

# Procedure of Note Taking

## 1. Become an Effective Listener

In order to be an '**effective**' listener you need to be an '**active listener**'. Very often this can be difficult in a lecture hall, for example you may have interruptions from your peers, you may not be comfortable in the lecture theatre, or you may find the delivery of the speaker too boring.

Regardless of the difficulties faced, you need to **develop techniques to overcome your difficulties with listening**. You have a personal responsibility to yourself to become an effective listener in order to learn at University.

**Some techniques you may need to develop to help you listen effectively:**

- Focus on what is being said
- Listen for key points
- Remove Distractions
- Be Patient

Once you are able to develop these techniques in the lecture, you will be in a stronger position to take notes.

### **Top Tip!**

- *In the lecture choose a seat that allows you to see the board/projector screen easily. Avoid sitting near the door, the back or the room or under the air conditioning vent.*



## 2. Decide on What to Record

One of the main difficulties students face in lectures is knowing **what and how much information to record in lectures**. Too often students feel that they must get everything the lecturer says down on paper! This is not the case.

You need to determine what is important in a lecture. To decide what's important, a good starting point is to **analyse your course learning objectives**. This information should be made available to you at the start of your lecture, or available from Queen's Online.

Once you have looked at your learning objectives, then you should have developed an understanding of **what is expected from you**, which in turn will make it easier for you to know what to write down during the duration of a lecture.

**Sometimes a lecturer's approach can also help you determine what should be recorded. For example:**

- Sometimes information on what's important is clear by how the lecture is organised. Verbal clues like "Firstly . . . secondly . . ." normally indicate a series of important points.
- Non-verbal information, such as the lecturer's tone of voice, can indicate that a topic is important.
- The amount of time the lecturer spends on a topic may indicate its importance.
- The lecturer may provide you with a course outline, which can indicate topics that will be emphasised and what the structure of the course will be.
- Remember if the lecturer takes the time to write something on the board, or highlight a particular topic, then it is important – so write it down!

Knowing what to write down is very important but how you record this information is also very important.

**Top Tip!**

- *Compare notes with a friend or a group of friends doing the same lectures!*

### 3. Develop your Recording Style

This technique is something that is **down to your personal taste**. The most important aspect is that when you write it down you are able to look at it at a later date, and be able to read, and understand what you have written. It is common for students to scribble everything down during a lecture, but when they return to their notes at a later date, they cannot read them!

Have a look at the hand-outs provided on this homepage for some techniques that you may find beneficial for recording your notes during lectures. Remember, the following are only some of the common techniques, it is important that you develop a technique that suits your own learning style (for more on learning styles have a look at our LDS homepage).

**Techniques that you may find beneficial for recording your notes during lectures:**

- Cornell Note Taking System
- Mind Maps
- Abbreviations

**Top Tip!**

- *Have a look at our hand-outs on note taking digitally! It will provide you with information on how to effectively take notes using a laptop or a tablet device.*