

MAKE -IT- HAPPEN







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 find a way to relax. 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



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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 & family you are isolating with (e.g. via the online conferencing service, Zoom)*
- *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, I would listen to lo-fi playlist that helped me to concentrate and I would sometimes change my working location - during times of isolation this could be in different rooms in the house / flat or in the garden. 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,

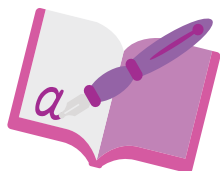
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Revision tips

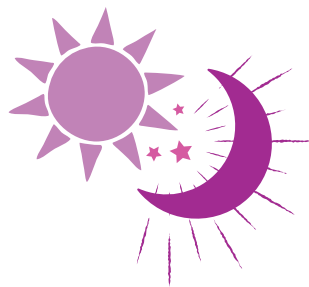
Get Organised



Everyone is now studying from home and it's important to treat your day like a study day to keep a healthy routine. Set your alarm, get up and out of your pyjamas, as if you were going to the university. 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.

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.



Create a space in ways that work for you

Some of us aren't morning people and there's no best place or time to work, so let revision work around you! You might be competing with others in the household, but try to mark your territory e.g. customise your workspace and place physical objects around you. Make it comfortable and set boundaries with others - if you're sharing communal areas like the kitchen or living-room, agree on set periods/times when you can use it alone and uninterrupted.



Talk to People

Talk to people, 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. You can now do this via many online platforms, whether it be WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams...the choices are endless!

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. It is important that you keep some of your routine, especially when things get stressful. This can be phoning home, chatting with friends online, taking time to exercise or watching a film.



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.

GET ORGANISED

Try plotting your day and stay organised to make the most out of your revision time. You can use the minutes at a time, allowing you to work hard but still kept alert.

This timetable is split into eight 45-minute sessions, with 15-minute breaks in between. We've left a suggestion. Feel free to adapt it however works best for you!

		TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
AM		9 - 9.15	decide your goals		
	SESSION 1	10 - 10.45			
	SESSION 2	11 - 11.45			
	SESSION 3	12 - 12.45			
lunch					
PM	SESSION 4	13.30 - 14.15			
	SESSION 5	14.30 - 15.15			
	SESSION 6	15.30 - 16.15			
	SESSION 7	16.30 - 17.15			
	SESSION 8	17.30 - 18.15			
		18.15-18.30	review your progress		

the revision timetable below to plan your exam prep. The average person can only focus for 45

space for you to set out and review your revision goals, but remember this template is just a

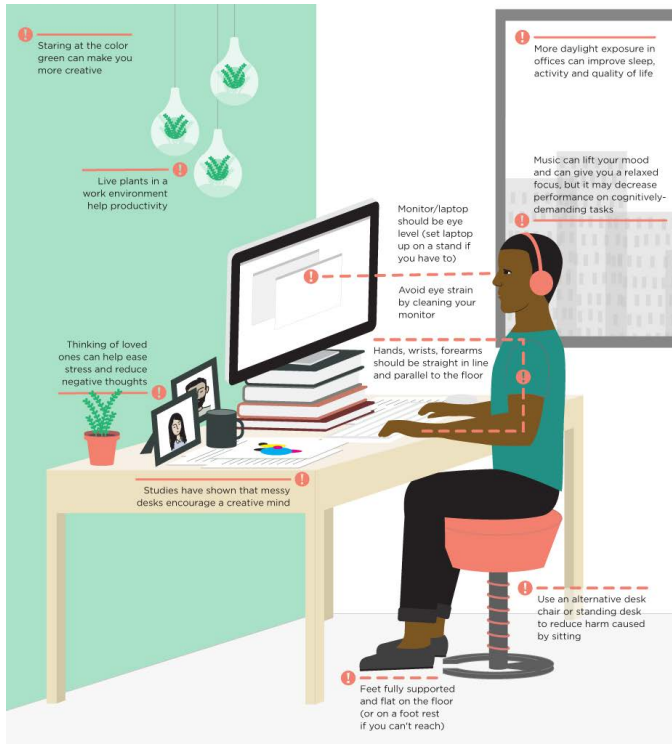
WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Goals for the day		

h

and plan for tomorrow

Study Space

Try to set up a dedicated study space, wherever you are. This may be a home office, your dining table or even your ironing board! Avoid using your sofa, a lounging chair and your bed. Make sure that you open a window from time to time to get some fresh air.



Ground Rules

Whether in a family home or a shared accommodation, set some ground rules with the other folks who share your space. Let them know when you will be attending online classes and/or will be revising, to avoid any disruptions to your study plan.

Remote Access

The University has put together a useful information on resources, guides and information to help you succeed in online learning. Have a look at unihub.mdx.ac.uk/coronavirus-covid19/studying-from-home to see what is available to you.

Finding Motivation

When you need it the most... sometimes motivation isn't there. It can take a bit of self-reflection to help you get in to the right mood. One way is through writing some things you're grateful for. Use the Gratitude Assessment below as a guide to motivate yourself.

Three amazing people in my life

1.

2.

3.

Three great unique talents and skills I possess

1.

2.

3.

Three ways in which my life is abundant and prosperous (e.g. friendship, hobbies etc.)

1.

2.

3.

Three great experiences I have had are...

1.

2.

3.

Whenever you struggle with your motivation and feel like giving up, come back to this.

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.
- Clear your head before bed. Try meditation or breathing exercises.
- 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



Wellbeing Weekly Register

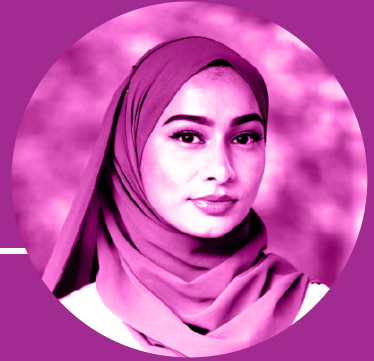
Having a weekly checklist helps you commit to doing the things you said you were going to do long term – your goals – edit the table to suit you!

TIME	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
Behavior/Actions					
Nutritional Breakfast					
Revision Plan					
Drink 1.5+ litre of water					
Meal Prep					
Scheduled Study breaks					
Time dedicated to relax					
Exercise					

g after the mood you said it in has left you. The suggested table below will help align yourself to

RI	SAT	SUN	Achieved	Goal	Net

Allow yourself time to relax



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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, talk to 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.

”

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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 and now a lot of them will be conducted in an online form. 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: unihub.mdx.ac.uk/study/assessment/exams/exam-regulations. It's essential to familiarise yourself with your exam timetable, especially the timings the exams will take place. This is very important if you are doing an online exam from home – this allows you to plan ahead and avoid wasting time that could be spent doing your exam.

Try to relax before you start doing your exam online. 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. Get in touch with 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
- Have your Student ID at hand
- Have water close and readily available to you
- If your exam is over 2hours, have snacks at hand
- Make sure you let your family and housemates know about your exam time and seclusion that is needed to avoid any distractions.

What to Know

- Know what time your exam is and how to get the exam paper / have the exam paper ready.
- 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.
- Make sure you know where to submit your exam (e.g. TurnItIn etc.)

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 walk or exercising in general! Good Luck!



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Support Services

Librarian Support

If you need any support with finding or accessing library resources, searching literature, referencing or accessing online tutorials, get in touch with the Library Team.

Get in touch Monday to Friday 9am-5pm

Chat online

Submit an online Query

Learning Enhancement Team (LET)

Further, Learning Enhancement Team is offering online tutorials for Academic Writing and Language and Maths, Stats and Numeracy. **Book your appointment today.**

Accessing University Software

You can access AppsAnywhere on your personal devices, follow the instructions below:

- 1) From your web browser type in: *AppsAnywhere.mdx.ac.uk*
- 2) If it's the first time logging in, the AppsAnywhere server will notice that the device does not have the Client
- 3) Follow the instructions on screen to carry out the installation of the client

Further, you are now able to download software such as SPSS, Minitab, Nvivo, Adobe Creative Cloud & Read and write. Visit *unihub.mdx.ac.uk/coronavirus-covid19/studying-from-home* for more information.

University Counselling & Mental Health Support

The Counselling and Mental Health service available to all students, provide wellbeing support and confidential counselling services to help you manage the challenges affecting you emotionally and/or psychologically that you might face whilst studying. If you need some psychological support, please download and complete the service's Call back Request Form and send it to cmh@mdx.ac.uk. Please, include your contact number in the email.

External Mental Health & Crisis Support

Local NHS Trust Mental Health crisis support

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, dial 0300 0200 500. You can call this number to get support or advice 24/7.

Text Shout to 85258 (free) from anywhere in the UK for support, *available 24/7*

Call The Samaritans on 116 123 (free) for support, *available 24/7*

If you do not feel that you can keep yourself safe, speak with your GP, go to A&E or call 999 if you are self-isolating.

More crisis and emergency support including CALM (a helpline for men or those who identify as male), and Switchboard (an LGBT+ helpline) available on UniHub.

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 offer 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

Big White Wall (BWW)

As an MDX student, you have access the Big White Wall, a well-established online platform that gives you the opportunity to connect emotionally and anonymously with others, in a safe forum with 24/7 moderation by trained professionals. BWW has a range of resources and programmes to enable you to express yourself in any way you choose – For example, through art and/or music therapy, self-help materials to explore your feelings and improve your own wellbeing, or simply to get things off your chest in a safe online space.

To access the BWW platform, simply go to **www.bigwhitewall.com** and use your university email address to sign up.

Fika

Fika is an emotional fitness app and includes 'packs' – skills development based on themes - skills that help you in all areas of your life. Some of the packs include: Goal Power, Pump up Your Positivity, Flex for Change, Relationship Strengthener, Confidence Booster, Stressbuster, Daily Goals, Daily Gratitude. You also only have to use it for 5 mins every day to reap the rewards!

Download the app for free on ***apple*** and ***google play*** and when signing up, select MDX from the list provided and then sign up using your university email address, then create a password.

Fika is about accessing daily 5-10 minute workouts on topics such as employability, motivation, resilience, confidence and life 'hacks'.

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, you will be emailed to your student account on what these arrangements are.

Disability Support Service



+44(0)20 8411 4945



Email: disability@mdx.ac.uk

FAQs

When and where is my exam?

Where the University has offered an alternative to your planned assessment this information will be communicated via My Learning. Deadlines for submission will be available on myLearning.

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.

What if I cannot attend the exam (due to sickness, access to internet etc.)

Where appropriate your Programme team have already allowed for those students who may need a short extension of up to 14 days. It is not possible in this period to make individual requests for short extensions. If you cannot meet the deadline set, a deferral will be applied to the next assessment period.

For assessments due since March 2nd 2020, students wanting a deferral to the next assessment period (including alternative assessment if this an option to you) will have this automatically granted and there is no need to complete an Extenuating Circumstances Form. Your submission at the next assessment period will not be capped.

What if I am currently working towards assignments or assessments that requires studio/workshop access?

Your Programme teams have been working to develop alternative assessment methods and these will be communicated to you by email or posted on My Learning. Please continue to check your emails regularly.

What if I need to use specialist software?

For specific programmes that utilise specialist software (including Adobe, Avid and Autodesk), the University is working to provide offsite access where possible. More details about this, where relevant, will be sent to you by your Programme Leaders. You can find more information about accessing resources from home on UniHub.

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.

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

Contact UniHelp via their Chat service and online query form between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

For Support

The Counselling & Mental Health team

 cmh@mdx.ac.uk

MDXSU Advice team

 Studentadvice@mdx.ac.uk

 www.mdxsu.com/advice