



**Union of Students 'n Ireland**  
*Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn*

# EXAM PREP

ARE YOU READY?

**Your guide to getting through  
college exams, filled with tips  
from expert organisations.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
**[www.usi.ie/exams](http://www.usi.ie/exams)**

# Preparing yourself

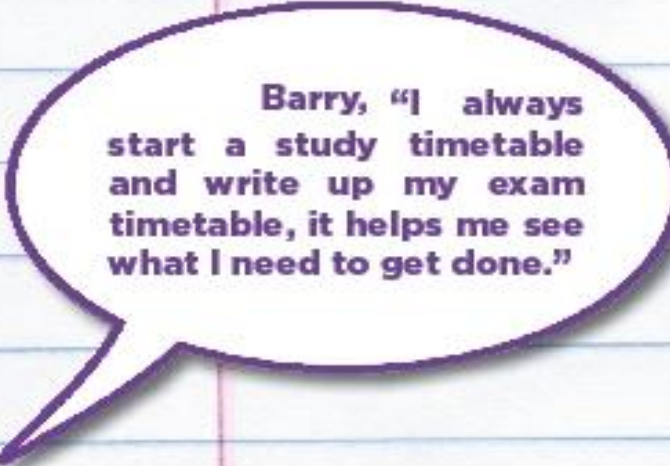
Exams are an inevitable factor in student life. The weeks before the exam can be very stressful, take some time to do exam prep and get ready, print notes, talk to the lecturer, anything that will help. Here are some tips:

- Make a study plan. Ask your friends or classmates to help with this and try to be realistic about how much study you can get through every day.
- Don't compare yourself to your friends. Everybody has a different way of preparing for exams and what suits someone else might not work for you.
- Avoid cutting out large parts of the subject/module/course just because you don't like them. Those topics might just be the ones that end up on the exam paper.

## Studying

Study, the 5 letter word we dislike but it comes hand in hand with exams. One of the best ways of getting through exam time is to have a good plan for how to study well, look after yourself and manage your time.

- Arrange your study space to ensure that it's warm, quiet and comfortable and free from distraction.
- Don't feel obliged to just sit in front of a book with a highlighter; there are many different ways to study. You should pick whatever works for you. Different courses in college require different methods of study.
- Condense your notes into 2-4 simple revision sheets with key phrases or equations to revise before the exam.

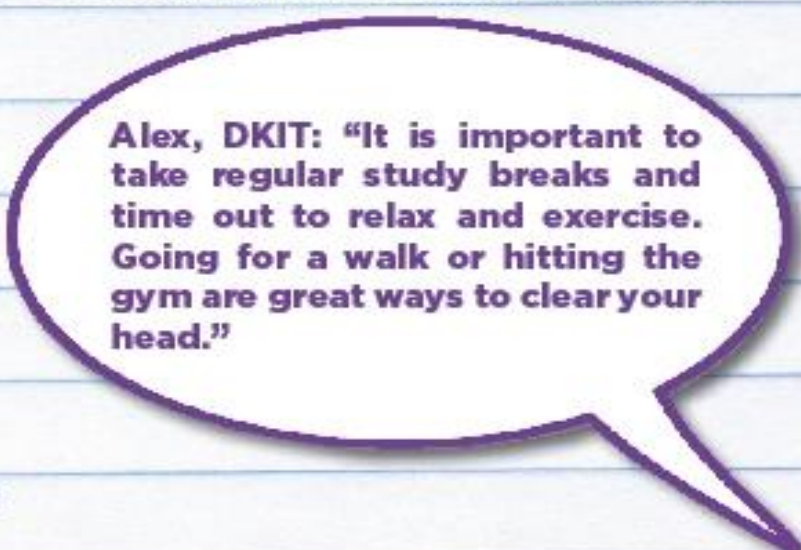


**Barry, "I always start a study timetable and write up my exam timetable, it helps me see what I need to get done."**

## Avoid Exam Stress

Exam stress can be overwhelming. If it all seems to be getting on top of you, there are plenty of things you can do to keep calm and get perspective.

- The power of positive thinking - Spend time with people who are positive, It will rub off on you. Avoid negative thoughts, such as "everyone else seems better organised, while I'm struggling."
- Be active. Don't spend all your time inside studying. Go out and do something active, go for a walk or a run.
- Don't leave yourself without time to study - If it's too late to revise properly and you're cramming, then listen to your body and rest when you need to. Otherwise you risk burn out.



**Alex, DKIT: "It is important to take regular study breaks and time out to relax and exercise. Going for a walk or hitting the gym are great ways to clear your head."**

## Easily distracted?

Try downloading an app on your internet browser that can block various website for a certain length of time. For example:

- Promodoro
- selfcontrolapp.com

## The Night Before

- Check your timetable for the correct time and location of your exam.
- Set your alarm before going to bed and plan how you will get to the exam venue, with plenty of time to get settled.
- After study, switch off your brain to sleep, do something to relax.
- If you have trouble sleeping try natural sleep aids like herbal teas or meditation.
- Get everything you need for your exam ready (stationery, calculator etc.)

## The Day of the Exam

- Make sure you have worked out how you will approach the paper: how many questions do you need to answer? How long do you have for each question?
- Eat light balanced meals with slow energy release foods
- Keep hydrated: your brain is a machine. Avoid energy drinks.
- If you are worried about nerves or anxiety address it before your exam - take a walk or talk to someone such as the Welfare Officer in your Students' Union.

## During the Exam

- Take a deep breath before opening your paper and use the first few minutes to read each question marking the ones you will attempt.
- If you have questions or concerns about the paper, alert the invigilator.
- Keep hydrated - that's why you brought the water.
- Stick to your time allocation for each question.
- Don't give up: if you are running into trouble and can't focus, take a break or start another question.
- Allow time at the end of the exam to review your answers. Key ideas often pop up when re-reading the text that you've written.

## After the exam

- Make sure you have handed up everything you need to submit.
- File away your exam paper with your notes
- Take a short study break; get some downtime before tackling the next module.
- If you are feeling stressed or worried, talk to someone you trust.

# Exam 'What ifs'

## What if I'm late for the exam?

Go to the exam room/hall and see if you will be admitted. Contact your department, the exams office and/or your Students' Union if you run into difficulty.

## What if I miss an exam or I'm too sick to sit the exam?

Every college has a procedure for instances where a student misses an exam. Contact your department and your Students' Union. Make sure to keep doctors' notes, as you may need to submit a copy.

## What if I sat the exam but I'm not happy with it?

If there was an issue with the paper, contact the lecturer responsible as soon as the exam is over. If you are unhappy with how the exam went for you, wait for the results before taking action. You can then talk to your Students' Union about appeals and/or viewing the script. Remember, the Students' Union and the exams office are there to talk and support you with exam results.

## Who to talk to

- Your classmates
- Your lecturer
- Your Students' Union
- Examinations Office
- College Counsellor
- Medical/Health Centre
- For a list of other support services visit: [www.pleasetalk.org](http://www.pleasetalk.org)
- To ask the expert on exam stress: [www.reachout.com/asktheexpert](http://www.reachout.com/asktheexpert)
- For a list of support agencies including on campus support: [www.headsup.ie](http://www.headsup.ie) or Freetext HEADSUP to 50424
- For exam tips from other young people & other advice: [www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)
- Visit [www.usi.ie/exams](http://www.usi.ie/exams) for more tips, advice and a printable USI Study Planner (pictured below).

The graphic features a purple-bordered box containing a study planner. At the top left is a yellow 'EXAM PREP ARE YOU READY?' badge. To its right are logos for 'USI STUDENT UNION' and 'please talk .org'. The planner is divided into three main sections: 'CHECKLIST' with columns for 'EXAM/SUBJECT', 'PREP DONE?', 'HELP?', and 'PROGRESS'; 'EXAM TIMETABLE' with a grid for scheduling; and 'STUDY TIMETABLE' with columns for 'TIME', 'MONDAY', 'TUESDAY', 'WEDNESDAY', 'THURSDAY', 'FRIDAY', 'SATURDAY', and 'SUNDAY'. A small URL 'www.usi.ie/exams' is visible at the bottom right of the planner.

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