

Guide to **GETTING THROUGH EXAMS**



THIS GUIDE PROVIDES INFORMATION ON:

- Before your exams
- Sitting your exams
- Options for when you have received your results
- De-stress before the test



WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM ILL THIS TERM OR SOMETHING ELSE HAPPENS WHICH AFFECTS MY PREPARATION?

In line with University recommendations:

- If your preparation is affected by illness (including mental health) and/or other severe grave cause (for example a bereavement), the most important thing is to seek help and let someone know early (e.g. your College Tutor, Nurse, DoS or college Tutorial Office). It is important to obtain evidence (medical or other) early.
- Your College may submit an 'exam warning' via CamSIS. An 'exam warning' will act as a contemporaneous indicator on your student record that you have experienced a problem during the examination period. If the College subsequently makes an application for an exam allowance, the details of the exam warning will be included. If the College does not make an application, no action is taken in relation to the exam warning. Warnings can be submitted at any point throughout the assessment period and normally no later than the last day of your examination.
- If you are a Postgraduate Research Student (PhD, EdD, MD, BusD, MLitt, MSc) and war/conflict, or natural disaster have significantly impacted on your research, when you submit your work, you can include a Research Impact Statement which will allow you to detail the restrictions or difficulties you have encountered (do not include information of personal circumstances or health issues; there is another procedure for this). This will be passed to the Examiners who will consider this information when assessing the work submitted. Further details can be found in the Research Students Impact Statements guidance.

www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/files/research_impact_statement_guidance.pdf

I HAVE A DISABILITY AND/OR A ILLNESS, WHAT SUPPORT CAN I GET WITH MY EXAMS?

- If you have a disability and/or an illness and have not already applied for an examination arrangement, you should speak to your College Tutor or Tutorial Office as soon as possible to discuss what examination arrangements might be available for you. Your College must request examination arrangements on your behalf to the EAMC (Examination Access and Mitigation Committee). You should also contact the Accessibility Disability Resource Centre (ADRC).
- You will require a full assessment report from a Educational Psychologist or other evidence to support the awarding of reasonable adjustments. You may have already been issued with a Student Support Document (SSD) with recommendations for adjustments in examinations, however the SSD does not in itself constitute a request for reasonable adjustments.
- Please note the deadline for applying for examination arrangements is the division of Lent Term. However, if you have missed the deadline still speak to your college as the EAMC may consider requests after this deadline but there could be limitations on what arrangements can be applied to your exams at this late stage.
- Requests do not carry over from year-to-year and so must be applied for each year.
- If you are a student undertaking a research programme there is a different way to apply for exam access arrangements which can be found here:
www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/exams/students/postgraduate-exam-information/examination-access-arrangements/exam-access

Further information can be found here:

- universityofcambridgecloud.sharepoint.com/sites/UoC_CambridgeStudentsExams/SitePages/Reasonable-Adjustments.aspx
- www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/current-students/exam-access-arrangements

WHAT DO I DO IF I'M FEELING UNWELL ON THE DAY OF MY EXAM?

In line with University recommendations:

- If you feel unwell on the day of your exam and do not think that you are able to sit your exam, then you should get in contact with your College Tutorial Office (during office opening hours), the Porters' Lodge (outside of College Tutorial Office opening times), or the College Nurse as soon as possible to let them know that you are unwell. You will be marked as absent from the exam and your College will discuss what mitigations may be appropriate.
- **In person exams** - If you feel unwell during an exam, alert an invigilator and they will be able to take the appropriate action. If you need to leave the venue before the end of the exam, your College Tutorial Office will be alerted and you should follow up with them immediately.
- **Online exam** - If you become unwell during the assessment and are unable to continue, you should submit the work you have completed so far and inform your College Tutorial Office immediately. They will provide you with guidance on what to do next.
- You should also contact a medical professional (where appropriate) for medical support. Applications for allowances require relevant, contemporary and specific evidence of illness.

Absence from an examination

- A student who misses an examination altogether without good cause, such as illness, or who arrives more than 30 minutes late will receive no credit for that examination. This will seriously affect the overall class and result achieved.

Further information can be found here:

- [Guide to Exams for Students 2024 / 25](#)
- [Exam Information for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught courses](#)
- [Student Guide to In-Person Exams](#)
- [Student Guide to Exams Taken on Moodle](#)
- [Student Guide to Exams Taken on Inspira](#)

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF SOMETHING HAPPENS IN THE EXAM WHICH AFFECTS MY PERFORMANCE?

Technical Support and Difficulties

- **Technical issues during your exam** - If you have technical difficulties during the exam that are unrelated to Moodle or Inspera, you should do your best to resolve these and take screenshots or photos of the display on your screen as evidence of the incident. If you are able to resolve the issues and return to your work, you will still need to submit on time. After the exam, you should send any evidence you documented to your College Tutor and Tutorial Office, with an explanation of what occurred.
- **Moodle** - If you are unable to download the question paper or experience other forms of technical difficulty accessing the course, contact the Moodle helpdesk at moodlehelp@uis.cam.ac.uk. The helpdesk is monitored Monday to Saturday, 9am to 5pm BST. If the query is outside of these hours, email them at any time so the helpdesk will be aware when it opens.
- If you have difficulties submitting your work at the end of the exam, email your file to onlineexams@admin.cam.ac.uk. You will receive an automated response which you should consider as confirmation of receipt. You may continue trying to submit to Moodle for up to 30 minutes and the above email will demonstrate completion within the upload period.
- Further guidance can be found on [How to use Moodle for exams](#)
- **Inspira** -The Inspira Integrity Browser software must be downloaded onto the device you will be using for your exams before you arrive for your first exam. Inspira should be tested before you arrive at your exam to ensure the software works as intended before your exam day. You can do this in your own time. There will also be an opportunity to do this in-person at a Student Bootcamp where members of the central exams team will be available to help.
- If you encounter difficulties accessing the exam via the Inspira portal, or if you have interruptions to your internet connection whilst finishing your exam in the Inspira portal, there will be technical support available on site.
- Further guidance can be found on [Using Inspira for your Exams](#).



WHAT CAN I DO IF I FAIL OR UNDER-PERFORM IN MY EXAM(S)?

- Ask your Director of Studies or Supervisor if they can check that the scoring has been added up correctly.
- If no error can be found in the scoring and you have reasons to believe that your results have been affected by any of the following:
 - A procedural irregularity in the examination process that has adversely impacted your examination results;
 - Demonstrable bias or the perception of bias within the examination process;
 - The withdrawal of academic provision, which has had a demonstrable impact on the examination itself of which the Examining Board were not aware; (this ground is for students whose assessment results have been adversely affected by industrial action)
 - Extenuating circumstances - serious illness or other grave cause;
- Contact your College Tutor or speak to the Student Advice Service (www.cambridgesu.co.uk/support/advice/contact/) to discuss your options. Do this as soon as possible after receiving your formal results as there are time constraints when submitting an application to the University.

Further information and guidance can be found here as there are different procedures depending on your degree:

- [Flowchart of processes for examination-related issues \(cambridgesu.co.uk\)](#)
- www.cambridgesu.co.uk/exams
- www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/mitigation
- www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/examination-reviews
- www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/about-us/EAMC

FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

In line with University recommendations:

- If you are in your final year and your results are not what you had hoped, you can book an appointment with an Advisor at the University Careers Service to discuss your career options www.careers.cam.ac.uk.
- If these were not your final exams, you can talk to your DoS/ Supervisor to see where you went wrong and what you can improve on next year.



DE-STRESS BEFORE THE TEST

Preparing for exams can be stressful and at times may feel all-consuming. Therefore it's important to remember to take breaks and practise self care alongside your studies to support your physical and mental wellbeing. This section uses the 'Five ways to Wellbeing' to consider different ways in which you could take breaks during the exam period.

CONNECT

Connection is all about feeling valued and close to others which means different things for everyone. This could be connection to family, friends, partners, animals, or nature. Here are some examples of ways to connect to others and take a study break:

- Take time away from revision to check in with a peer, either from your course or college, and have a chat about something other than upcoming exams and deadlines.
- Reach out to an SU Campaign or Society that peaks your interest.
- Have a go at growing some plants, or look after any houseplants you already own.

BE ACTIVE

Exercise is great for our physical and mental health. Being active is all about doing what you can. You can also combine slower paced activities, such as walking with others, to exercise whilst socialising.

- If you are already part of a sports club or regularly go to the gym or exercise classes try to keep these within your routine.
- Try to physically leave your workspace, stretch and move your body at regular intervals.
- Be kind with your expectations of yourself during the exam period, make sure to check in with yourself and listen to what your body needs.

TAKE NOTICE

Taking notice is about trying to be present in the moment. It can take a lot of practice especially during stressful periods, but it can be a great way to check in with yourself and how you are feeling.

- Try Mindfulness. Apps such as [Headspace](#) could help you practice mindfulness. Please note that a fee might be required.
- Take some time to clear your workspace at the end of the day, or complete other daily tasks that help you to feel comfortable in your living space.
- Take notice of how you are feeling, check in regularly and take a break when needed.

LEARN

Learning doesn't have to only relate to your academic studies, it also involves being curious and trying new things. You could incorporate learning into destressing by:

- Study with a friend or peer, you can also remind each other to take a break!
- Trial studying in different spaces and at different times to learn more about what works best for you.

GIVE

Acts of giving and kindness can help to promote our wellbeing by increasing feelings of self worth and connection. There are many small ways we can give back which can also help us to take a break from our studies:

- Give yourself permission to take a break from your studies.
- Taking the time to ask friends, peers or family how they really are and actively listening to their responses.
- Cooking a meal or making a drink for a peer or housemate. This could help remind them to take a break too!

SLEEP AND FOOD

Whilst not part of the official five ways to wellbeing, sleep and nutrition are essential to our wellbeing. Here are some tips to support with these areas:

- Try to make your bed each morning and if possible don't revise from bed.
- Give yourself time to relax after revising before you try and get to sleep.
- Try not to drink too much caffeine or alcohol as this might impair your ability to sleep well.
- Try to eat breakfast on the day of the exam, even if you don't feel like it, to keep your body and brain well fueled.

STUDENT MINDS TIPS FOR EXAM STRESS

Here are some other tips from Student Minds on dealing with Exam Stress, you can read the whole resource here:

www.studentminds.org.uk/examstress.html

- Take frequent breaks. We can only concentrate properly for 30-45 minutes. When you do take a break make sure you don't stay at your desk.
- Drink lots of water!
- Think about where and when you work best. You can find designated study spaces across the University and the City via Space Finder, where you can filter by noise level, facilities and atmosphere to find the ideal spot to suit your needs: spacefinder.lib.cam.ac.uk/
- Don't cut out all the enjoyment from your life. It's impossible to focus without giving your brain rest by doing other activities. Make sure to add in time to relax into your timetable.

EXAM INFORMATION

You can visit the University's webpages on general exam information.

- [Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Courses Exam Information](#)
- [Postgraduate Research Course Exam Information](#)

PREPARING FOR THE EXAM - IN PERSON

- Pack any materials or equipment you will need for the exams the night before your exam takes place. For full lists of what you can and can't take with you check out the in-person guide to exams below.
- Make sure you have a bottle of water with you.
- Check your exam venues ahead of time to ensure you know where to go and how long it will take you to get there. You might be in a different place to your peers taking the same exam so be sure to check your timetable thoroughly. You must be at the exam venue 20-30 minutes before the exam starts so make sure to plan your journey accordingly.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAM - ONLINE

If you are due to have an online exam this year make sure you:

- Are familiar with the process and technology involved ahead of time.
- Plan your exam space ahead of time; you need a private quiet room, a desk, chair and adequate lighting.
- Make sure you know whether you are allowed to type your exam or if you are expected to handwrite, scan and upload your submission.

If you have any concerns relating to revising, exam stress, or the logistics of in person or online exams, speak to your Director of Studies or Tutor ahead of time.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

If stress or anxiety relating to exams is impacting upon your wellbeing or mental health, you can reach out for some additional support from the following areas:

- Cambridge SU out of hours helpline directory:
www.cambridgesu.co.uk/support/outofhours/
- University Counselling Service:
www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/
- Accessibility Disability Resource Centre:
www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/
- Nightline (Term time only): 7pm to 7am during term time.
01223 74444 cambridge.nightline.ac.uk/
- University Counselling Service Exam Preparation Workshop
www.studentsupport.cam.ac.uk/workshops





WE OFFER FREE, CONFIDENTIAL & INDEPENDENT SUPPORT TO ALL CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.

You can come to the Student Advice Service with any concerns you may have, whether it's the first time you have a question or as a last resort. Students often come for advice on:

- Exam worries
- Welfare Concerns
- Academic issues
- Supervisor Relations
- Mental Health Issues
- Personal Issues
- University & College Regulations
- Disciplinary Issues
- Financial Concerns
- And much more...

Our friendly Advice team includes professional advisors. We can provide support by email, phone, or video call. If we can't help you directly, we will find someone who can.

Contact Us:

We're located in the Students' Union on the 3rd Floor of the University Centre, Granta Pl, Mill Lane, Cambridge, CB2 1RU

Our office hours are Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm, all year round (excluding Bank Holidays).

0808 1641 222 | advice@cambridgesu.co.uk

**The Student Advice Service is
brought to you by:**

