

## How to get the most out of lectures

"I struggle to keep up in lectures, they go so fast."



Lectures can be **challenging**.

They are usually **fast paced** and **packed full** of information. It can be difficult to discern what is important.

In order to get the most out of your lectures, you should **prepare** for them.

Here are some **general tips** to get the most out of your lectures:

- **Avoid** going out late or drinking the night before, especially for early 9am lectures!

- Try to be well rested, aim for about **7-8 hours of sleep**.
- Be **on time**. Know where the lecture is being held and set aside enough time to get there.
- Sit where you are **most comfortable**. If you are using any assistive technology it might help to sit nearer the front.
- Have **everything** you need: pens, paper, assistive technology etc.
- Try not to use laptops, tablets or phones during a lecture. There is evidence that suggests that laptop use in lectures has a negative impact on a student's learning.

Getting the most out of your lectures can be further broken down into **a three step process**:

1. **Prepare**
2. **Participate**
3. **Review & Revise**

## 1. Prepare

- **Check Blackboard regularly** for lecture slides, messages from lecturers or class handouts. Knowing the content and structure of the lecture will help you plan and make notes.
- Some people find it helpful to print off the lecture slides in advance, and make notes on them.
- **Get familiar** with the content. Think about the lecture title, what is the subject of the lecture? Do a little bit of reading on the subject. The module's reading list will direct you towards appropriate information. For more information, go to the reading list section.
- Go to the **toilet beforehand**, there is nothing more distracting than needing the loo during a lecture.

## 2. Participate

- Be on time, get the best seat that considers your needs and use of assistive technology.
- If you are going to get distracted by your phone, laptop or tablet, put them away.

- If a friend or neighbour **regularly distracts** you, sit somewhere else or with someone in between.
- **Take part** in lectures. If you are uncertain about something, ask, you may not be the only one. If the lecturer asks a question, answer it, it does not matter if you are wrong.
- If you fidget, try squeezing a bit of “**blu-tack**”
- If you lose concentration, try **chewing some gum**.
- **Make notes**. If you miss / don't understand something, leave a gap and carry on. Make a note of which slide you were on, or the subject matter you had to skip.
- Check out **Guide 2 – How to take notes** for tips and strategies on how to make the best notes for you.



### 3. Review and Revise

- To get the best possible grades, it is **vital to review** your notes and lectures as soon as possible. Regular short revision sessions afterwards will also help you maintain your knowledge and understanding.
- Here are some general tips when **reviewing / revising**:
  - a. **Fill in any gaps** you made in your notes.
  - b. Put your notes into **different formats**, for example: flashcards, diagrams, flowcharts, tables or mind maps.
  - c. If you are unsure of a particular topic, do some further reading / research.
  - d. **Discuss** the lecture with your friends / peers. Share / compare notes to get a more rounded view of the lecture. **Be careful** how reliant you are on this. If you need to share notes regularly, you should look at how you take your notes and make adjustments.
  - e. Join or create a **study group**. Study groups are an excellent means for sharing your thoughts and understanding on a subject. You can also share / discuss notes and revision materials.

- f. Set yourself **tasks or exercises** such as making an academic poster on a lecture or module, creating online multiple choice questionnaires or answering short essay questions.
  
- g. When it comes to regular revision and pre-exam revision, **sit in a similar environment** to the one you will be conducting your exam in. So no music, in a quiet room, sat at a desk.
  
- h. If you are stuck or do not understand something, **get in touch with the lecturer**, they will be more than happy to help.

