

Dan

Research Student | Chemistry |

Access Reading PhD tutor



Time Management and Revision Techniques for your Subject Area

- Chemistry is famous for having a large number of contact hours, don't be daunted, all of these are to teach and facilitate your study.
- A key part of your week will be your practical module. For this you will have to prepare prior to the practical element as well as usually post-practical. This may be a pre-lab quiz and/or a COSHH form so my advice is complete these in plenty of time so everything is ready and sorted without a last-minute panic about printing it off in the morning. For example, in Year 1 the practical is 11:00 until 18:00, so on Friday or over the weekend I would complete the COSHH and read the practical guide. This meant everything was complete in time, and if I needed to do extra reading then I had plenty of time. If your practical has some post-work (i.e. a pro-forma or lab report), then I advise doing it asap while everything is fresh in your head. This means the concepts, ideas and observations are clear in your memory, so it is easier to write about. Sometimes the deadlines of these can be in 3-4 weeks' time, and when you have done 3 practicals and now have to write three pieces of coursework in a short period, it adds unnecessary stress to your degree.
- I advise going to as many lectures as you can, as sometimes an academic may say an important rule/concept, or draw some 'curly-arrow' mechanisms or answer a really important question from another student. This means when you are writing your lecture notes in your own time, you have the lecture slides as well as notes made during the lecture meaning you have double the explanation or key examples! Many academics may spend a lot of time drawing so it is extremely useful to be there in person as online lectures may not have these important ideas shown.
- Exams at university are a little different compared to school/college. If you learn the content required for that exam, around 50% of the marks are regurgitation, which links back to Bloom's Taxonomy of 'Remember' and 'Understand'. The other half of the marks require you to apply known concepts to unknown examples ('Apply') or may require you to 'Analyse' the information given to understand what the question desires from you. You may have to justify your opinion or idea ('Evaluate') and these will be the difference between a 2:1 or 1:1. Thus, my advice for revision is practice old past papers, workshop or tutorial questions, as half the battle of answering well is knowing what the marker desires from you. The question may have 'red-herring' numbers which can be easily ignored or extra information that achieves little. Knowing what each question wants from the student (you) by practicing will make you read an exam question and know what they are asking. This helps reduce stress in an already stressful environment, and means it is more like muscle memory allowing you to focus on the new application at hand. Many times, questions in previous past papers may be

effectively the same (with different values for example), so this is now easy marks for you as you practiced that paper last week!

- Don't be afraid to do revision with friends! Sometimes going and doing some practice past paper questions with some friends will allow you to discuss ideas together. I used to normally do past paper questions with two/three friends, where we would discuss how to tackle it roughly, all complete it in our time and then reconvene and discuss if we all got the same answer. Other times, I would complete questions on my own and then compare with friends at a later date. In tutorials or even at the end of lectures, you could ask an academic if your question is answered correctly, especially if it was a particular tricky one!

Overall, my advice would be, try and be prepared for each practical before and after and attend every lecture to ensure the best chance of success for your exams! Completing work or lecture notes asap really helps in the long run and while some friends may be panicking as they have no notes or haven't finished that lab report, you can sit back and watch that episode of that series you love or see some friends for a meal or coffee!