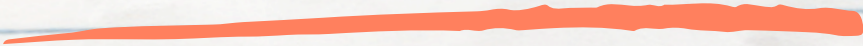


THE STUDENT BLOG



EXAMS,
REVISION AND
SUPPORT AT UNI



CHIARA



Durham
University



UNIVERSITY: DURHAM UNIVERSITY

COURSE: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

FAVOURITE SCHOOL SUBJECT: MATHS! BUT I'VE ALSO ALWAYS LOVED
LANGUAGES, SO FRENCH AND SPANISH!

HOBBY: RUNNING/ YOGA

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS DURING EXAM TIME, AND WHAT YOU DO TO PREPARE:



“Exam time is a stressful period for everyone, it’s not just you! I definitely feel the pressure as exams approach and start to worry about how much revision I’m doing and if I’m preparing enough. These feelings are normal, and people will face exams differently. The best way to stay calm is to prepare in advance! The only way you will feel you are ready for the test is if you’ve done the revision to back it up.

Everyone will prepare for exams in different ways. Flashcards, Quizlet, practice tests, reading out loud... there are endless ways to revise. What you need to do is find which method works best for you. What kind of a learner are you? Visual? Auditory? Will creating notes for everything help you revise or will it waste your time? It took me a long time to figure out the best way for me to revise, and even now, as a university student, I’m still exploring different ways. Just remember, there is no deadline for this. You can explore as many revision methods as you want as long as they are actually preparing you for the exam. Few people just have one method, it’s all about a combination so you don’t get bored.

Personally, I’ve found that making notes from lecture slides/presentations in my own words, so that I can break down complex information, is really helpful. Some people find it more useful to handwrite their notes, which is also fine! It just takes longer, so I tend to use my laptop. However, before university, I would always handwrite because it helps with muscle memory! Then, from these notes, I would make lots of flashcards that have short answers, typically 1-2 sentences in bullet points, focusing on the key information. Everything I needed to know would be in those flashcards. And then I use spaced repetition apps, such as Quizlet, Anki, or Outlearn for me because Anki does not work on my laptop, to keep testing myself. Spaced repetition works only when you are consistent with it. If you test yourself one time and never again, you will not remember the information. You have to keep testing yourself regularly to store the information in your long-term memory.

And then I’ll do some practice questions to test myself on the information I’ve learned.”

IT CAN BE CHALLENGING MANAGING YOUR TIME AND STRESS DURING REVISION AND EXAMS – TELL US HOW YOU STAY MOTIVATED, AND THE STUDY TIPS THAT WORK FOR YOU:



“It is definitely a struggle managing your time when exams approach. You have to fit in time for revision alongside your daily routine, which can include classes, sports, extracurricular activities, and spending time with friends and family. I’ve always struggled with giving myself enough time to revise during exam season. What has worked for me is making a revision timetable. Not a heavily detailed one, that has something for every hour of the day, but a general daily timetable that allows you to list a couple of important things you need to do that day. Perhaps on Monday I’ll look at topic 1, and then on Tuesday topic 2. And then at the end of the week I’ll go over everything I’ve learned during the week to make sure I’ve stored the information.

Of course, some people will find it more helpful to have a fully structured, hour by hour, schedule. That definitely will make it harder to not stick to the schedule, but it can be restrictive if something unexpected comes up. As I’ve mentioned, you can try out these timetables. Maybe start with a structured one, if it’s too fixed you can make it a general timetable. Or if you find a rigid timetable helps keep you disciplined, then you can use that. Motivation is definitely an interesting concept. I’ve learned that it is less about motivation and more about discipline. If I’m being honest, I am rarely motivated to revise for my exams. You will find that most people will agree. So instead of trying to convince yourself to sit down and revise, hold yourself accountable. Go to a library and don’t leave until you’ve done what you have to do. If I don’t study for an hour, I can’t go out with my friends. Have a group study session where you can’t talk until you’ve completed your work. Things like these have really helped me stay disciplined and shift my attitude from ‘I don’t want to do it’ to ‘I have to do it’. In the end, all your revision and preparation will benefit you and will make you feel so much better after the exams. Stay disciplined.”

TALK TO US ABOUT THE RANGE OF SUPPORT AVAILABLE AT YOUR UNIVERSITY, AND HOW IT'S HELPED YOU:



“One of the great things about Durham University is that there are truly so many resources you can use for help with anything. Especially when it comes to preparing for exams, I’ve really relied on the support given from Durham to help me revise. While every course is different, I assume all courses work in the same manner when it comes to the resources and support offered. However I cannot guarantee this, so the following support is specific to the Psychology Department.

Firstly, everyone gets an Academic Advisor that they can go to when they need help with anything. This is really helpful because it is a one-on-one meeting with an experienced lecturer/professor at the university that has years of experience helping students and can offer you lots of advice on how to prepare for exams. Take advantage of your advisor and ask them any questions you have!

Secondly, the course offers drop-in classes every week that you can attend if you are unsure about anything or have any questions about the material. This is incredibly helpful because in a lecture you may be too shy to ask the lecturer or you may not have the opportunity to. Therefore, you can ask any and all questions you have in the drop in class!

Durham also uses Blackboard Ultra for its learning content, and there are discussion boards specifically for any questions students have about exams. People use these all the time, and the lecturers respond almost immediately, which is so helpful because then people can see the answer to a question they may have also had.

Durham University itself also offers a lot of support during exam season. There are many exam preparation sessions, either run by colleges or the university itself, which help people with revision and exam skills. These can be general exam skills or specific to the course.

Overall, Durham is really great with supporting students during the stressful exam season, and there are so many resources for us to use if we are struggling. Most universities will have similar resources to these, so it is up to you to take advantage of them!.”

IF YOU COULD PASS ON 1 PIECE OF STUDYING ADVICE, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

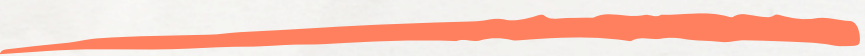


“This is a hard one! There are so many little pieces of advice I would love to share, but if I had to narrow it down, I would say start early. I know you’ve probably heard this before, but that’s because it is so so important. I always regret not revising earlier because it leads to more stress as the exams approach. If you start early, even just by making your notes and flashcards as you are learning the content, it will be so much easier for you in the end. Give yourself time, don’t cram everything in the last week before the exam. Maybe that has worked for you before, but it won’t work at university where the content is much harder and you have to be a lot more independent when it comes to keeping up with the content.

Make a plan early. Have a visual layout of your revision schedule over the couple of weeks or even months before the exam so you can see what your revision will look like. Then, if anything comes up, you can change the schedule around to suit you. Keep the schedule flexible, because unexpected things always come up. And always remember to go over what you have learned.

Start earlier than you think you should. It doesn’t mean cramming one entire topic in one day, but splitting that topic over the week or even a month if you need it. Start broad and get more specific as the exam approaches. Allow yourself plenty of time to go over anything you struggle with.”

THE STUDENT BLOG



TELL US IN THE
COMMENTS WHAT TOPICS
YOU'D LIKE OUR
PARTNERSHIP ASSOCIATES
TO COVER!