

U&

Some useful exam tips...

A Step by Step Guide to
Getting the Results you want

Contents

<u>Step 1:</u>	Study Preparation	04
<u>Step 2:</u>	How to Study Effectively	06
<u>Step 3:</u>	Sample Study Timetable	07
<u>Step 4:</u>	Exam Preparation	09
<u>Step 5:</u>	Exam Checklist	10
<u>Step 6:</u>	Exam Performance	12
<u>Step 7:</u>	Healthy Body = Health Mind	13
<u>Step 8:</u>	After the Exams	14

Step One

Study Preparation

Checklist before you sit down to study

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 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 a power point, e.g. bedroom, library, etc.

☐

I have an accessible study area available for early morning and late evening study sessions.

☐

I have a study area that is well lit, well ventilated and of a comfortable temperature.

☐

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 period.

☐

Step Two

How to study effectively

To get the grades that you want, you must be willing to accept that you have to work hard. Prior to the exams, you will have two weeks of no lecturers. These two weeks should be focused on structured studying. When the exams start, you can then use the days in between exams to revise and catch up on all key facts. This way you are less likely to panic. If you have done the work, all you can do is go into the exam and do your best.

Key Points to Studying Effectively

Study Timetable Set up a study timetable for the two weeks prior to the exams (see step three). Make an agreement with yourself that you will study a certain amount of hours each day and what you will achieve within those hours. Remember to allocate time for recreational activity – this allows a certain amount of leeway in your day so that if you ‘run over’, you have some time to play with. This also reduces the feelings of guilt or frustration when you do take time out – as you have factored it in.

Energy Levels Notice when you have the most energy during the day and schedule study time for those periods. Some people are more alert early in the day and others in the evening or late at night.

Study Schedule Break down the study schedule into exams to be taken, number of topics to be studied for each subject and the number of hours given to each subject, each day.

Set Goals Goal set for each day and for each week of study, e.g. you must have all topics covered and extra notes taken by end of Week One. Week Two can focus on revising key facts, text, formulae, practising graphs and looking at past exam questions.

Highlighting Use highlighters to highlight key information during study so you can refer back easily. Keep highlighting use to a minimum as too much use will decrease its effects.

Extra information Allow time for searching the internet for extra facts and figures that will help you answer exam questions more effectively. Up-to-date statistics and figures help bring more depth to your answers.

Step Three

Sample Study Timetable

Monday & Friday		Tuesday & Thursday	
9.00am – 10.30am	Session 1	Morning	Lie in
10.30am – 11.00am	Break	12noon – 1.30pm	Session 1
11.00am – 12noon	Session 2	1.30pmm – 1.45pm	Break
12noon – 1.00pm	Session 3	1.45pm – 3.15pm	Session 2
1.00pm – 2.00pm	Lunch	3.15pm – 4.00pm	Break
2.00pm – 3.30pm	Session 4	4.00pm – 5.30pm	Session 3
3.30pm – 3.45pm	Break	5.30pm – 6.30pm	Dinner
3.45pm – 5.15pm	Session 5	6.30pm – 8.00pm	Session 4
Total – 6.5 hours		Total – 6.5 hours	

Wednesday & Saturday	
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
Total – 6 hours	

- 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 lie in the morning after if you are tired from the night before. 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!



Step Four

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

Exam Timetable Make sure you know what rooms your exams are in and what time they start!

Materials Do you have enough pens, pencils, a watch, calculator, ruler, glasses, student card?

Food for Energy Have a balanced breakfast or lunch before the exam. A meal with lots of carbohydrates and proteins will give the body enough energy to get through the exam, e.g. a fried breakfast with eggs, meats, toast, etc. or a chicken and pasta lunch.

Last minute revision It may help to use blank cards for writing your key notes to help with last minute revision. Also some students prefer to switch off before an exam and leave the notes at home.

Nervous Yes, this is normal — it is adrenalin moving around the body — use this energy to motivate yourself to do well. Focus on positive thoughts to help relax your body and mind.

If you are worried about anything — talk to your lecturer, chairperson, family or friends. Student Support Advisers in the Student Advice Centre are also available Monday – Friday, 9.30am – 5.00pm if you have any concerns and you wish to talk.

Source: [www.dcu.ie/registry/
examinations/checklist.shtml](http://www.dcu.ie/registry/examinations/checklist.shtml)



Step Six

Exam Performance

“You may now turn over your papers”

– What next?

- Write your details, as requested, on all answer sheets.
- Read the exam paper a couple of times to make sure you understand the instructions and questions. Do not dive into writing without first reading the entire paper.
- Calculate how much time you will give to each question and stick to it.
- If you have rough work done at the back of the answer sheet — note it near your answer so the examiner can see it.

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, breath 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. Download this form: www.dcu.ie/registry/forms/pdfs/R30.pdf

Step Seven

Healthy Body = Health Mind

You need energy for the body and for the mind when you are studying and during the exams. Here are a few tips to ace the exams:

Power Food

Smart foods include ‘Omega-3 Fatty Acids’ such as tuna, salmon, eggs and bananas, as they release energy slowly – and iron-rich foods including red meat, breakfast cereal and green vegetables.

Water

The more hydrated you are, the more efficient your brain and body will work. Keep a bottle of water at your study table at all times.

Exercise

During your study break, get out and play football for 30 mins. or go for a 30 min walk/run with friends. During study you can also keep your head, neck and shoulder muscles relaxed. Simple exercises include;

1. Gently roll the neck clockwise whilst breathing in and out slowly and then anti-clockwise (5 times).
2. Put hands on your lap whilst sitting in a chair. Pull your shoulders up, breath in and squeeze muscles. Exhale forcefully and let the shoulders drop.

Relax

Essential oils such as Lavender help reduce anxiety and increase relaxation. Put two drops on your pillow at night or on a handkerchief during the day.

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.
- 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 cold as a salad or,
 - Tuna/pasta salad with wholemeal bread
- 2 glasses of water

Step Eight

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 'Absence from Examinations' form which can be downloaded at:

www.dcu.ie/registry/forms/pdfs/R41.pdf

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 & 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, which can be found on the Registry website at: www.dcu.ie/registry/forms/pdfs/R30.pdf

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** www.dcu.ie/timetables/)

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.

Word of Advice

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 & Development

Useful Contacts

Absent from Exams/Deferral of Exams

Registry – 01 700 5338, www.dcu.ie/registry

Opening Hours

Morning 9.30am to 12.30pm

Afternoon 2.00pm to 5.00pm

Out of Hours Contact

Security – 01 700 5999

Other Contacts

Student Advice Centre – 01 700 7165,

www.dcu.ie/students/advice

Health Centre – 01 700 5143,

www.dcu.ie/students/health

Past Examination Papers

www.library.dcu.ie/index.shtml

Library – www.dcu.ie/library

See web for opening hours

Produced By: Student Support & Development
T 01 700 7165
E student.support@dcu.ie
Ground Floor, Henry Grattan Building
Dublin City University, Dublin 9

**DCU Student
Support &
Development**

to the books...