



Do's & Dont's: Note Taking

DO. . .

- **Date and number pages** you use when recoding notes in lectures.
- Make sure that you **can read what you record**. If your handwriting is really bad you may want to look into using a laptop computer for taking lecture notes. However...
- **Think carefully before deciding to use a laptop!** You need to make sure you can type faster than you can write, and that your laptop battery can last the length of a lecture, or you have access to a power supply. Make sure you **BACK UP** your notes regularly!
- **File your notes** regularly don't leave your notes lying in your bag as they may go missing!
- Leave plenty of space between topics so that you **have room to edit your notes** if the lecture revisits a particular topic.
- Set aside a few minutes each day, as soon as possible after class, to edit your notes. Find and **fill in any missing points, underline and highlight titles and important points**, and summarise the main points of the lecture.
- If your notes are available before going to your lecture, make sure you read them and bring a copy of them with you to your lecture. **Preparing in advance** is key to your learning.
- Develop and use a **standard method of note-taking** including punctuation, abbreviations, margins, etc.
- **Listen for cues** as to important points, transition from one point to the next, repetition of points for emphasis, changes in voice inflections, enumeration of a series of points, etc.
- **Copy down everything on the board**, regardless. Did you ever stop to think that every blackboard scribble may be a clue to an exam item?

DON'T . . .

- **Don't depend on someone else's notes.** Your notes are particular to your skills and prior knowledge - they are unique to you. If you cannot attend a lecture make sure you look obtain someone else's notes, but also speak with your lecturer to ensure you haven't missed out on important information.
- **Don't cause or tolerate distractions.** If someone is distracting you, simply move to another seat – if this isn't possible then tactfully ask those making noise to be quiet.
- **Don't assume for any reason that going to class is unnecessary.**
- **Don't try to take down everything that the lecturer says.** It is impossible in the first place and unnecessary in the second place because not everything is of equal importance. Spend more time listening and attempt to take down the main points.

For information please contact us on 028 9097 3618 or email lds@qub.ac.uk

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/lds>