
CENTRE FOR ACADEMIC PRACTICE

C*f*AP

05 STUDY SKILLS

S4 STARTING TO REVISE

Use this pack to help you to:

- organise and plan your revision
- use your time profitably
- guard against panic!

Are you ready to revise?

When revision is mentioned, it often conjures up a picture of someone poring over a pile of books and papers, usually late into the night, looking, extremely harassed. Of course the most efficient way of revising is to avoid this stressful type of situation, where very little will go into your head and even less will stay there.

First of all you need to work out how long you have before your exam or assessment.

Tick which one of these applies to you:

- More than 3 months
- Between 2 and 3 months
- Between 6 and 8 weeks
- Less than 6 weeks

Response

- 1 You have plenty of time, so don't panic. You don't really need to start a revision programme yet, but read this pack so that you can get some idea of when to start and what to do.
- 2 You have plenty of time, but you should be starting to think about and plan your revision programme.
- 3 You are ready to start on the first stage of revision. You have time to organise yourself, but get started straightaway, so that you avoid last-minute panic.
- 4 You really need to get organised quickly, and to read S5, Active Revision. You may find it helpful to start your revision programme earlier before your next exam or assessment, so that you have plenty of time to revise effectively.

Getting organised

Between 6 to 8 weeks before your exams is the time to get yourself organised. To begin you need to know exactly what you should be doing.

Check that you have:

- the examination dates
- a copy of the syllabus
- a list of topics you need to cover
- copies of past papers.

Assessing your situation

Ask yourself the following questions:

1 *How much time have I left?*

Photocopy the revision timetable on the back page as many times as you have weeks up to your exam. Pin up each week's revision timetable, or keep it in an accessible place, so that you know exactly where to find it when you need it. Put in 'start of revision' and put in the exam or assessment dates.

2 *Is all my coursework complete?*

If the answer is no, you may need to finish your work before revising. On the other hand, you may be able to complete an exam successfully with the work you have already done. You should check with your tutor if you have any doubts and decide on a sensible course of action.

3 *What other commitments do I have?*

Write down the commitments you have during the time up to your assessment.

Response

Look at them carefully. Are you worried about having too many commitments? If so:

- can you put off any commitments until after the exam? Put brackets around these.
- are there any that you could get someone else to do? Put a line through these with a note of who you could ask.

You don't need to give up everything and become a social recluse while you are revising. You will need to relax and there'll be plenty of time for you to go out or do something different if you plan your revision well.

Write the dates of commitments you have left on your timetable. Make arrangements for those commitments you are going to delegate or defer.

4 *Who do I need to involve?*

Write a list of all the people who will be affected by or involved with your revision. Then note down who can help you.

Response

You may find it helpful to talk to these people about what you will be doing and ask them for the help or support you need.

You may be able to get help from all of the following:

- tutors/mentors. Don't be afraid to ask for help
- family; they can give you a bit of peace when you need it. But don't forget to give them some of your time
- friends or other learners. Working together can be useful
- colleagues at work. Get them on your side.

5 Where am I going to work?

If you don't have a place set aside for learning, try to find one now. You may find it easier to have all that you need in one place so that even if you have only a short time to spare, you can sit down and do something worthwhile.

Not everyone can have this luxury, however, so find ways of making what you do have as convenient as possible. For example, if you can use only the dining table and have to clear it for meals, you may be able to organise all that you need in a box, so that it's easy to get at.

6 When shall I work?

You will know when you work best. 'Experts' usually say that we are at our brightest and most alert first thing in the morning, but if you are a night owl, you probably won't agree. You really need to look at yourself and decide how you work best.

If you can face early rising, you may be able to get up an hour earlier than usual and do some revision before the rest of the household gets up and before you go to work or college. If you have young children in the house, it may not be possible to get up before them. Likewise if you can't even start to think before 10 a.m., then you will need to set aside time in the evening.

It is sensible to plan your revision so that you are not working flat out. Build time for rests and breaks into your revision.

7 What are my priorities?

Use a copy of your syllabus and a list of topic areas to plan your priorities. Write down in the two columns:

Things you feel reasonably confident about

Things you don't feel confident about

Response

You may need to allocate more time for revising those areas you don't feel confident about. Decide whether you need to check anything with your tutor.

Action plan

You should now be well organised and ready to plan out your programme of revision. Fill in the following action plan and use this to create a further revision timetable for each week. Refer to the plan frequently during your revision, and make any necessary adjustments.

You may find it helpful to talk over your plan with someone who knows you well.

Date of exam:

Time:

Place:

Materials/equipment needed:

Revision plan

Topic	Total time allocated (hrs)	Revision begins (date)	Revision ends (date)
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