

# 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 mitigating circumstances (for example a bereavement), the most important thing is to seek help and let someone know early (e.g. your College Tutor, Nurse, DoS). It is important to obtain evidence (medical or other) early.
- Your College may submit an 'exam warning' via CamSIS. An 'exam warning' is an early marker that your College attach to your student record to note something has happened. This 'exam warning' will only be acted on when you receive your results and if you think that your exam results may have been affected by illness and/or mitigating circumstances. The 'exam warning' can be used as evidence if you are applying for an examination allowance. 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 you haven't been able to access all of your intended materials and/or facilities for your dissertation/coursework due to Covid-19 or the situation in Ukraine, when you submit your work, you can include an 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 guidance for students which, although only refers to Covid-19, also now applies to the situation in Ukraine.

<https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/graduate-exam-information/submitting-and-examination/phd-msc-mlitt/submit>

[https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/files/covid\\_research\\_impact\\_statement\\_guidance\\_for\\_students.pdf](https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/files/covid_research_impact_statement_guidance_for_students.pdf)

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

- If you have a disability and/or a long standing illness and have not already applied for an examination arrangement, you should speak to your College Tutor 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 Disability Resource Centre (DRC).
- You will require medical or psychological evidence or a full diagnostic report, or a Student Support Document (SSD) issued by the DRC to support any request for an examination arrangement.
- Please note the deadline for applying for examination arrangements is the division of Lent Term. However, the EAMC will consider requests after this deadline but it may not be possible to accommodate the request, especially where it requires an adjustment that you must practice. Therefore, there may 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.

Further information can be found here:

- <https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/examinations-further-guidance-staff/colleges/examination-arrangements#request>
- <https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/examinations-further-guidance-staff/colleges/examination-arrangements#Research>
- <https://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:

## In person exams

- 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 immediately to let them know you are unwell. You will be marked as absent from the exam and your College will discuss what mitigations may be appropriate.
- If you feel unwell during an exam, let an invigilator know 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.
- You should also contact a medical professional (where appropriate) for medical support.
- Covid-19 and other cold symptoms.  
If you have respiratory symptoms and a high temperature, you should stay at home and contact your College Tutorial Office immediately. Your College will discuss what mitigations may be appropriate.

## Online Exams

- If you are unwell and unable to start the exam, you should inform your College Tutorial Office as soon as possible. You will be marked as absent from the exam and your College will discuss what mitigations may be appropriate.
- 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 as soon as possible. They will provide you with guidance on what to do next.
- You should also contact a medical professional (where appropriate) for medical support.

Further information can be found here:

- [www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/undergraduate-exam-information/on-the-day](http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/undergraduate-exam-information/on-the-day)
- [student\\_guide\\_for\\_exams\\_2021-22\\_final.pdf](#) (cam.ac.uk)

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

(LARGE AMOUNTS OF EXTERNAL NOISE, DISTURBANCE IN EXAM ROOM, MISTAKE ON THE PAPER ETC.)

### In line with University recommendations:

- If you are concerned about the conduct of the exam or other external factors in the exam room that might affect your performance, it is important that you inform the University as soon as possible. You can do this by submitting a Representation to the Examiner form within 5 days of the examination. You can also inform your College Tutor and they may decide to report this to Student Registry.

Where a form is received by Student Registry or the Student Registry becomes aware of an irregularity, this will be communicated to the Chair of Examiners and considered by the Examiners at their final meeting.

- If you are completing an online exam and experience interruptions to your WIFI or have technical difficulties during the assessment, you should contact your College Tutorial Office to let them know what has happened and actions taken so that they can take any appropriate action, such as submit an exam warning. If your online exam has an invigilator, notify them of the interruptions in the first instance.

### Further information can be found here:

- [www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/examination-reviews](http://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/examination-reviews)
- [www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/undergraduate-exam-information/on-the-day](http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/undergraduate-exam-information/on-the-day)



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

### In line with University recommendations:

- 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 COVID-19)
  - Extenuating circumstances - serious illness or other grave cause;

Contact your College Tutor or speak to the Student Advice Service (<https://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

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](http://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.

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

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



# 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. Check out [Cambridge Allotment Society](#) for more details on growing plants and veggies at Cambridge!

## 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. The University of Cambridge has free mindfulness courses for all students, for more information visit: [Mindfulness at Cam | Cambridge students](#).
- 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:

<https://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: <https://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.

## PREPARING FOR THE EXAM - IN PERSON

You can visit the University's webpages on exams for further information on what to do before the exam, on the day of the exam, and after the exam.

For undergraduate students visit here:

<https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/undergraduate-exam-information>; and postgraduate students here:

<https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/graduate-exam-information>

- 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 webpages above.
- 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 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: <https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/support/outofhours/>
- University Counselling Service: <https://www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/>
- Disability Resource Centre: <https://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/>
- Nightline (Term time only): 7pm to 7am during term time. 01223 74444  
<https://cambridge.nightline.ac.uk/>
- University Counselling Service Exam Stress Guide  
<https://www.studentwellbeing.admin.cam.ac.uk/support-particular-issues/exam-stress>





## 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](mailto:advice@cambridgesu.co.uk)

The Student Advice Service is brought to you by:

