Managing Workload

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The Problem with Workload

• Coursework & assessment workload is high
  • It feels like 24h in a day are just not enough

• Your expectations are high
  • Of course you want an “A”

• Courses progress through material at high pace
  • It’s easy to fall behind and hard to catch up

• Everyone else seems to be smarter and more productive than you
  • No, everyone else is in the same boat
Abstract Goals

• Manage your workload
• Manage your expectations
• Build a routine and develop a pace
• Take a break, speak and learn with other students
  • Use opportunities to get help
A little bit more concrete

• Get yourself a planner - sound simple?
• Do your work earlier rather than later - you’ve heard that before, right?
• Don’t overwork yourself - plan in days off, fun activities
• Try to keep to a daily/weekly/monthly routine
• Do what makes you happy!
  • Course choices, but also other activities to balance out study life
• Remind yourself why you’re studying and what you want to achieve
Realistic Aims

• Find out what is expected
  • Marking scheme, past courseworks, identify optional/bonus material

• Set yourself realistic and strategic targets
  • 40% is a “pass” (for UG students), 70% is an “A” - more about this later
  • Check credit weight of assessment, e.g. 10% coursework vs 90% exam
    • Remember: 10% difference in a piece of coursework worth 20% of a 20 credit-point course make 0.3% difference at the end of the year!

• Only UG3/UG4/(UG5) marks matter for final degree classification
SMART

Specific
Achievable
Measurable
Realistic
Timely
Build a Routine

• Ad-hoc/chaotic learning style quickly runs out of steam - trust me
  • Reserve regular times for review of lecture materials
  • Plan in times for reading, coursework…
  • “an hour a day” is better than a crazy all-nighter
• Don’t skip lectures/tutorials
  • Attend on-campus activities regularly (there will be more next semester!)
• Reserve time for yourself - don’t burn out
Setting Concrete Tasks

• Not so great:
  “Study on Tuesday”

• Better:
  “Complete questions 1 & 2 of XYZ coursework on Tuesday afternoon”
Breaking Up Large Tasks

• Looking at your 3-page coursework sheet can be overwhelming!

• One question at a time… and break up tasks even further
  
  • Reading/review of relevant lectures notes/book chapters

  • Start thinking about the problem, take notes, look at related tutorial exercises - work through sample solutions of related problems

  • Try to articulate your concrete problem (“I have a problem with how to transform X into Z at this point in the proof” vs “I don’t understand anything”), maybe post on Piazza, ask your tutor, or speak with other students

  • Explore independently - consult other resources
Starting Early Done Right

• Starting Early ≠ Completing Early

• Write down all your deadlines immediately (set reminders)
  • Check for conflicting deadlines and plan accordingly

• Read your coursework sheet; get an overview of what needs to be done
  • Get started with preparation tasks: install software, get papers/books,…
  • Break down large task into smaller manageable chunks

• Schedule concrete smaller tasks (see previous slide)
Join/Set up Learning Groups

- Learning together with other students is more fun
- Mutual support and motivation
- Can also be effective for exam revision
- InfPALS, InfBase
Exam Revision

• Review coursework exercises

• Check for past papers
  • Warning: courses may vary/get updated between years

• Check for past papers from other Universities
  • Warning: course names/contents may differ - check what’s applicable

• Work through textbook exercises

• Think strategically about what would make a “nice exam question”
  • Get up to speed with application of e.g. certain algorithms you have studied in your course
How will I revise?

- Rehearsing answering exam questions
- Checking practical arrangements
- Finding out about the exam paper
- Gathering and organising revision material
- Deciding what to revise
- Making a revision timetable
- Understanding and learning course material
Extended Common Marking Scheme
## Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Honours Class</th>
<th>Mark (%)</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Non-Honours Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.1</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.2</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Performance at a level showing the potential to achieve at least a lower second class honours degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Pass, may not be sufficient for progression to an honours programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Marginal Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Clear Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Bad Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Bad Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Range Descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade / Mark / Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 / 90-100 / Excellent (Outstanding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often faultless. The work is well beyond that expected at the appropriate level of study. See also the guidance above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 / 80-89 / Excellent (High)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A truly scholarly and/or professional piece of work, often with an absence of errors. As ‘A3’ but shows (depending upon the item of assessment): significant personal insight/creativity/originality and/or extra depth and academic maturity in the elements of assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3 / 70-79 / Excellent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Knowledge: Comprehensive range of up-to-date material handled in a scholarly and/or professional way.
- Understanding and handling of key concepts: Shows a good command of the subject and current theory.
- Focus on the subject or task: Clear and analytical; fully explores the subject or task.
- Critical analysis and discussion: Shows evidence of deep thinking and/or an appropriately logical and rigorous approach in critically evaluating and integrating the evidence and ideas. Deals confidently with the complexities and subtleties of issues. Shows elements of personal insight/creativity/originality.
- Literature synthesised, analysed and referenced: Comprehensive grasp of the up-to-date literature which is used in a scholarly way.
- Structure: Clear and coherent showing logical, ordered thought. Additionally for code: likely to support re-use. No unused variables or dead code.
- Presentation: Clear and well presented with few, relatively minor flaws. For writing: Accurate referencing; using the correct referencing system. Figures and tables well-constructed and accurate. Good standard of spelling and grammar. Alternatively for code: well-documented, readable code.
- Design of software or experiments: sensible, with appropriate justification.
- Correctness and robustness: Compiles and executes without errors or warnings. Strong evidence of testing and (if appropriate) optimisation. Correct functionality and robust to unexpected input.

https://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/infweb/student-services/ito/students/common-marking-scheme
The “Bonus” Range

“I got a mark of 70%. Where did I loose marks?”
The “Bonus” Range

“I got a mark of 70%. Where did I loose marks?”

70% is the new 100%!
You got full marks, you just didn’t earn any bonus marks.
The “Bonus” Range

“I got a mark of 70%. What do I need to do in order to get a mark of 100%?”

Surprise me!
If I told you what you want to do, it wouldn’t be worth the bonus.
An Example

1+1=?
An Example

1 + 1 = 2
An Example

1 + 1 = 2
An Example

1+1=2

Proof!
Let’s try again

1+1=?
Let’s try again

1 + 1 = 2

Proof!
Let’s try again

1+1=2

Proof!

You didn’t surprise me, i.e. this answer is now the expected answer from a student at your level (since I told you a minute ago), and how I want to see another answer that goes beyond your expected level of study!
Other Sources of Information
• Advice on specific study skills topics
• Downloadable resources
• Useful study strategies

www.ed.ac.uk/iad/studyhub
Downloadable resources

Dissertation and Project Planner

About the Planner:

This generic planner is designed to help you through all the stages of your dissertation or research project, from starting to think about your question to final submission. At each stage there are useful prompts to help you plan your work and manage your time.

There are also blank spaces that you can use to add your dissertation. We hope that you find it useful. If you have any questions or comments please contact us on iad.academic@edin.ac.uk.

https://edin.ac/2IhoAZj
EXAM Bootcamp

Exams! Three steps to success

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2. The revision workout
3. Effective exam strategies

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