

SUB

ASSESSMENT GUIDE



S
U



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



Ellie Rivera
Education Student Leader

Dear students,

Exam season is here and during these hard times (trust me, I know how hard it can be!) it's imperative to remain proactive and well-prepared, this cannot be overstated. Amidst all of the of study sessions and assessments, maintaining a proactive stance not only fosters academic success but also safeguards one's physical and mental well-being.

Stay ahead by cultivating a structured study plan well in advance. Establishing clear goals and deadlines allows for effective time management, reducing last-minute cramming and mitigating stress levels. Moreover, prioritize regular breaks and adequate rest in order to remain your best and prevent burnout.

Nourish your body and mind with nutritious meals, exercise, and sufficient sleep. Recognize that self-care is not a luxury but a fundamental component of academic performance. Engage in activities that rejuvenate your spirit, whether it's a leisurely walk, meditation, or spending time with loved ones.

Remember, it's not just about surviving the exam period; it's about thriving amidst the challenges it presents. Seek support from peers, professors, and support services whenever needed. Together, we can navigate this academic journey with resilience and grace.

Stay ahead, stay well, and embrace the journey towards success. Every step taken to succeed in your exams and stay well will be worth it!

CONTENTS



BEFORE

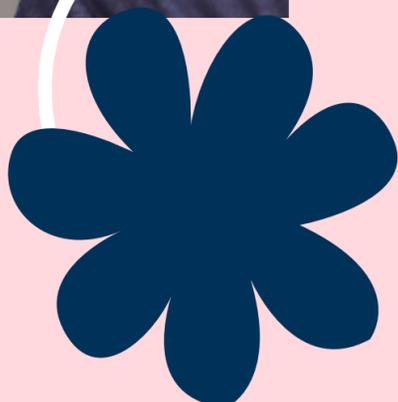
- 6 | Revision Tips
- 9 | Managing Stress
- 10 | Get Organised
- 11 | Where to Study

DURING

- 13 | Sitting Exams 101
- 15 | Taking Care of Yourself
- 17 | University Support

AFTER

- 20 | Support Services
- 22 | FAQs



BEFORE



PREP TALK



REVISION TIPS

SET BREAK INTERVALS

Plan regular breaks into your study schedule.



For example, **take a 5-10 minute break** for every **25-30 minutes of study**.

This technique, known as the **Pomodoro Technique**, can help improve focus and productivity.

SOCIALISING

If you're studying with friends or family, take short breaks together to chat and socialize. Just be mindful not to let these breaks extend for too long.

STAY POSITIVE

Maintaining a positive attitude can greatly impact your revision success. Celebrate your progress and stay motivated by focusing on your goals.



Remember, everyone has their own unique learning style, for me I find these tips useful below. However, feel free to adapt these tips to suit your preferences and needs.

Taking breaks during revision is essential for maintaining focus and preventing burnout.



Lily,
BAME Students'
Liberation Leader

REVISION TIPS



**Lily,
BAME Students'
Liberation Leader**

CHANGE YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Sometimes, a **change of scenery** can help break up the monotony of studying.

Consider taking your break in a different room or **going outside** for some fresh air.



REWARD YOURSELF AND KNOW WHEN TO STOP

Give yourself something to look forward to during your breaks by planning a small reward. It could be as simple as enjoying a piece of chocolate or watching a funny video.

Be mindful of your energy levels and take longer breaks or stop studying altogether if you start feeling tired or overwhelmed.

Pushing yourself too hard can be counterproductive.

Remember that the key to effective breaks is to use them intentionally to recharge your mind and body so you can return to your studies feeling refreshed and focused.

REVISION TIPS

MIRIAM,
WOMEN'S
LIBERATION
LEADER

START EARLY AND ORGANISE

Begin your revision well in advance of the assessment date. Create a revision timetable that allocates specific times for each subject or topic, ensuring you cover all the material before the exam.



UNDERSTAND, DON'T MEMORISE

Focus on understanding key concepts rather than memorising facts. Use diagrams, flowcharts, or mind maps to visualise how ideas connect, making it easier to recall information during the exam.

PRACTISE WITH PAST PAPERS

Get hold of past exam papers or sample questions related to your subject. Practising with these can help you familiarise yourself with the format of the questions, time management, and identify areas where you need more revision.

STAY ACTIVE AND HEALTHY

Regular physical activity boosts your brain function, memory, and overall mental health, making your study sessions more productive. Ensure you're also getting enough sleep and eating a balanced diet to keep your mind sharp.



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](#).
P.P.S. Feel free to adapt this in a way that works best for you.

WHERE TO STUDY

Wellcome Collection

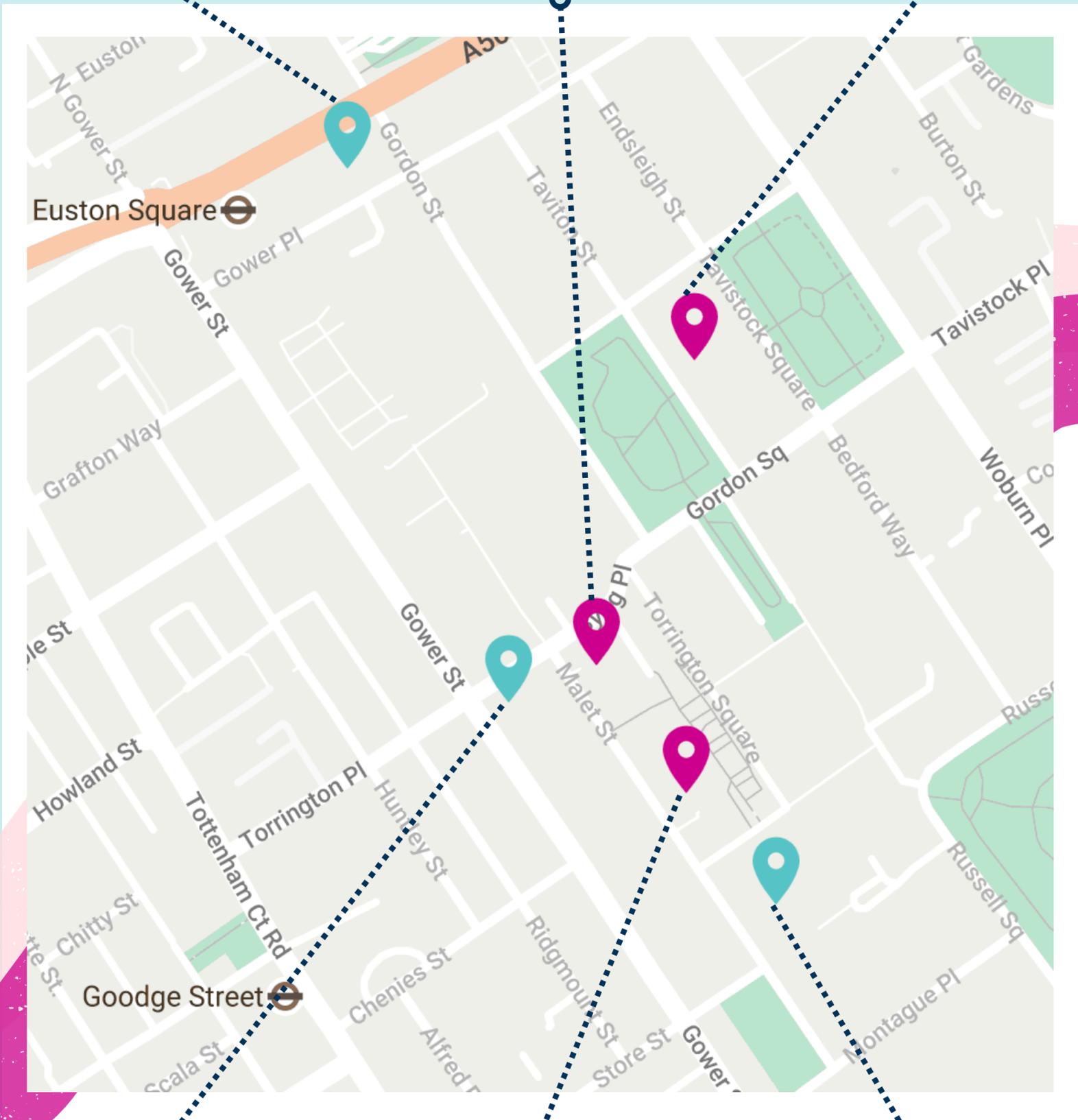
Reading Room; Library; Cafe
183 Euston Rd., NW1 2BE
Tues-Sun, 10am – 6pm

Birkbeck Central

Café, Ground Floor, WC1E 7HY
Mon-Fri, 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 – 5pm

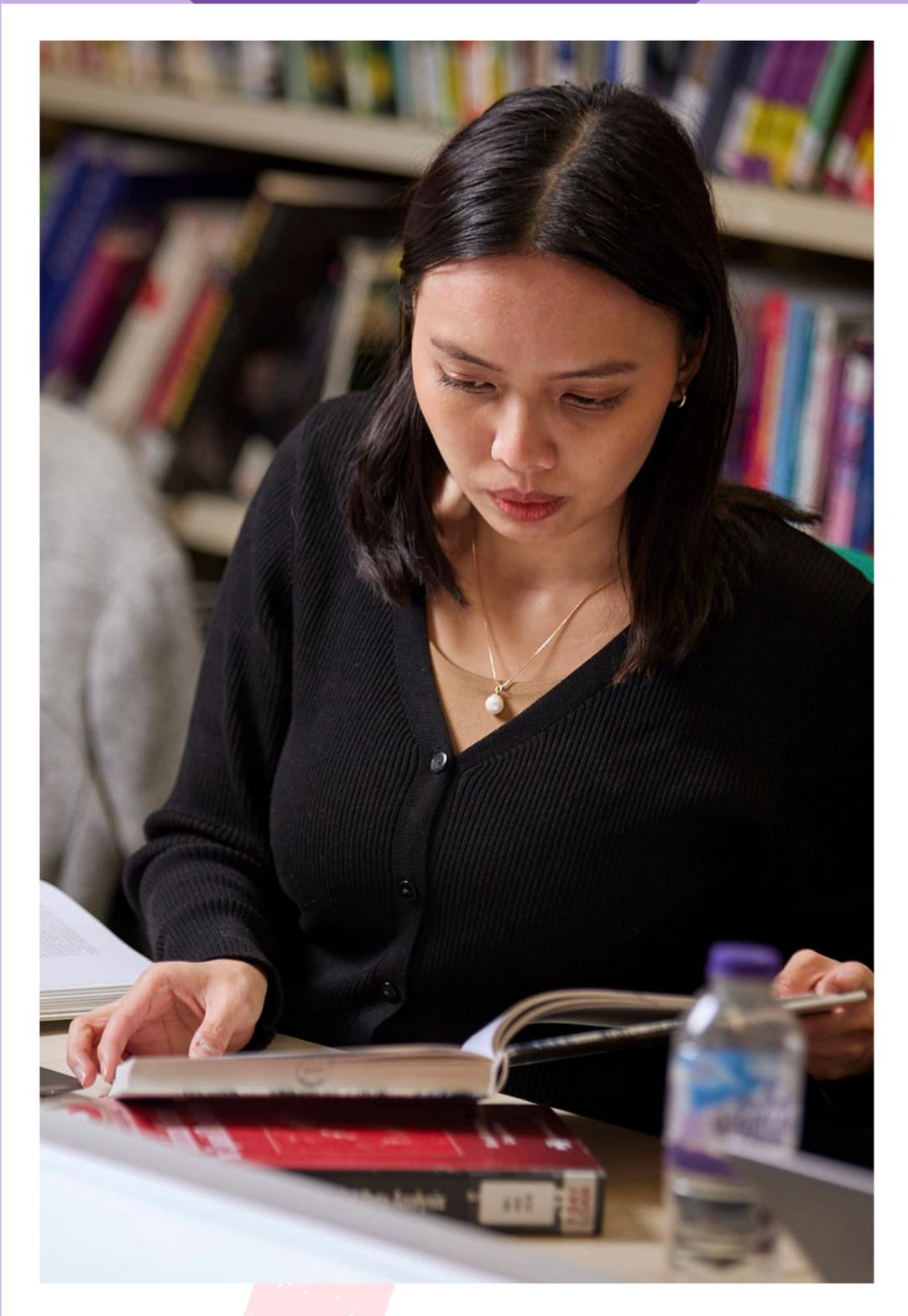
Birkbeck Library

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



GRUNGH 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 exam venue so you can avoid any travel delays on the day

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.

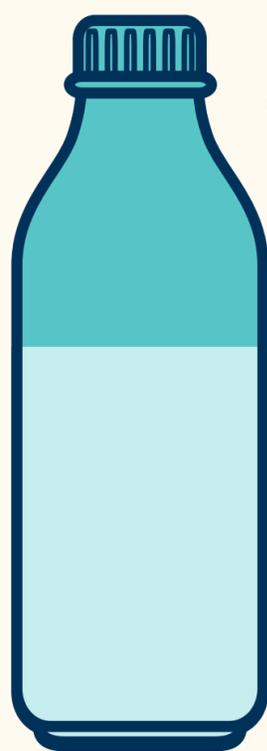
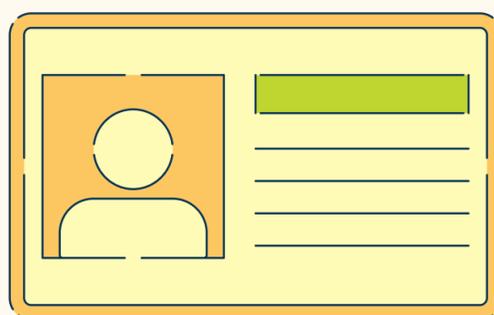
Focus on yourself: ignore how other students are doing.

WHAT TO BRING



Pens, pencils,
highlighters

ID card & Exam
candidate number



Clear water
bottle



NO NOTES



Calculator
(if permitted)

TAKING CARE OF **YOURSELF**

Exam time can be an intense period in any student's life. The pressure to perform well, coupled with long hours of study, can take a toll on both your mental and physical health. In the pursuit of academic excellence, it's easy to overlook the significance of self-care. Yet, taking care of oneself during this crucial time is not just important; it's essential.

Prioritise Breaks:



Amidst the stacks of textbooks and endless notes, it's vital to remember that breaks are not a luxury but a necessity. Research suggests that taking regular breaks during study sessions can enhance productivity and focus. Set aside time for short breaks every hour or so. Use this time to stretch, take a walk, or simply relax and clear your mind. Stepping away from your books for a moment can rejuvenate your brain and prevent burnout. There are many spaces around Birkbeck and London you can do this, so make sure to get out and about, and not just staying in the same place for long periods of time.



Mental Health Matters:

Your mental well-being is as important as your academic achievements. Exam stress can lead to anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues if left unaddressed. Practice self-compassion and be kind to yourself during this challenging period. Set realistic goals, and don't be too hard on yourself if things don't go as planned. Seek support from friends, family, or a university counsellor if you're feeling overwhelmed. Remember, it's okay to ask for help.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Nurture Your Body:



A healthy body supports a healthy mind. Make sure to prioritize your physical well-being by eating nutritious meals, staying hydrated, and getting enough sleep. Avoid the temptation to pull all-nighters, as sleep deprivation can impair cognitive function and memory recall. Incorporate regular exercise into your routine to reduce stress and boost energy levels. Even a short walk or a quick workout session can work wonders for your body and mind.



Balance is Key:

Strive for balance in your life, even during exam season. While it's essential to dedicate time to studying, don't neglect other aspects of your life that bring you joy and fulfilment. Schedule breaks to engage in hobbies, spend time with loved ones, or simply relax and unwind. Maintaining a sense of balance will help prevent burnout and ensure that you're able to perform at your best when it matters most.

In the midst of exams and deadlines, it's easy to lose sight of self-care. However, taking care of yourself isn't selfish; it's a crucial investment in your overall well-being and academic success. Remember to prioritize breaks, nurture your mental and physical health, and strive for balance in your life.

By practicing self-care during exam time, you'll not only perform better academically but also cultivate habits that will serve you well in the long run.

So take a deep breath, prioritize your well-being, and tackle those exams with confidence and resilience. You've got this!

WILLIAM



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](#).

ALTERNATIVE EXAM ARRANGEMENTS

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

Birkbeck students have access to a large range of online academic skills tutorials that can help you to fulfil your potential, some examples are listed here but there are many more on the website:

- Good study habits
- Reading and critical thinking skills
- Citation and referencing
- Essay and assignment writing: process, planning, structure
- Exams
- Essay and assignment writing: academic writing style
- Dissertations
- Lecture and seminar skills
- Maths and statistics

The university also offers online and face-to-face advice, guidance and support to help all Birkbeck students develop the study skills they need for academic success at university. To access the study skills platform, simply go to the links below and use your university email address to sign up.

This includes:

- Study skills resources, including interactive guides, videos and recordings of past workshops in the Study Skills Moodle module.
- Live study skills workshops which are offered multiple times a week during term time. There are many different topics, they are always free and you can attend as many as you wish.
- Specialist, subject-based help via our Learning Development Tutors and resources.
- Access to personalised writing feedback and online tutoring via Studiosity in My Birkbeck.

AFTER

... AND BREATHE



SUPPORT SERVICES

There are many services, both inside and outside the university which are here to support you, before, during and after the assessment and examination period. Please make use of these if you are struggling and if you are unsure where to turn just reach out to the Birkbeck Student Advice Service or to Students' Union Support who can signpost you to the most appropriate service.

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:

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

[Website & Contact Details](#)

Birkbeck University offers all students access to a free online mental health self-help and peer support via [Togetherall](#).

SUPPORT SERVICES

SU SUPPORT SERVICE

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](#)

URGENT AND EMERGENCY SUPPORT

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, dial 0300 0200 500. You can call this number to get support or advice 24/7.

Text Shout to 85258 (free) from anywhere in the UK for support, available 24/7.

Call the Samaritans on 116 123 (free) for support, available 24/7.

If you do not feel that you can keep yourself safe, speak with your GP or call 111.

For immediate medical help call 999 or visit A&E at your local hospital.

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: [Mitigating circumstances guidance – Birkbeck, University of London \(bbk.ac.uk\)](https://www.bbk.ac.uk/academic/assessment/mitigating-circumstances).

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, the university 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 it can be confirmed 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

Birkbeck Students' Union,
Birkbeck University of London,
G16 Birkbeck Central,
Malet St,
London,
WC1E 7HX

studentsunion@bbk.ac.uk
020 3296 3010
www.birkbeckunion.org



[@BirkbeckUnion](https://www.instagram.com/BirkbeckUnion)



[@BirkbeckUnion](https://twitter.com/BirkbeckUnion)



[@BirkbeckUnion](https://www.facebook.com/BirkbeckUnion)



**BIRKBECK
STUDENTS'
UNION
HERE FOR YOU**