



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

WORRIED? DON'T BE

Revision tips to help
you survive your exams



YEAR 12

Exams are creeping up and you know you should be revising.

But where do you even start?

How do you stop getting distracted?

Whatever study problems you're having, this handy guide will help you get through exams with as little stress as possible.

Happy revising!

WHAT TYPE OF REVISER ARE YOU? TAKE THE QUIZ!

Everyone's brain works differently - are flash cards your thing? Or do you prefer diagrams or mind maps? Take this quick quiz to find out!



Try these revision tips:

- Draw your own diagrams, cartoons or illustrations to remember big or difficult topics.
- Watch a video or documentary.
- You can't draw everything – add smaller doodles to your notes.
- Find infographics, posters and other visual resources online to help you.

If you mostly answered As

You remember things better when you see something visual that explains the topics you're studying.



These tips are also worth a try:

- Teach someone. This involves discussion, understanding and interpretation, and is ideal for remembering your topic.
- Use audiobooks.
- Recite what you know about a topic when you're doing other jobs like washing up. Sounds nuts, but it works!

If you mostly answered Bs

You learn best by listening to someone talk about a subject and then discussing it through.



Why not have a go with these ideas?

- Post-it notes. Everywhere!
- Flash cards. For the epic note taker, these smaller cards help you focus on what's important.
- Make a 'cheat sheet'. Include essential facts and answers to things that are worrying you.

If you mostly answered Cs

Old fashioned written notes work best for you, but try these tricks to save time and avoid boredom.

YOUR SECRET WEAPON AGAINST REVISION

Mind maps work for any type of studying, be it essays, revising, presentations, or coursework projects. Here are our five reasons why we love mind maps!

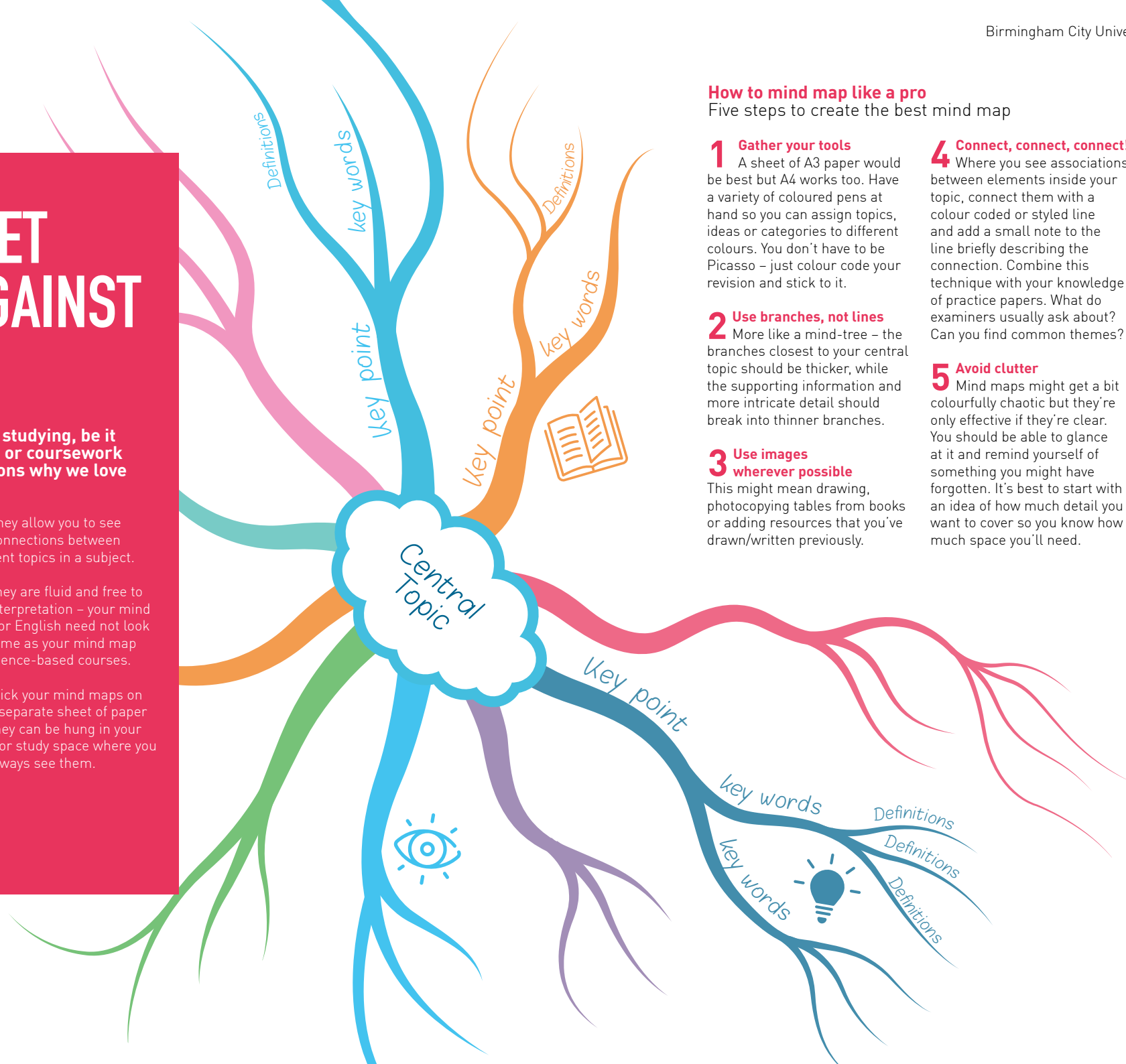
1 You know how you get tired of looking at revision books? It might be because you find them boring but it's also because you're only consuming one type of information. Mind maps, on the other hand, harness the full range of skills – word, image, number, logic, rhythm, colour and spatial awareness – all at once. This activates more parts of your brain and improves your memory.

2 Mind maps allow you to present large amounts of information on one page by creating associations between image, word and colour.

3 They allow you to see connections between different topics in a subject.

4 They are fluid and free to interpretation – your mind map for English need not look the same as your mind map for science-based courses.

5 Stick your mind maps on a separate sheet of paper and they can be hung in your room or study space where you can always see them.



How to mind map like a pro

Five steps to create the best mind map

1 Gather your tools
A sheet of A3 paper would be best but A4 works too. Have a variety of coloured pens at hand so you can assign topics, ideas or categories to different colours. You don't have to be Picasso – just colour code your revision and stick to it.

2 Use branches, not lines
More like a mind-tree – the branches closest to your central topic should be thicker, while the supporting information and more intricate detail should break into thinner branches.

3 Use images wherever possible
This might mean drawing, photocopying tables from books or adding resources that you've drawn/written previously.

4 Connect, connect, connect!
Where you see associations between elements inside your topic, connect them with a colour coded or styled line and add a small note to the line briefly describing the connection. Combine this technique with your knowledge of practice papers. What do examiners usually ask about? Can you find common themes?

5 Avoid clutter
Mind maps might get a bit colourfully chaotic but they're only effective if they're clear. You should be able to glance at it and remind yourself of something you might have forgotten. It's best to start with an idea of how much detail you want to cover so you know how much space you'll need.

REVISION HACKS



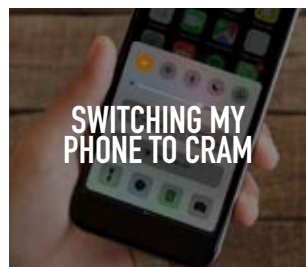
PROBLEM:
I'm completely unmotivated.

HACK:
Reward yourself...with sweets or a healthier snack. Use small food that comes in large quantities and space them out across the pages of your work books and notes. Once you've completed a page you can treat yourself.



"CLEAR YOUR MIND BEFORE REVISING. TAKE A WALK OR LISTEN TO YOUR FAVOURITE MUSIC SO YOUR MIND DOESN'T WANDER OFF ONTO SOMETHING ELSE WHILE REVISING."

TINA KODRA
Psychology student



PROBLEM:
I find it really hard to start because I get distracted.

HACK:
When you're revising, everything else seems more fun and it's hard not to sneak a little look at social media after you've written a paragraph of notes. To stop your phone distracting you, try:

- Putting it on airplane mode
- Placing it in another room or with a family member
- Lock it by entering the wrong password – this will make it unusable for a period of time.



PROBLEM

I have four exams and a resit. I don't know what to focus on first!

HACK

Start with the subject that gives you the most trouble. Even if the exam you're dreading the most is the last one you sit, you will need to spend more time on it. You'll feel more confident if you dedicate more time to it.

"REMEMBER TO TREAT YOURSELF – A DAY OFF OR A SHOPPING TRIP."

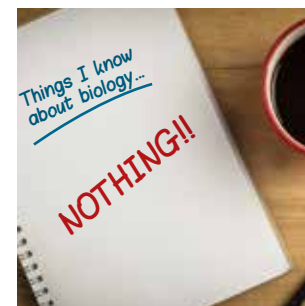
SOTON MANUEL
Sociology student

PROBLEM:

I just haven't got a clue how to get started.

HACK:

Show what you know. Pick a topic and write down everything you know about it. This will show you what you need to learn and which areas you need to focus on.



"MAKE A PLAN TO REVISE A BIT EVERY DAY."

ANDREEA DALIA BLAGA
Digital Media
Technology student



PROBLEM

I'm finding it hard to manage my time.

HACK

How does anyone have time to do everything with exams coming up?! The answer? Lots of planning. Start with filling out the revision timetable in this booklet, but for your study sessions the Pomodoro technique is king. It involves setting a timer for 25 minutes and working on an activity until the timer rings, then taking a five-minute break. Repeat this three times and then take a 30 minute break.

Quick hacks

- 1 Type in a sans-serif font like Arial. They are fast fonts to read which is why they are used for nearly everything!
- 2 Spray an unfamiliar scent. This can make you more alert if you're tired.
- 3 Listen to music but not something you like, it's distracting! Try something instrumental.

MY REVISION TIMETABLE

How to plan your timetable

Having trouble starting your revision? Get motivated with a timetable. If you don't know how to make a good one, we've got your back. Just follow these five steps:

1. Colour code your sessions

to match your syllabus. Having trouble with biology? Mark it red.



2. Use the Pomodoro method

(which this timetable is built around). Split your revision into 25 minute slots with a five minute break.



3. Be sure to build in a break

when you come back from work or college - beware of burnout!



4. Avoid distractions

by turning off your phone or putting it on airplane mode with the internet turned off.



5. Traffic light your syllabus

Find out what topic needs the most attention and which ones you know well - do this by marking your syllabus. This will allow you to timetable more sessions for the subjects you're struggling with and highlight specific topics in those subjects.

Follow this rule:

If this came up in the exam I'd run out of the exam room.

I know what this topic is about but couldn't answer an in-depth question.

I've got a good understanding of this and I've performed well with this topic on practice papers. I just need to have a regular review.

“Set concrete goals, reward yourself when you complete the goal and think about what you will achieve by studying for the exam.”

SOTON MANUEL
Sociology student

“Make your revision timetable as realistic as possible. Don't bother filling the whole day with revision if you know you won't stick to it, instead start off with revising for one or two hours a day and then increase the time as you get more into it.”

TINA KODRA
Psychology student

Download your blank weekly template at

bcu.ac.uk/revision-table



MONDAY

	Highlight specific topics inside a subject that need extra attention	5 MIN BREAK		5 MIN BREAK	The brain retains short chunks of information easier. Try to stick to two to four pomodoro sessions to avoid burning yourself out.	5 MIN BREAK		30 MIN BREAK
		5 MIN BREAK		5 MIN BREAK		5 MIN BREAK		30 MIN BREAK
LUNCH								
	Biology	5 MIN BREAK		5 MIN BREAK		5 MIN BREAK	Unless you're busy in the week with other commitments, keep your weekends free. You'll need time to recharge.	30 MIN BREAK
		5 MIN BREAK		5 MIN BREAK	Get moving or go outside when you have a break - the activity will increase your retention.	5 MIN BREAK		30 MIN BREAK
DINNER								
	Fit your timetable around your days off. Sometimes you might have work or college so slot in morning and evening sections accordingly.		At work					

KEY DATES

13 MAY
Exams begin

14 JUNE
BTEC exams are over!

21 JUNE
GCSE exams are over!

28 JUNE
A Level exams are over

29 JUNE
BCU Open Day

MID JULY
ONWARDS
BTEC results

15 AUGUST
A Level results

ANSWERING EXAM QUESTIONS

YOU'VE LEARNED, YOU'VE REVISED, BUT NOW YOU'RE SAT IN THE EXAM HALL WONDERING HOW ON EARTH YOU'RE MEANT TO GO ABOUT ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS IN FRONT OF YOU...

Getting all that knowledge out of your head and down onto paper is more than tricky. So here's the good, the bad and the ugly of answering exam questions to make it a whole lot easier.

If you're doing a coursework-only subject or qualification, your uni degree may well include exams, so these tips will be useful to help prepare you for all kinds of assessments.

THE GOOD

Prep prep prep!

Get to know your exam. How many questions are there? How many marks are at stake? How long should your answers be? Ask your teachers, practise with old exam papers and get in the know!

The question!

The question is your friend, it's there to help. Make sure you understand it. Identify key words and what it's asking you to do. Discuss? Evaluate? Compare? Outline?

PEE!

Always remember to PEE all over your exam. Point. Evidence. Explain. A nice easy structure that's easy to remember and carry out. Make your point, back it up with some evidence and then explain it. Structure can make or break a good exam answer and this technique, as recommended by our student Soton, is a winner.

THE BAD

Panic!

You've got this. You've done your prep, you know your structure, so don't dive straight in. You have time so use it. Flick through the paper, read all the questions and spend a few minutes planning your answer.

Waffle!

Absolutely make sure you avoid waffle! You need to be clear and concise. Our student Andreea suggests writing down everything about the topic and then selecting the relevant bits to include in your answer.

Post-mortems!

It's over. The exam paper has been collected in. You can't change anything. Make sure you get it out of your head and focus on your next exam. Then when they're over, go and enjoy summer!

THE UGLY

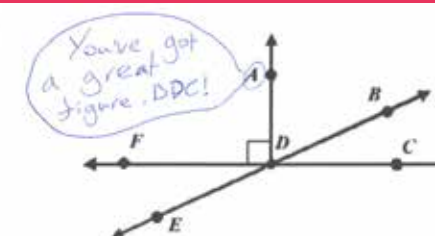
If all our top tips go out the window, remember you won't be having as bad of a time as these:

7. Briefly explain what hard water is

Ice

(2)

2. Name an angle complimentary to BDC:



6) Overpopulation has been an issue in several countries. What do you think is the best solution for overpopulation?

THE HUNGER GAMES!

(3 Marks)

BEAT EXAM STRESS WITH COLOURING

COLOURING IS A HELPFUL WAY TO DE-STRESS AND A GREAT WAY TO TAKE A BREAK FROM REVISION. IT'S NOT JUST FOR KIDS TOO! COLOURING FOR GROWN-UPS IS ALL THE RAGE AND EXPERTS HAVE BEEN SHOUTING ABOUT THE CALMING BENEFITS FOR OVER A DECADE.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Sometimes when you're trying to remember a fact but you can't think of the answer, it will only come to you later when you're doing something else entirely. By focusing on an activity like colouring, you can prevent negative and unhelpful thoughts from entering your mind. It can reduce anxiety and help you concentrate and be more mindful!



HOW TO STAY MOTIVATED

THE ALARM GOES OFF AND YOU KNOW YOU'VE GOT A DAY OF REVISION AHEAD, BUT YOU JUST CAN'T CRAWL OUT OF YOUR NICE WARM PIT. AS MUCH AS YOU WANT TO HAVE A PRODUCTIVE DAY, SOMETIMES YOU JUST CAN'T FACE IT OR DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET STARTED. OUR STUDENTS SHARE THEIR TOP TIPS TO KEEP THE ENERGY GOING!



STAGE 1:

Chilling - I've got loads of time!

STAGE 2:

Erm... I better do something soon...



STAGE 4:

Nap time! Exhausted from panicking

STAGE 3:

PANIC omg! There's so much to do!



STAGE 5:

Motivation. I got this!

STAGE 6:

Distraction... social media, food, etc.

STAGE 7:

Panic again. *I'm going to fail!!!!*

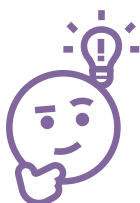
STAGE 8:

Determined

STAGE 9:

I got this! Sense of accomplishment

FINISH!



STAGE 14:

Uni! You made it!

STAGE 13:

Exam results. Congratulations!

STAGE 12:

Summer with friends

STAGE 11:

Exam time

STAGE 10:

Confident and ready



ANDREEA SAYS

"SET MANAGEABLE GOALS"

Split complex goals into main targets and sub-goals.

Make sure you plan your time well.

Keep track of what you have achieved to motivate you.

Tick off each task along the way for a sense of accomplishment.

Reward yourself after each goal you reach.

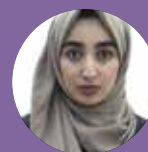


TINA SAYS

"TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS AND OLDER SIBLINGS WHO HAVE ALL BEEN THROUGH EXAMS BEFORE"

Having a chat with friends can help motivate you and remind you that you are not alone.

Group study sessions are a great way to motivate you as you can share any revisions tips and bounce ideas off each other.



RIMAH SAYS

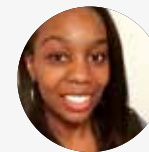
"KEEP A POSITIVE MINDSET"

Focus on the positives, like what you have learned that day.

Try and see the lighter side of life.

Do the best that you can.

Remember, a positive mindset can help you keep focus through the whole process and help you achieve good grades.



SOTON SAYS

KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE PRIZE!

Remember that after all of your hard work you will be rewarded with qualifications that will help carry you through the rest of your life.

Make plans for what you will do with all of your free time before you start your exciting journey on to university.

Imagine how great it will feel when you know that you have worked to the best of your ability and finally have your qualifications.

PERSONAL STATEMENTS



Top tip

“A good Personal Statement should provide us with relevant background information about you. It should also reflect your distinctive style and characteristics – we are not looking for clones.”

SHONA MCQUILLAN
Our guru for your application questions

WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF YOUR UNIVERSITY APPLICATION, BUT TALKING ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR AMBITIONS IS NOT ALWAYS AN EASY TASK! SO WE'VE PUT TOGETHER A LIST OF DOS AND DON'TS TO GET YOU STARTED.

DO:

Show off your strengths

Concentrate on what you're good at. Just make sure that it's relevant to your course. Do you run a successful blog and want to show off your skills for a marketing degree? Whatever it is, make sure you boast about your achievements.

Use concrete examples

Use your life experience to support your accomplishments and distinguish yourself from other applicants – this makes your Personal Statement more memorable.

Proof read

Make sure your spelling and grammar is accurate. Don't just rely on spell-check – get your friends, family and teachers to help!

DON'T:

Panic!

Although this can be a stressful time, stay organised and try not to panic. Make sure you take advantage of any extra support and help from your teachers, friends or family.

Plagiarise

Don't copy someone else's UCAS Personal Statement or use something you have found on the internet. UCAS uses software to check every Personal Statement for plagiarism.

Use irrelevant personal facts

Before you write about playing netball or a school trip you went on in year seven, apply the 'so what?' rule. Does it make a useful contribution and help explain why you should be given a place on the course? If not, scrap it.

PERSONAL STATEMENT CHECKLIST

TOP TIP

Why not give yourself a five-minute break for a cup of tea or a scroll of your social media feed every time you complete a few sections? Rewarding yourself with small treats is a great way to motivate yourself!

SO YOU'RE READY TO WRITE YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT BUT WHAT DO YOU EVEN INCLUDE? WE'VE PUT TOGETHER AN EASY STEP-BY-STEP CHECKLIST TO MAKE THIS AS EASY AS POSSIBLE FOR YOU. WHY NOT CHECK OUT OUR PLANNER ON THE NEXT PAGE AND TICK OFF THE BITS YOU'VE COMPLETED AS YOU GO ALONG?

UCAS TIMELINE

Mid September

Opening date for UCAS applications.

15 January

Main closing date for applications.

25 February

UCAS Extra opens. You can make an additional application if you don't have any offers.

2 May

Deadline to accept one firm and one insurance offer.

From July

Universities start to receive exam results and Clearing process starts for those who have not yet secured a place.

August

A Level and BTEC results days - when you find out if you've met your conditional offer.

FIVE ESSENTIAL THINGS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

- ✓ **Your course choice**
Showcase your enthusiasm about your chosen subject. Make it clear that you have the right skills, interests and experience for the course. If you are applying for a diverse range of courses, try to explain your reasons for each of them.
- ✓ **Your future plans**
Whether you want to be a lawyer or the next Steven Spielberg, think about what you want to do in the future. It may be that the course is directly relevant to your intended career, or perhaps you have already studied the subject and found it particularly enjoyable. If the subject is completely new for you, highlight what experience/interest led you to this decision.
- ✓ **School and college life**
At this point most of your experience may have come from your school life, so make sure to include the skills you have gained while at school or college, as well as any sporting or extra-curricular activities, or positions of responsibility (for example prefect, librarian) that you held.
- ✓ **Work experience**
This could include the skills you gained through work experience, placements or any part-time work you have done. Work experience shows your dedication and commitment to your future career, while part-time work proves you are disciplined and organised.
- ✓ **Interests and activities**
Highlight the skills you have gained through any other activities you are involved in outside of school such as volunteering in the community, music, team sports, and any other hobbies or leisure interests. You'll be surprised how much you have done!

GETTING STARTED ON YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Your course choice:

Your future plans:

USE THIS SPACE TO MAKE
SOME NOTES. IT WILL
HELP YOU GET SOME
IDEAS TO START WRITING
YOUR FIRST DRAFT.



School and college life:

Work experience:

Interests and activities:

Top tip

“Start early. I had exams in January so it was important for me to complete my Personal Statement and send it off as early as possible!”

ELLA SQUIRES

OPEN DAYS

OPEN DAYS ARE A BIG PART OF PICKING A UNIVERSITY. THEY'RE YOUR CHANCE TO GET A FLAVOUR OF WHAT BEING A STUDENT IS LIKE AT DIFFERENT UNIS.

JASPREET FROM OUR STUDENTS' UNION HAS QUASHED SOME OF THE COMMON WORRIES ABOUT WHAT IT'S REALLY LIKE TO GO TO AN OPEN DAY.



FOUR WORRIES ABOUT GOING TO AN OPEN DAY

Can I bring my parents?

Yes definitely! Open Days give your parents the satisfaction that their child is at a safe place and they have seen it as well.

How about coming on my own?

I'm an international student who came on my own from India. The great thing about being on your own at Open Days is you can do and see what you want!

Do I have to go?

You don't have to go! But you may miss the opportunities that are on offer like the various talks and information from course tutors. You will miss out on what student life is like!

Does it take all day?

I would personally recommend visiting for a whole day. This will help you make your decision on which uni to choose more efficiently and effectively!

So no matter which university Open Day you visit, you can expect a fun, interactive day. See as much as you can, ask as much as you can!

OUR NEXT OPEN DAYS

23 MARCH 2019
Saturday | 9am - 3pm

29 JUNE 2019
Saturday | 9am - 3pm

Find out more and register:
www.bcu.ac.uk/visit





BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT LIFE AT BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY

**COME TO ONE OF
OUR OPEN DAYS**

bcu.ac.uk/visit



www.bcu.ac.uk
+44 (0)121 331 5595

 [birminghamcityuniversity](https://www.facebook.com/birminghamcityuniversity)

 [birminghamcityuni](https://www.youtube.com/birminghamcityuni)

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

 [myBCU](https://www.snapchat.com/add/myBCU)

 [myBCU](https://www.instagram.com/myBCU)