



# Guide to Stress Free Exams, Personal Circumstances and Academic Appeals



## Health and wellbeing - preparing your mind and body for exams by maintaining a healthy lifestyle

- Eat well by having regular meals, especially breakfast and maintain a balanced diet with vegetables and starchy foods such as pasta, rice etc. Opt for healthy snacks such as fruits, nuts and seeds. Keep hydrated by drinking plenty of water as dehydration can cause irritability and difficulty with concentration. Try to avoid too much caffeine or high sugar drinks.
- Aim to maintain a regular sleep pattern (ideally, totalling 8 hours). If you don't get enough sleep you will remember less<sup>1</sup>. A milky drink or herbal tea can be calming and help improve sleep.
- Exercise regularly whether it is going to the gym, an exercise class, running or even going out for a walk. Try some relaxation e.g. yoga which can help if you suffer from anxiety or feelings of panic. Find out more about the different exercise classes available here [www.strath.ac.uk/sport/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/sport/)
- It is important to continue to do things you enjoy, talking to friends and family. These will help you keep perspective.

## Be prepared before exams

- Check your timetable for any exam clashes, report these as soon as possible to your Academic Department and check regularly for locations, dates and times as these can change.
- Check with your Academic Department what materials you are allowed to take into exams e.g. calculator, dictionary. If your first language is not English you are allowed to use a paper-based translation dictionary (unless told otherwise, i.e. language exams) – this will be rigorously checked by invigilators.

- Make sure you have a valid student ID card. If not, visit Student Business.
- If you are registered with the Disability and Wellbeing Service they will notify all departments running exams for you. You should be contacted in advance to inform you of any specific arrangements.
- Register with a GP – certain circumstances may require you to submit supporting medical evidence. Please email [disability-wellbeing@strath.ac.uk](mailto:disability-wellbeing@strath.ac.uk) or visit [www.strath.ac.uk/disabilityandwellbeing](http://www.strath.ac.uk/disabilityandwellbeing) for help with registering with a GP.
- Check your travel arrangements to ensure you will arrive in plenty time before the start of the exam.

## Night before exam

- Pack your bag - make sure you have pens, pencils, tissues, bottle of water and any other materials you are allowed to bring into the exam.
- Check your travel arrangements again to ensure there has been no changes (best to arrive 20 minutes before exam start).
- Set your alarm.
- Try to have a good night's rest and avoid caffeine and alcohol.

## On the day

- Ideally, have something to eat and drink.
- Try to wear layers of clothing so you can adapt to the room temperature.
- Avoid people or things that may disturb your self-confidence and focus on a level of relaxation.
- Go to the toilet before your exam.
- Switch off your mobile phone before entering examination room.
- Finally, take time to read the exam paper thoroughly.

<sup>1</sup> <http://classes.myplace.strath.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=606770>

<sup>2</sup> Personal Circumstances and Academic Appeals Policy and Form can be found at <http://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/policies/academic/>

<sup>3</sup> In the first instance call 0141 567 5040 or email [strathunion.advice@strath.ac.uk](mailto:strathunion.advice@strath.ac.uk)

<sup>4</sup> In the first instance call 0141 548 3402 or email [disability-wellbeing@strath.ac.uk](mailto:disability-wellbeing@strath.ac.uk)

If for any reason you are going to be late, ill and/or unable to participate in your exam, contact Student Business 0141 548 3165 and your Academic Department immediately.

If you have any questions, need to use the bathroom or feel unwell during your exam inform the invigilator who will advise accordingly. You must raise your arm and stay in your seat until an invigilator is able to attend to you. Do not speak to anyone else!

## After the exam

- Congratulate yourself for the things you did right.
- Reward yourself for your hard work. Do something that makes you feel good, coffee with a friend, shopping, playing computer games etc.
- Don't spend time criticising yourself for where you think you went wrong or spend longer than is helpful talking to your friends about how badly you think the exam went.

## PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

### What are 'Personal Circumstances'?

Circumstances beyond your control which may affect your performance in exams and assessments.

### What sorts of circumstances are considered?

Circumstances which you feel have contributed to you not being able to perform in or attend exams e.g. serious or significant illness or injury; exceptional personal circumstances such as bereavement, serious illness of a significant family member or friend; being a victim of significant crime. The list is not exhaustive.

## How do I inform the University of these circumstances?

- Log these circumstances on PEGASUS as soon as possible.
- Submit a Personal Circumstances Form<sup>2</sup> and supporting evidence directly to Student Business, Level 1 – McCance no later than 5 days after the latest affected exam or assessment.
- Please do not submit this evidence to your Academic Department as this may cause you to miss the submission deadline.

## What happens next?

Your circumstances will be discussed at a formal examination board and recommendations will be made. The results of this exam board will be posted on PEGASUS.

## ACADEMIC APPEALS

### Who can make an academic appeal?

All students have the opportunity of appealing an exam board decision. It should be noted that you cannot appeal individual class marks. You can only appeal a decision where the result of a class or classes, has affected the expected outcome of the exam board. You can only make an appeal on the grounds of personal circumstances of which you have already informed the University. If you need to raise personal circumstances at a later stage, seek further advice from The Advice Hub<sup>3</sup>.

### When can I make an appeal?

You can make an appeal once you have been notified of the exam board decision; you cannot appeal before this time. You should submit Personal Circumstances as outlined above.

### Who can I talk to about personal circumstances and academic appeals?

You can speak to your Personal Development Adviser, Course Director/Year Adviser, Disability and Wellbeing Service<sup>4</sup>, and Advice Hub<sup>3</sup> at Strath Union.

## OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT

[www.strath.ac.uk/sees/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/sees/)

**the place of useful learning**

**[www.strath.ac.uk](http://www.strath.ac.uk)**

University of Strathclyde Glasgow

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