

MAKE -IT- HAPPEN



SCAN ME







I am happy to introduce this guide and share all the tips that we have collected from students and experts on managing the stressful assessment period. What to be expected from this guide are great revision tips, many inspiring quotes to keep you motivated, key information from experts on managing stress and amazing tips to ensure you are keeping on track with your nutritional levels and sticking to your sleep schedules.

I understand how stressful this time of year can be and the advice I gathered from this guide last year has been very helpful in my exams and assignments. I am delighted to share my tricks and tips on managing exam periods. It is so important to make sure to share your thoughts with someone and understand that you are not alone, we are all in the same journey.

My revision tip is to start off with studying for two hours per day, then increasing it to an extra hour when exams are a month away from starting. What I usually do the night before an exam is to close my books and just go out for good food and find a way to relax (hitting the gym for me!). I prefer working off PowerPoint Slides by paraphrasing each slide and understanding the work more than memorising it word for word, the importance with revision is to place emphasis on understanding the content rather than memorising words.

I highly recommend using the library services. I used them to look over my coursework to ensure that my grammar is perfect, and referencing is correct. As someone for whom English isn't his first language, I used this service to ensure that the structure of my work makes sense and that my words carry the right impact.

On behalf of everyone at the Students' Unions, I wish you the best of luck with your studies. I am certain you will do the best, BELIEVE IN YOURSELF!!!!



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Preparing for your assessment period



Everyone has different methods that help them to study and prepare for exams and assessments, so here is a few tips that might help:

Organise your study space, make sure there is enough space for you to spread out your books and notes out.

Practice taking an old exam.

Organise study groups.

Make flash cards and study with friends.

Take regular breaks, and drink plenty of water.

Eat nutritious food.

Ensure you're getting enough sleep.

Plan your exam day.

When I was preparing for assessments, it helped to change where I was working, sometimes I'd work in my house, sometimes in the library and other time's I would go to coffee shops or sit in the garden. I also liked to have music on in the background and would take regular breaks between working. Breaks can include going to the gym, getting a cup of tea, watching TV or going and meeting up with friends. I would also rotate the modules and projects I was working on, especially when it came to creative writing, as to avoid 'writers block'. I would also create a check list of everything I wanted to do before my deadlines. This helped to feel like I was in control of my studies and I could keep on top of my work load.

When it comes to managing and relieving stress, exercise is a great help. Exercise not only relieves stress, but it also improves memory retention, increases focus and concentration, and boosts your energy. If the stress gets to a point where it feels overwhelming, and you notice that is affecting your day-to-day life - talk to someone. This can be someone from the University's wellbeing service, our own SU advice team, a friend or a family member.

Good luck with your exams and assessments! "

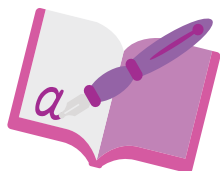


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Revision tips

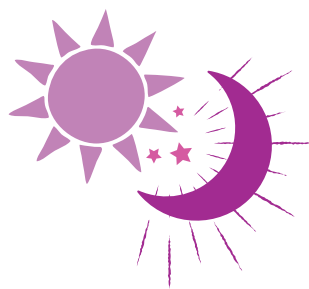
Get Organised



Plan which topics you intend to revise and create a revision timetable that is realistic and flexible, to account for any unexpected changes. Review the course material and clarify any questions you have. Most importantly, make your own priorities clear and don't compare yourself to your peers. One of the key reasons we feel exam stress is because we compare ourselves to others. It's important not to forget that your exam results are just a small part of who you are.

— Study in ways that works for you

Some of us aren't morning people and not everyone finds themselves most productive in the Library. There's not best place or time to work, so let revision work around you! Even the best made revision plans can be disrupted with unexpected events, so make sure you add in some spare time to pre-empt these changes.



Make the most of the resources available

Practising on past papers is one of the most effective forms of revision. Previous Exam Papers are available on the Exam Paper Database via the My Library section of MyUniHub, your lecturers, SLAs and GAAs. If the required exam paper is unavailable, contact your Module Tutor.



On many courses, similar themes are revisited in exams each year, so it is useful to get a feel for what markers may be looking for. Reviewing the course materials and going over questions that have been asked throughout the year should stand you in good stead.



Talk to People

Just because it's Summer Term doesn't mean academics have left. Talk to people whilst they're still here, if you have questions for your lecturers or class teachers then get in touch with them. Make sure you use revision classes or lectures being offered. Although independent study is important it can also be incredibly useful to discuss topics with classmates, sharing ideas and resources.

Take Breaks

No one can study all day effectively, and psychologists say we can only concentrate for 30-45 minutes. Ensure that you are eating and drink plenty of water for productivity. Exercising is one of the quickest and most effective ways to de-stress. Fresh air will clear your head and perk you up. Even a short walk will do.

Your routine is important for managing your mental health. While you may need to cut back on social activities during exam periods, it is important that you keep some of your routine, especially when things get stressful. This can be phoning home, meeting friends for dinner, taking time to play sport or watching a film.

Go to page 7 for a revision timetable to help you plan in your breaks.



Ask for Help

Don't be afraid to ask for help or support! The exam period can be stressful, so if you need help make sure you get it. The University has its own counselling service and MDXSU provides independent advice. You can find contact details on the back page of this guide.

Study Space

Study space on campus can fill up quickly and during exam time it can seem as if there is nowhere to work. Below is some useful information on the best study places on and off campus.

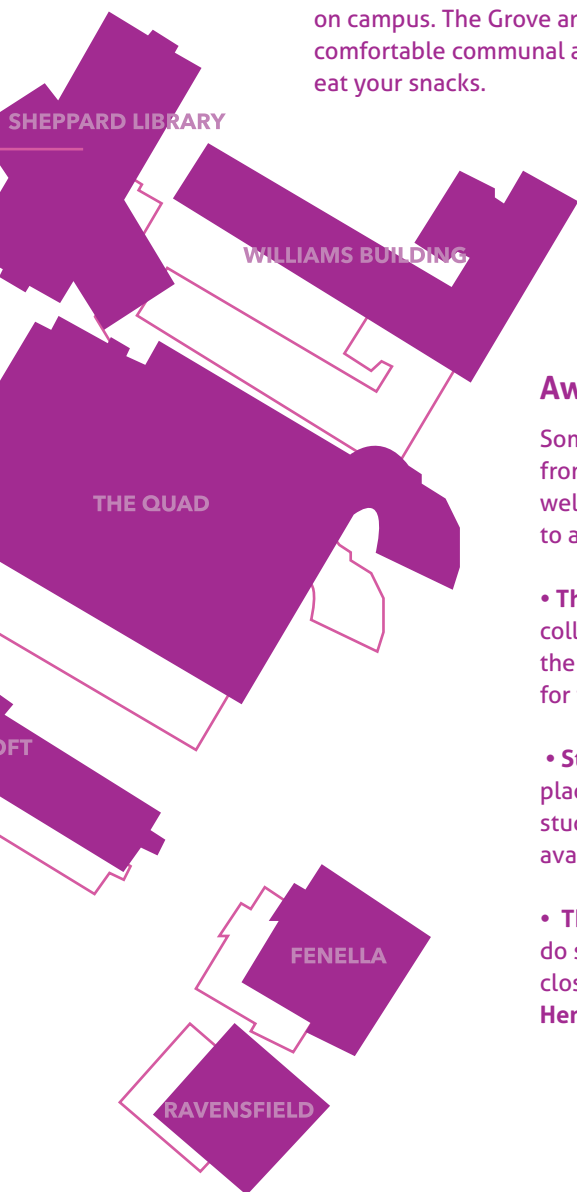
Sheppard Library

Finding a study space in the Library come exam time can be difficult, so try getting there earlier in the day to set up your revision space. If you are a night owl, Costa Coffee in Sheppard Library is now open until 10pm every day and the Library itself is open 24 hours, with Library staff always on-hand to help.



Elsewhere on-campus

Make the most out of the many other available places to study on campus. The Grove and the Ritterman buildings also provide comfortable communal areas where you can study and peacefully eat your snacks.



Away from MDX

Sometimes it can be useful to revise away from campus – many places in London welcome students and design their spaces to accommodate you.

- **The British Library** has one of the greatest collection of books than anywhere else in the world and students can study and/or join for free.
- **Starbucks in Golders Green** is a popular place for MDX students looking for a fresh study space, with plenty of plug sockets available.
- **The Park** - when the sun is out, why not do some revision outside? With lots of parks close at hand, try out **Sunny Hill Park** or **Hendon Park**.

Taking Care of Yourself

During exam time, it is really important to make sure you are looking after yourself and making time for self-care. This can be anything from reading a book to going for a run. Whatever will help you!

Below are some self-care suggestions for you to try out.

Nutrition

When studying, good nutrition isn't often a priority. The right foods and drinks will energise you, improve your alertness and help you achieve the necessary endurance needed for the assessment period.

- Don't skip meals, breakfast in particular.
- Choose quick and healthy meals.
- Meal Prep – prepare some homemade meals and freeze them in individual portions.
- Smart Snack – fresh fruit, dried fruit, yoghurt or nuts will keep you going throughout the day.
- Keep Hydrated – aim for at least 1.5l to 2l of fluid per day.

Sleep

Good quality sleep is vital to feeling and performing at your best.

- Limit caffeinated drinks.
- Make your bedroom a place of rest.
- Don't use your smartphone in bed.
- Have a bedtime routine.
- Aim for 8 hours sleep.

Managing Stress

Stress controlled at the right level can work to your advantage as it can help you to produce your peak performance. So how do you keep it at the right level?

Tips:

- Take frequent breaks - we can only concentrate properly for 30 – 45 min.
- Eat well and don't forget to drink lots of water.
- Keep active. Exercise is one of the most effective ways to de-stress. Even a short walk will do.
- Get support from your family and friends.
- Don't ignore your assessments and avoid self-blame
- Don't set yourself ridiculous goals. You will not be able to revise everything in one day!
- Avoid stimulants. Caffeine, alcohol and drugs impede your energy levels and concentration in the long term.

Learn to Relax

Always make time in the day to relax, whether you are in the assessment period or not. Breathing is an effective short-term solution, especially right before the examination.

- Close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose while counting to four slowly. Feel the air enter your lungs.
- Hold your breath inside while counting slowly to four. Try not to clamp your mouth or nose shut. Simply avoid inhaling or exhaling for 4 seconds.
- Begin to slowly exhale for 4 seconds.
- Repeat steps 1 to 3 at least three times. Ideally, repeat the three steps for 4 minutes, or until calm returns.
- Relaxing can also come in the form of what position you're in. Try out some of these during our Wellbeing sessions – see page 15 for timetable.

How can I learn to relax?



- Knees high enough to reduce tension in stomach muscles
- Legs on chair sideways
- Support right up to behind knees
- Good for relieving lower backache



- Ensure table is close and arms are not stretched out
- Alternatively, kneel beside a bed



- Back fully supported by chair
- Chin and thighs parallel to the floor
- Feet and hands resting easily

- Support your head, neck and knees
- Head should be level, not tilted back or pushed forward

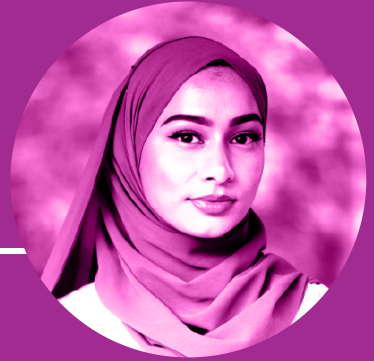


- 'Old' recovery position
- Support under head and knees
- Good if pregnant

- Support under pelvis



Allow yourself time to relax



“

It is important to have a structured time table of when and what to study, at the same time, it is also important to know when to take a break and not overwork yourself. I always found that when or if I started to feel overwhelmed leading up to my exam, it often meant that I was overworking myself and did not have a balance. Take time to watch a movie, be with your friends or family, pray and meditate; any mechanism that works for you to allow your mind to relax.

Leading up to your exam, make sure that you have had plenty of practise by doing exam papers and practise questions. This will help you feel more confident in answering the questions during the real exam. Please remember that this exam period is only for a short period of time and as much as it is important to work your hardest, this should not be done at the expense of your wellbeing. Maintain a balance and carry on.

”

Tahmina Choudhery

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On the day of the exam

Exams can be intimidating, especially if it's your first time sitting them at MDX. To put yourself in the right state of mind, here is some key information on what you can do to ensure that everything goes as smoothly as possible.

What to know in advance

Ahead of exams, have a look over the regulations, available on UniHub (<https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study/assessment/exams/exam-regulations>). It's essential to familiarise yourself with your exam timetable, especially timings and which rooms the exams will take place – know your route too, so there are no surprises on the day!

Once you arrive at the exam location, take the time to try and relax before you go in. This one is far easier said than done, but implementing your own coping strategies, such as breathing exercises, can be an invaluable way of combating exam anxiety. Exams can be stressful and your Students' Union is here to advice and support you through it – together we can make the process easier. Pop into MDXSU if you need support.

What You Need

First things first, ensure you have all the materials you need;

- Pens, pencils, highlighters, and a calculator if permitted
- Don't forget your Student ID
- Bring with you a clear water bottle (remove the label) to the exam.
- Do not keep any notes on you.
- If you need food or other types of drink for medical reasons, please advise invigilator before the exam starts.

What to Know

- Know where the exam is and how to get there.

- Make sure that you read the exam questions properly and that you understand what you are asked to answer.
- Create a plan or a structure on how you will answer the question/s before you start and stick to it.
- Try to answer everything, starting with the questions you know how to answer well.
- Budget your time. Ensure you leave some time towards the end to go over your answers.
- Focus on yourself – do not look around to see how other students are doing. It will just distract you from your main task.

It's over!

What now?



To have a successful time during exam period, it is important to learn to cope with stress and workload. As a previous student at Middlesex University, I found it incredibly helpful to have a diary and work on my time management skills.

Having a structure each day will help you become more productive. I usually planned my day out by starting off with prioritising my assignments by focusing more intensely on the assignments that are worth more of my overall grade and then doing the rest of my assignments that are worth small percentages. Learning how to prioritise takes discipline and practising time management does get better eventually.

Procrastination is an issue among students, and I know what it's like to feel demotivated. How I tackled this aspect is by ensuring I do the formative assessment and by using the feedback to improve my work. What I would do when I am demotivated to revise for exams is to go for a nice peaceful walk, remembering my reasons for studying this passion of mine. That instantly helped me feel refreshed and more motivated to study smarter.

Don't forget to take breaks, whether that's watching a TV show, going for a drink or just playing football (or exercising in general!). Good Luck!



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Support Services

University Counselling

The Counselling and Mental Health service available to all students, provide well-being support and confidential counselling services to help you manage the challenges affecting you emotionally and/or psychologically that you might face whilst studying.

The Counselling & Mental Health team is made up of counsellors and psychological therapists, offering;

- One-to-one counselling/ psychological therapy
- Mental health support and casework
- Group workshops, addressing issues such as starting university, stress management, overcoming procrastination and psychological blocks to study
- Referral to other services where appropriate

To refer yourself for support, go to <https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/support/counselling-and-mental-health>

Once you refer yourself, they will offer you an initial assessment via email. Sometimes these emails can go to people's junk email boxes so please check there regularly.

For more information please email at: cmh@mdx.ac.uk or call 020 8411 4118

Drop-in Sessions

The Counselling and Mental Health Team offers a drop-in service if you are feeling distressed, anxious or have a concern you would like to discuss. Come and talk to them by just turning up at Sunny Hill House between 2-3pm, Mondays to Fridays. There is no need to book an appointment, just bring your student ID along with you.



Sunny Hill House, Middlesex University, The Burroughs, London NW4 4BT

For more information please email at: cmh@mdx.ac.uk or call +44 (0)20 841 14118

Students' Union Advice Service

The MDXSU Advice service offers independent advice on a range of academic issues, providing non-judgmental, confidential and unbiased advice. You can schedule a meeting, which will take place at MDXSU (downstairs in MDX House).

The MDXSU Advice service offers advice and support in:

- **Making an appeal to the University**
- **Making a complaint to the University**
- **Responding to an allegation of academic misconduct**
- **Representing yourself at a University Disciplinary hearing**

To organise a meeting with your Students' Union Advice team, email studentadvice@mdx.ac.uk or call +44 0(2)0 8411 6450.

To find out more, visit www.mdxsu.com/advice

SilverCloud

- Middlesex University is now offering SilverCloud to all registered students and staff, a free online self-help service to help anyone experiencing a variety of emotional challenges.
- SilverCloud offers secure, immediate access to online CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) programmes, tailored to your specific needs to support you in setting yourself goals, problem solving and building up your life skills. These programmes have demonstrated high improvement rates for depression and anxiety.
- It's flexible – access it anywhere, on your computer, tablet or mobile phone and work at your own pace.
It's easy to use - interactive tools and activities make your experience interesting and motivational.

Sign up to SilverCloud today at mdxwellbeing.silvercloudhealth.com/signup

Disability Support Services

Alternative Exam Arrangements

Students wishing to obtain support in exams, due to a disability, specific learning

difficulty, medical issue or injury who have not been assessed yet, please contact the Disability and Dyslexia Service. Students with permanent conditions who have previously received provisions during exams do not require a further assessment.

Once you have been assessed by the Disability Support Service and confirmed that you are entitled to provisions for your exams, e.g. extra time and/or use of a PC – you will be emailed to your student account on what these arrangements are. You must go to the exam venue that is advised in the email, and not the venue that is shown in your exam timetable as you may not receive your provision.

Examples of individual exam adjustments and accommodations are:

- Extra time
- Taking your exam in a room with a smaller number of students
- Being able to bring food/drink/medication into the exam room
- Use of specialist equipment (e.g. ergonomic keyboard)
- Use of a computer

Disability Support Service

Sunny Hill House, Middlesex University



The Burroughs, NW4 4BT



+44(0)20 8411 4945



Email: disability@mdx.ac.uk

FAQs

When and where is my exam?

The exam timetable will be available on UniHub. Please, ensure that you check the timetable for any last-minute changes.

If my exam is taking place in more than one room, how will I know which room to go to?

You will be allocated a room depending on your surname. There will be a list of these exams displayed on UniHub indicating which room you will need to go to. You must go to the room that has been allocated to you. Arrive to the exam room in advance.

Can I take food and/or drink into the exam venue?

You may take only clear bottles with the label removed. No food is allowed unless you have medical reasons. In that case, please, let the invigilators know before the exam starts.

Am I allowed to take my mobile phone or any other electronic device into the exam?

You cannot use any electronic device during exams unless it is a permitted calculator. All electronic devices must be switched off and placed under your table in the exam room.

What do I do if I have a disability/injury and need support?

If you have already been assessed by the Disability Support Service, you will be emailed to your University email account what the arrangements for your exam are. If you have not been previously assessed, you **MUST** contact the Disability Support as soon as possible. Tel: +44 (0)20 8411 4945 or on disability@mdx.ac.uk.

What do I do if I have two exams on the same day?

You will need to contact UniHelp and advise that you have an exam clash. You will then be contacted by the Exams Team via your university account to confirm your arrangements. You will take both exams on the same day and will be supervised. That is necessary as you will not be permitted to have contact with any other students between exams. You will remain under exam conditions until you have completed the second exam of the day. You will not be able to use your phone during this supervised period.

What if I cannot attend the exam/my performance was affected by extenuating circumstances? (Sickness, religious reasons etc.)

You will need to complete an extenuating circumstances form as soon as possible and submit relevant evidence. Please, see more information on extenuating circumstances here - <https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study/assessment/extenuating-circumstances>

What if I am late for my exam?

You are allowed to enter into the exam room up to 30 minutes after the exam has begun. Ensure that when travelling on the day of the exam, you plan to arrive with sufficient time in advance.

What if there is a fire alarm during my exam?

You will need to wait for instructions from the Exam Invigilator. You will be under exam conditions and must NOT talk to each other or use your mobile phone. Every effort will be made to re-start your exam.

Where can I get more info on exam rules and regulations?

Please, see the University Regulations and The Assessment Regulations. It is your responsibility as a student to familiarise yourself with them. Visit <https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study/assessment/regulations>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank every team that participated on making this project happen. It could have not been possible without you.

Student Engagement

Student Welfare Advice Team

Progression & Support

Disability and Dyslexia Service

Library Liaison

Sports

Peer Assisted Learning

Student Counselling and Mental health

Chartwells

MDXSU Student Groups

MDXSU Campaigns and Projects

MDXSU Student Communities & Development

This guide is full of information to help you through exam season including tips to de-stress, revision ideas and how to get extra support.

If you have questions about your exam or need more support, you can get help here:

For Exam Related Queries

UniHelp

020 8411 6060 (UK)

0044 208 411 6060 (International)

Opening times:

Monday - Friday: 8:30am - 9:30pm (UK)

Saturday & Sunday: 11am - 6pm (UK)

After 6pm is the least busiest time to call.

Face to Face:

Come and see us in the Sheppard Library, Hendon campus.

Current opening times (UK only)

Monday – Friday, 8:30am - 9:30pm (GMT)

Saturday – Sunday, 11am - 6pm (GMT)

Or visit UniHelp Online to submit a query.

For Support

The Counselling & Mental Health team

✉ cmh@mdx.ac.uk ☎ 020 8411 4118

MDXSU Advice team

✉ Studentadvice@mdx.ac.uk

🌐 www.mdxsu.com/advice

☎ 020 8411 6450