's
Campus**
T +353 (01) 884 2242
E registry@dcu.ie

Opening Hours

Morning
9.30am to 12.30pm

Afternoon
2.00pm to 5.00pm

Monday - Thursday
9.00am - 1.00pm
& 1.30pm - 4.30pm

Friday
9.00am - 1.00pm
& 2.00pm - 4.30pm

**Out of Hours
Contact
(Security)**
T: (01) 700 5999

**Student
Support
Services**
T: +353 (01) 700 7165
T: +353 (01) 884 2004
W: dcu.ie/students/index.shtml

**Health
Centre**
T: +353 (01) 700 5143
W: dcu.ie/students/index.shtml

**Past
Examination
Papers**
W: library.dcu.ie/index.shtml

**Glasnevin &
St Patrick's
Drumcondra
Library**
W: dcu.ie/library

Produced By
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W: dcu.ie/students



Student Support and Development

Learning
Counselling
Experience
Access
Disability
Advice
Careers
Health
Spirituality

Log on dcu.ie/students
Email student.support@dcu.ie
Call +353 (01) 700 7165
Drop in Student Advice Centre
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Henry Grattan Building

+353 (01) 884 2004
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Room 101