

# KICKSTART YOUR REVISION FOR CLOSED BOOK EXAMS

IN COLLABORATION WITH PREVIOUS WARWICK STUDENT, EMILY ALGER



Some exams at Warwick will be closed book this year. Previous Warwick student, **Emily**, offers some advice to perfect your revision technique this exam season.

## Understand the material

During a closed book exam all you can rely upon is your own intuition and understanding of the module, so engaging in your revision is as important as ever! I begin my revision by reading through the lecture notes, but for this to work you need to get active!

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*I write down important theorems to test myself on...*

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Whilst reading through the notes I'll annotate important theorems, maybe link it to other parts of the module or previous ideas to start generating the "bigger picture" or "overall story" of a module. I find that often as I go to lectures, the module journey often doesn't make much sense - you have so much information thrust upon you that modules can seem vast and confusing.

I like to re-read lecture notes almost like a book, seeing how one chapter leads onto the next and why we are progressing through the module in this certain way.

## Identify the definitions and theorems you need

Closed book exams mean that book work may be in your papers once again and so learning the definitions and theorems for a module could be key to getting a good mark. As I read through the lecture notes, I write down key definitions onto flash cards and I write down important theorems to test myself on.



Theorems are often long, and they need to be broken down - here's how I do it. I write down the theorem on a cue card, working line to line. I don't

write down a line until I understand it and then I annotate any important parts I really need to remember or I was stuck on. This can take a long time but it's worth it!

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*...the most important thing to focus on is myself...*

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Hopefully, after you've battled through a theorem once it will be easier to replicate another time. I also find that if I don't understand a proof, it's probably because I didn't understand earlier parts of the module. I think this approach to learning theorems is the perfect way to assess how much you know about the whole module in general.

## PRACTICE

This is the most important activity for me during my exam season. I just do a lot of questions. I usually try and save past papers and exercise sheets to a week

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or so before exams, I find that this helps keep exam-like questions fresh in my mind. Practicing questions seems to be the moment my exam revision clicks. Suddenly I am putting theory to practise and applying what I learn. Finally, all the interwoven subtleties of the module combine, and I gain confidence.

Try to balance these exam style questions alongside your book work preparation - I do find that I get better at book work the more I apply it to questions.

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*I like to re-read lecture notes almost like a book...*

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## **Revise persistently, try not to cram**

I find that revision works best if I do it little by little overtime compared to the night before the exam. A lot of modules have certain nuances which take a long time to appreciate and gain some intuition for. It's not the hours which count, it is the days.

I like being organised and knowing I am revising way before the exam period starts, it helps me manage

exam stress and encourages me to keep going. It can be hard to start revision and dive into the depths of a module, but you'll thank yourself for starting. I usually find the idea of starting much more intimidating than the actual revision.

Revising a little everyday gets you into a manageable routine which I find easier to keep up in comparison to cramming.



## **Use the Library**

There are many ways that the Library can help with your revision and it will definitely depend on the environment you need to revise in.

If you need to do so in quiet, there are the top floors and extension floors of the Main Library. If you need to be in a louder environment or want a peer to help you with practice questions, you'll want to be on the first two floors of the Main Library or over at the Rootes Learning Grid.

Further to this, the Library also run Revise Here Revise Now sessions which allow you to break up your revision into manageable chunks using the pomodoro technique and the Library Student Partners at the event will help quiz you on your knowledge if you find that helpful!

Every exam year, I remind myself that the most important thing to focus on is myself. Exams are stressful and I have found that I do much better whilst I look after myself. That means clocking off from revision in the evening, socialising regularly and getting good rest.

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*Revising a little everyday gets you into a manageable routine...*

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*Good luck this exam period and bring on the Summer!*