



ASSESSMENT GUIDE





THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

Birkbeck Students' Union presents the **Ultimate Guide to Assessments**. From taking care of yourself and managing stress, to revision tips and organisation ideas, this guide is a one-stop-shop for all things assessment period at Birkbeck.

We've also outlined key information you need to know about sitting your exams; before, during, and after. Most importantly, there's a breakdown of all the different support services you may need to access during this time.

INTRO



I understand how challenging exam season can be. The pressure to excel academically while maintaining optimal mental health and well-being can feel overwhelming.

It can be a challenging period, but with the right strategies in place, you can manage your assessment period more effectively. Embrace resilience, prioritize self-care, and stay connected with others for support. Believe in yourself and your ability to overcome any challenge that comes your way. You've got this!"

– Pedro Malheiro, Student Leader



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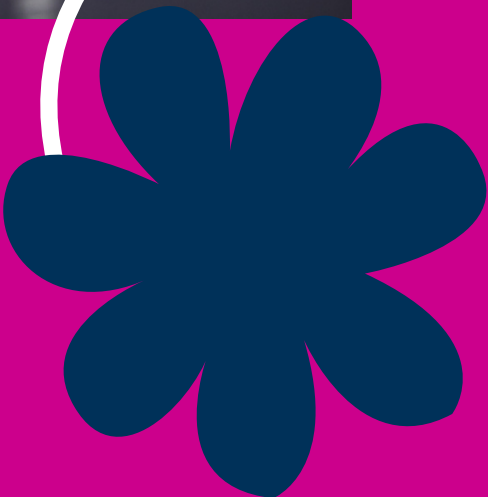
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BEFORE



REVISION TIPS

WORKING IN SHORT BURSTS

I use the popular “**Pomodoro**” technique:



I set a timer for **20 minutes** and **focus** on the subject at hand.

When the timer rings, I reset it for **5-10 minutes** and **take a break**, doing something different to allow my mind to recover.

When the timer rings again, I **repeat** this cycle.

TONYA'S TIPS

If anything distracting pops into my mind, I write it down in a notebook nearby and deal with it on my next break

WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER

Whilst practising past exam papers, I **prioritise the subject areas that reward the highest marks.**

This takes a lot of stress away from trying to understand every little thing. Sometimes during exams, I do run out of time, but I feel much more confident knowing that I prioritised questions worth more.



Tonya Moralez,
LGBTQ+ Officer

REVISION TIPS



Tonya,
LGBTQ+ Officer

REGULAR BREAKS

Anything I need to get done;
I ensure I get done on my breaks.

I'm **flexible with my breaks**,
sometimes stretching 5-15
minutes if feel like I need to.



MY PHILOSOPHY

I do my best and follow smart steps to create success, whilst remaining aware that I can only do what I can. I don't add extra pressure on myself as it's not necessary and I don't compare myself to others.

Everyone has their own standards for success, and the grades they want to achieve, and I cannot speak for anyone else, but **I focus on what I can do, and forgive myself if I cannot do more.** I am realistic about these limits, and this helps me to stay grounded.

REVISION TIPS

IKENNA,
BLACK
STUDENTS'
OFFICER

1. FIND OUT WHAT YOU NEED TO LEARN

by looking at the study guide in Moodle, I make a list of all the content I need to know.

2. CREATE A STUDY TIMETABLE

in which, for each day, I write what topics I will be looking at. I also put aside days in which I will take a break from revision.



3. REVISION

I prioritise revisiting the content that I am less confident in to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the information.

I then test my knowledge and understanding by completing practice questions on Moodle and seeing where improvements have to be made.

I also view past assessments to see a lecturer's feedback – to ensure I don't repeat past errors in any upcoming exams!

MANAGING STRESS

First of all, remember that stress is a normal, even healthy, reaction to a threat (it prepares you for ‘fight or flight’).

If it’s affecting you badly, however, one of the ways to manage it is by focusing on what you can control. It can be a small thing, either to do with your studies or something fun.

We've collaborated with Good Thinking to put some wellbeing tips together.



READ THE
FULL
ARTICLE
HERE

Look After Yourself

Get Organised

Don't Bottle Things Up

Strike a Balance

Don't Panic

GET ORGANISED

Revising can get overwhelming, which is why planning and organising your time can be beneficial to make the most out of your study sessions.

This timetable is split into **45-minute sessions**, broken up by **15-minute breaks** and a longer lunch break, as well as time for a short walk. The average person can only focus for 45 minutes at a time, so **this timetable allows you to work hard while staying alert, and allotting time for taking care of yourself.**

Tip: remember that some days will be more productive than others, and that's okay: this does not mean you've failed!

Just take 15 minutes at the end of your day to review your progress and allow for time to do those tasks the next day.

	TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
AM	8 – 9	Wake up, have breakfast and get ready						
	9 – 9.15	Decide your goals for the day and make a to do list						
	9.15 – 10							
	10.15– 12							
	12.15 – 13							
		Lunch						
PM	13.30 – 14.15							
	14.30 – 15.15							
	15.15 – 15.45	Go for a short walk						
	15.45 – 16.30							
	17.45 –18.30							
	18.30 –18.45	Review your progress and plan for tomorrow						

PS. You can download the timetable [here](#).

WHERE TO STUDY

Wellcome Collection

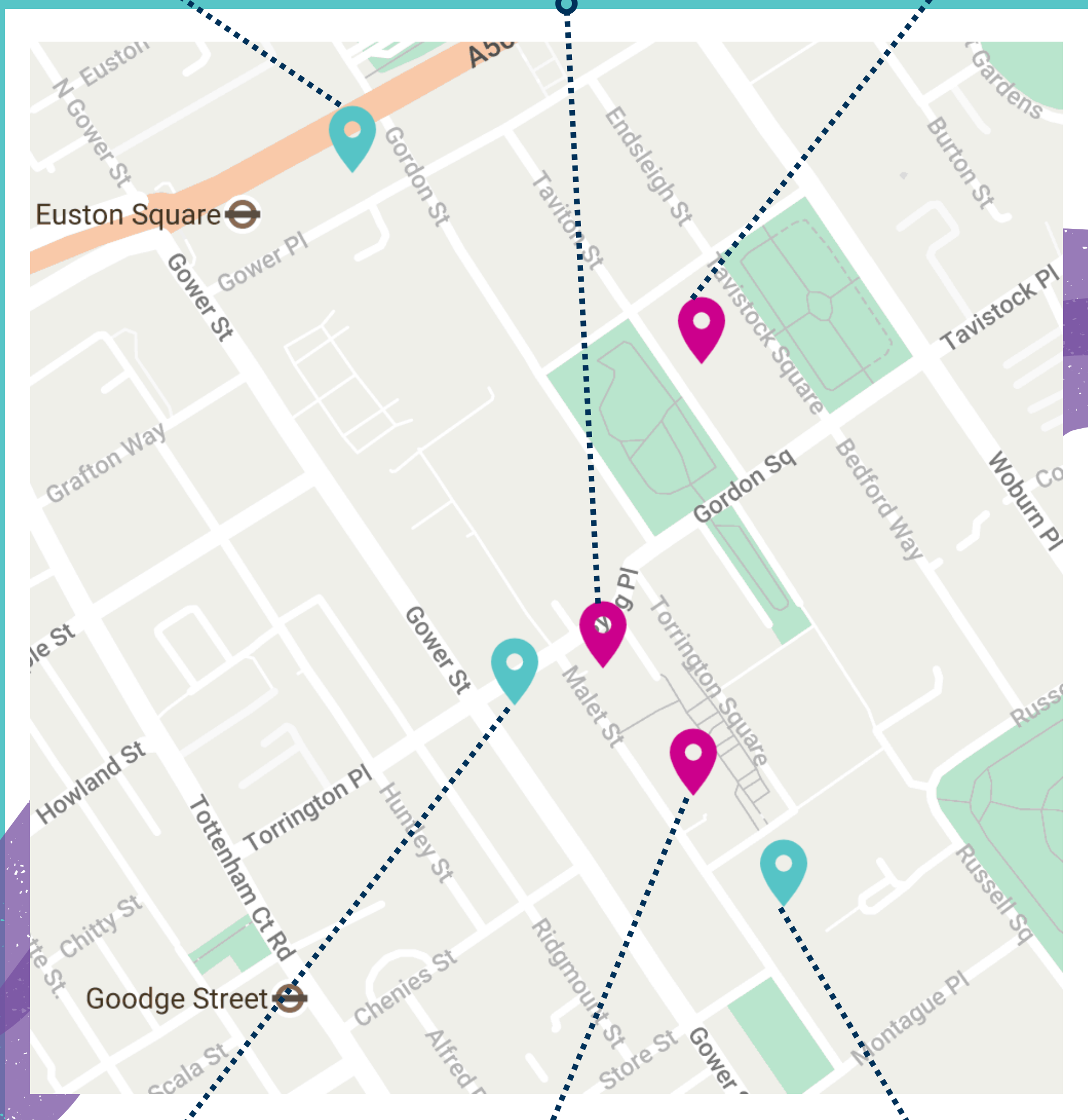
Reading Room; Library; Cafe
183 Euston Rd., NW1 2BE
Tues-Sun, 10am – 6pm

Birkbeck Central

Café, Ground Floor, WC1E 7HY
Daily, 9am – 9pm

Gordon Square

43 Gordon Sq., WC1H 0PD
Mon-Fri, 9am – 10pm



Waterstones

Dillons Cafe, WC1E 6EQ
Mon-Sat 8.30am – 8pm
Sunday 12pm – 6pm

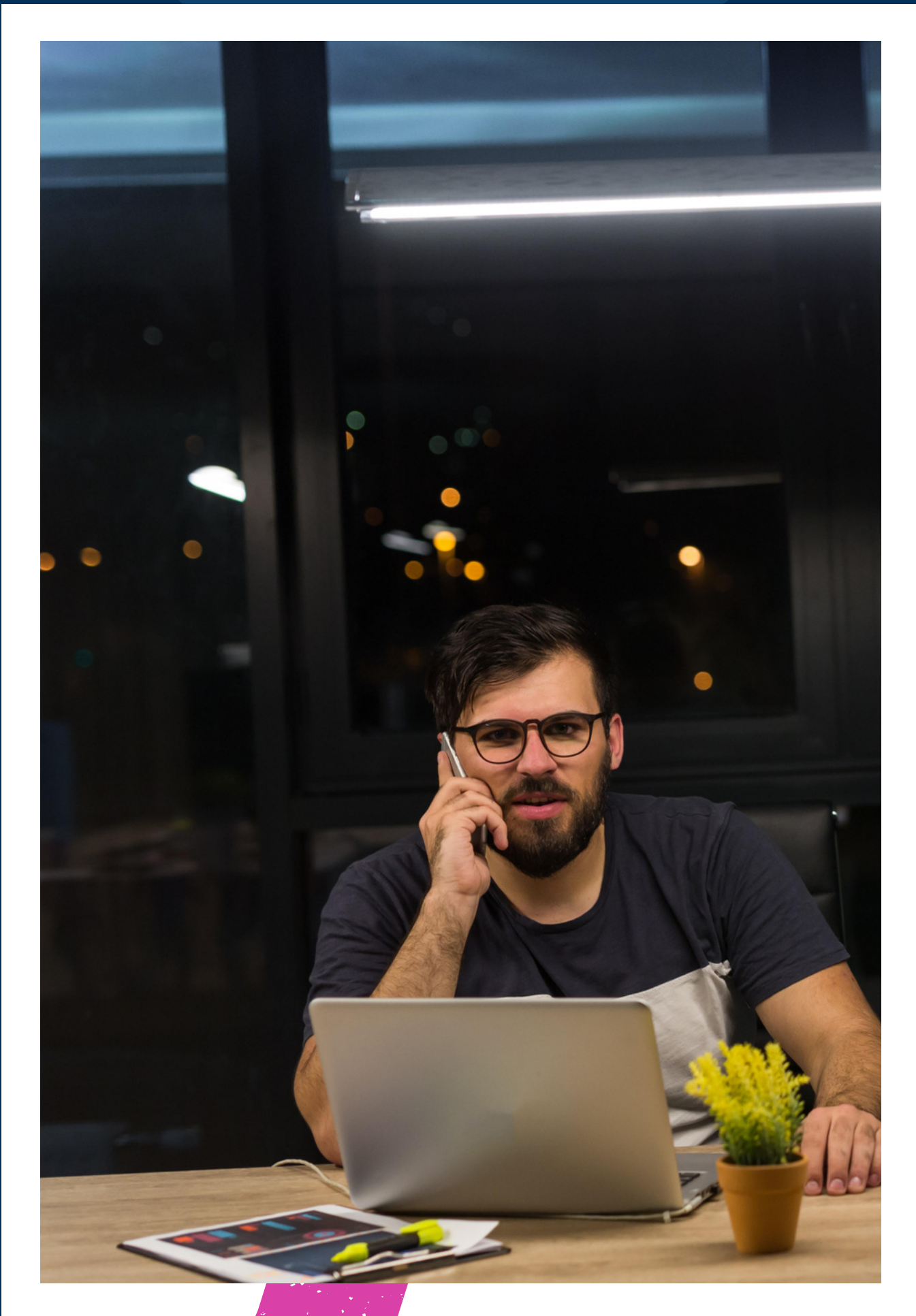
Birkbeck Library

Malet St Building, WC1E 7HX
Daily, 9am – 11.45pm,

Senate House Library

4th Floor, WC1B 5DP
Mon-Fri 9am – 11pm,
Weekends 9.45am – 9pm
[More details here](#)

DURING



CRUNCH TIME 

SITTING EXAMS

101

WHAT TO KNOW IN ADVANCE

Make sure to have a look over these important regulations and guidelines.

Familiarise yourself with your exam timetable - pay extra attention to timings and location.



Tip: Know your route to the venue so you can avoid any travel delays on the day

TONYA'S TIPS

I do a 5-10 minute mindfulness meditation before exams to help me control my nerves

Try to relax (easier said than done), but finding your own coping strategies can be an invaluable way to combat exam anxiety.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

OPENING YOUR EXAM PAPER

Read exam questions properly and make sure that you understand what is being asked.

Before you start, **create a plan** for how you'll answer the question/s.

Try to **answer everything**: start with questions you know how to do well.

Budget your time: ensure you leave some time towards the end to check over your work.

Focus on yourself: ignore how other students are doing.

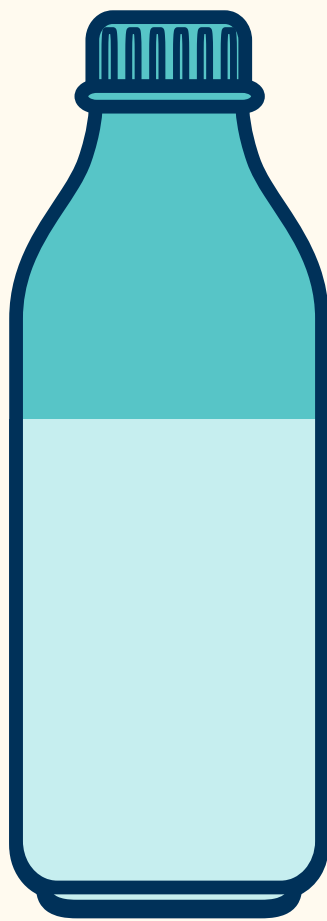
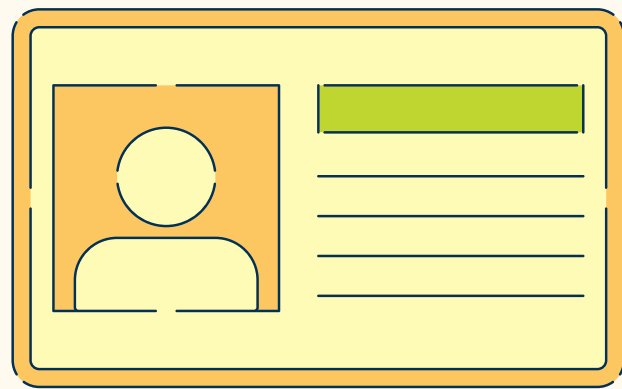


WHAT TO BRING



Pens, pencils,
highlighters

ID card & Exam
candidate number



Clear water
bottle



NO NOTES



Calculator
(if permitted)



TAKING CARE OF **YOURSELF**

Prioritizing self-care is another essential aspect of managing stress and anxiety during exams. Ensuring you're eating well, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep not only helps reduce stress but also contributes to your overall mental well-being. Remember that taking care of yourself is just as important as acing those exams.

– Pedro, Student Leader

I de-stress by **taking breaks from studying** occasionally, **engaging in my hobbies** that include listening to music, watching sports, watching films and TV, reading books and playing video games.

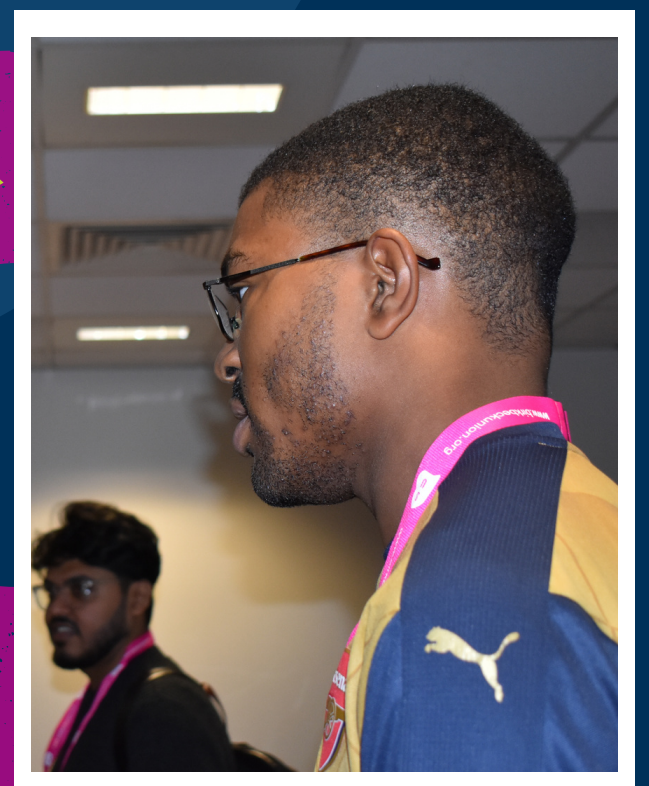


I also **exercise** e.g., jogging – studies have shown that exercise is a great way to decrease stress and is good for our brains.



A **good night's sleep** is also essential during any period to reduce stress and improve overall physical and mental health – I make sure I sleep a minimum of 8 hours each night!

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IKENNA

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF



Hassle-free nutrition is key!

I keep quick and easy food stocked in my fridge, so I don't have to think about what to eat.

Treat yourself!



I buy myself little inexpensive treats where I can and pamper myself at home with bath soaks, little games and fun activities.

Winding Down



In the evening, I enjoy a couple hours to wind down.

I eat dinner, and enjoy something relaxing again, taking a short walk to buy a treat or I'll watch Netflix for a little while.



Incorporating mindfulness techniques, eg. meditation, deep breathing, or grounding exercises, can help you manage anxiety and stress during exam season. Setting aside time each day to practice mindfulness, even if it's just for a few minutes, can have a significant impact on your mental well-being.

- **Pedro, Student Leader**

STUDY SUPPORT

LIBRARY

If you need support with finding, or accessing library resources, searching literature, referencing or accessing online tutorials, contact the Library Team [here](#).

DISABILITY SERVICES

In person & remote appointments are available with the Disability and Dyslexia Service.

Find details about the services they offer and how to go about arranging an appointment [here](#).

Students wishing to obtain support in exams, due to a disability, specific learning difficulty, medical issue or injury must contact the Disability and Dyslexia Service.

Students will be assessed and provision will be put in place where appropriate.

Examples of individual exam adjustments and accommodations are:

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

STUDY SUPPORT

ONLINE TUTORIALS

All students have access to a large range of online academic skills tutorials, including:

Critical Reading and Thinking,
Referencing, Exams, Assignment Writing,
Dissertations, Lecture and Seminar Skills

STUDY SKILLS

There is also online and face-to-face advice, guidance,
and support to help all students develop the skills
they need for academic success.

To access the study skills platform, click the links below.
and use your university email address to sign up.

[Study Skills Moodle](#)

[Live Study Skills Workshops](#)

[Learning Development Tutors and Resources](#)

[Studiosity \(via My Birkbeck\)](#).

AFTER

...AND BREATHE



SUPPORT SERVICES

STUDENT ADVICE SERVICE

There is a range of student services on offer in order to support you during your studies and Student Services should usually be your first port of call when you need any help or information.

[Website](#)

[Contact Details](#)

COUNSELLING SERVICE

Available to all students, providing wellbeing support and confidential counselling services to help you manage the challenges affecting you emotionally and/or psychologically that you might face whilst studying, including:

- One-to-one counselling/psychological therapy
- Self-help resources
- Mental health support and casework
- Referral to other services where appropriate
-

[Website & Contact Details](#)

SU SUPPORT SERVICE

The Birkbeck Students' Union Support Service offers independent advice on a range of academic issues, providing non-judgmental, confidential and unbiased advice - both online and face-to-face. The support service covers:

- Making an appeal or complaint to the University
- Mitigating Circumstances
- Responding to an allegation of academic misconduct
- Representing yourself at a University Disciplinary hearing
- Signposting/referral to other services
-

[Website](#)

[Consent Form](#)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When and where is my exam?

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

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.

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.

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

You should already have been assessed by the Disability Support Service, they will email you with details of the arrangements for your exam.

What if I cannot attend the exam/my performance was affected by mitigating circumstances?

If you need support for any unforeseen circumstances or a recent injury then this can be managed via the Mitigating Circumstances policy which can be found [here](#).

Please ensure that you speak to your Department as soon as possible if any unforeseen circumstances will affect your ability to attend or your performance in an assessment.

If you become unwell during an examination then please alert the invigilators as soon as possible.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

...CONTINUED

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.

What if I am late for my exam?

Please note that travel delays are not an acceptable reason for lateness, and you will not be allowed extra time. In the event of transport strikes/inclement weather or other unforeseen events during the exam period, there will be regular updates on the My Birkbeck website advising you on what to do next. Only in the most severe adverse conditions will exams be cancelled and re-arranged.

If you arrive within a few minutes of the start time of an exam: you will be allowed access to the room, but you will not be allowed any additional time. Please enter the room as quietly as possible and locate an invigilator who will help you find your desk.

If you know that you will be more than 30 minutes late for an exam, please call the Examinations and Assessment Office on +44 (0)20 3926 3028. If your reason for being late is genuine and acceptable, we may be able to seat you in a different room for the full exam length. If not, you will be asked to attend in your allocated room for the remaining exam time if we can confirm that no other candidate has already left the exam.

If you are severely late for examinations, you will not be allowed to sit, regardless of the time remaining.

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

Please see the [University Assessment Regulations](#). As a student, it is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with them.

CONTACT US

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STUDENTS'
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HERE FOR YOU