



8 STEP REVISION PLAN

School of Mathematics and Physics

Complete these steps for each course

Step 1: Make sure your notes are complete

- **Lecture notes:**
 - Make sure you have a **complete** set of lecture notes
 - Get missing notes from Blackboard, friends or the lecturer
- **Problem sheets/Practical sheets:**
 - Make sure you have a **complete** set of problem sheets including their solutions
- **Past exams / Mock exams:**
 - Make sure you have three exam papers to test yourself with. Do not look at these until later (Step 7).

Timing: Before revision week

Step 2: Thoroughly understand your notes

- **Go through your lecture notes and make sure you understand everything**
 - Read through everything that is relevant for the exam – your aim is to find the bits you don't understand
 - Make the process active: make notes while reading. Rephrase things in your own words and note things you don't understand or things you want to revisit later
- **For things you do understand:**
 - Test yourself – redo problem sheet questions or coursework questions
- **For things you don't understand:**
 - Look for alternative perspectives on the material (e.g. other textbooks, [khanacademy.org](https://www.khanacademy.org))
 - Ask your lecturer during practical sessions or revision week to explain the material you don't understand

Timing: Before revision week

Relax for one or two days

Working intensely then relaxing will help you to retain more information

(Don't skip the working intensely bit...)

Step 3: Condense your notes

- **Go through your lecture notes again and condense them into a shorter set of notes**
 - Aim to condense the entire lecture course into approx. 6-8 sides of A4
 - Write out all definitions and theorems out in full
 - Summarise important examples
 - Summarise important examinable proofs
 - Leave out things you think are irrelevant
 - Consider leaving out things that you are **certain** you already have in your memory
 - Take timed breaks during this process. Your brain will be retaining the information you are summarising, so you need to stay sharp
- **At the same time, write out a set of 50-100 basic questions:**
 - Example questions: “What is the definition of a group”
- **You should now only revise using these condensed notes and questions**

Timing: 2-3 weeks before the exam

Relax for one or two days

Remember: this is an important part of revising

Step 4: Actively learn summarised notes by micro-testing

- **Read through your condensed notes repeatedly**
 - Read and re-read your condensed notes
 - Micro-test yourself: cover up lines and check you can recall them perfectly
- **Repeatedly set yourself your basic questions:**
 - Repeatedly test yourself using your set of 50-100 basic questions
- **You should keep doing this until you have committed your summarised notes to memory and you consistently get your basic questions correct**

Timing: 2-3 weeks before the exam

Relax for one or two days

Remember: this is an important part of revising

Step 5: Go through all your problems sheets / practical sheets

- **Redo all problems on your problem sheets / practical sheets**
 - Write out your answers carefully, as you would in an exam
 - Try to do this **without using your notes**
 - Mark your work using the model solutions
 - Your aim is to be able to do all problems (except those the lecturer has stated go beyond exam level) quickly and with confidence, and without needing your notes
- **Redo problems you found tricky (with your notes to help) until they are easy or you have committed the solutions to memory**

Timing: 2 weeks before the exam

Relax for one or two days

Remember: this is an important part of revising

Step 6: Reversal

- **Read through your condensed notes in reverse order**
 - Continue to micro-test yourself
- **Do your basic questions in reverse order**

The aim here is to stop your brain learning things sequentially and relying on order for recall

In an exam you will need to be able to recall things out of sequence

- **You should now have mastery of:**
 - Your condensed notes, your problem sheets
 - If not, repeat previous steps

Timing: 2 weeks before the exam

Relax for one or two days

Remember: this is an important part of revising

Step 7: Sit a TIMED practice exam paper

- **Sit a practice exam under exam conditions**
 - Time yourself and stick to the time limit
 - Sit your practice exam away from your notes so you are not tempted to look
 - Sit your practice exam somewhere where you won't be interrupted
 - No breaks, no cup of tea – be strict!
- **After the exam relax for an hour or two**
- **After relaxing, mark your exam**
 - Practice exams are given with numerical answers
 - For non-numerical answers use your lecture notes to check your answers
 - Consider swapping your answers with a friend, and mark each others
- **After marking, redo any missed or incorrect questions**

Timing: The week before the exam

Step 8: Focused final tweaks

- **Your practice exam will have highlighted some weaknesses**
 - Repeat Steps 1-6 but focusing on those areas where you were weak in your practice exam
- **Sit another practice exam**
 - Repeat Step 7 by sitting another practice exam
 - Again look for weak areas and repeat previous steps until the weakness has been corrected
- **Sit a third and final practice exam**
 - Repeat Step 7 by sitting a third and final practice exam
 - Again look for weak areas and repeat previous steps until the weakness has been corrected
- **You are now ready to sit your university exam**
- **Video summary of this guide:** <https://youtu.be/Chggod80e0U>

Timing: The week before the exam