



The University of
Nottingham

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Veterinary Medicine and Science **Study Skills for Vet Students by Vet Students**

www.nottingham.ac.uk/vet



The Veterinary course is unlike any other educational experience that you may have encountered before. The course is intense and there are many new concepts and ideas that you will be exposed to. Most students find that they cannot work the way that they did during A levels or in other previous degrees. Adapting to these new demands is challenging, and you will need to develop new methods of learning and revising very early in your days as a new vet student. But the course is very fulfilling and as outlined in this booklet, many students have made this adaptation with great success.

The following reflection from a third year veterinary student outlines how she successfully adapted to the veterinary course. This is followed by tips and advice from vet students in their own words...

"In first year I chose to make all of my notes on my computer and then copy them up by hand at a later date as part of my revision. Although this worked it took a lot of time and I had to abandon copying up some modules in order to get on with proper revision. I revised simply by re-reading the notes over and over again. I realised that I did not like revising from a computer screen but needed a method of producing hand-written notes that took less time. I also needed a revision method that encouraged me to retain a larger proportion of information.

In second year I decided to write my notes up by hand in the lecture itself. This worked with certain lecturers but with others I got left behind. I often ended up with large amounts of notes to finish writing up each evening leaving me with very little time to relax and do other things. This often left me feeling stressed. Again I felt that I needed to find a note taking technique that required less time.

I found a better way to revise was to work through my notes with a friend, testing each other about what was written on each page. However, the problem with this method was that it only works when somebody else is able to revise with me. I needed a technique that I could also use when I was alone.

This year I have finally found a note taking technique that works well for me. I print off the lecture slides in advance and simply write additional points the lecturer makes onto my print-outs. This is a quick method that allows me to read through my notes without staring at a computer screen. For revision, I intend to make myself flash cards. On one side I will write key bullet points from my notes. On the other I will write myself prompts so that I can test my memory of what is written on the other side of the card. I will also be able to use the card with friends.

The evolution of my note taking and revision techniques over the past few years shows how I have used my reflective abilities to make new aims and work towards them. I have improved each year until I have found techniques that I am happy with. This shows the importance of reflecting on things that I do so that I can strive to better myself in the future."

Jenna Lamb,
Year 3 Veterinary Student

Get Organised!

Revision timetable split by module to make sure that I get time to cover each module as fully as possible without getting stuck on one aspect.

- YR4
- Make detailed revision plan - don't work for more than 2h at a time.
 - Make posters / spider diagrams.
 - Go out for fresh air!!
 - Summarise / bullet points - highlight!!!
 - Don't leave new things until the night before

- Yr4
- Revision timetable.
 - make notes through year
 - highlight!! & make notes on diseases -

Plan ahead with a Timetable

I make a detailed revision timetable to settle my mind. I make sure there are loads of breaks! Then once I have revised topics I teach it to other people - this helps me remember it.

Go over each teaching session as soon as you can to check you understand the key concepts!

Year 2

Read lectures thoroughly after to make sure I understand it.
- No point in not understanding it until revision!!

I make notes in lectures with key words. I then go back to write up the lectures again & write questions

Review the lecture soon after. Write what the lecturer says in class. Make colourful summaries.

Write up the lectures each week, highlight during revision and 'condense'!

Listen + add anything said not on slides in lectures → then write up lectures.
Read Physiology (Spasmod) - not dyce!
Revise by reading notes then asking questions to myself based on notes

Annotate the lectures at the time & then write them up into powerpoints - ready good to revise from!!

Make notes during lectures & use these to revise from & when it all gets too much find a topic you enjoy learning!

Condense lecture material and try to understand the big picture

Try to understand
the bigger picture -
combine notes!!!! 😊

One Note
❤️

try combining
lecture material
- gives the bigger
picture - Y2

YEAR 2

ANNOTATE LECTURE SLIDES DURING
LECTURE, TYPE UP IN ONENOTE
THEN PRINT-OFF + HIGHLIGHT DURING
REVISION PERIOD

YR 2 →

Write up lectures

→ Summarise

→ Note down key points

→ Flashcard these

and you'll be the cleverest
person ever

Condense lectures
onto flashcards

Writing down on
to one page of A4
Can be in back each
lecture - use pretty
pictures and lots of
colour

Keep going through
all notes condensing
them down each time

I write the lectures
into word document
(making it to a short version
with the most important)
Use anatomy and physiology
book, internet and then re-write
the word documents print out
for exam.

Write lectures
up & condense
to 1 side of A4

I repeatedly
condense my notes
- skim reading and
crossing out what
I "know" until I have
a few pages of key notes
to look over before the
exam

Use the learning objectives to help you identify the important points.

Go over e/lecture
u had that day
& answer the LO's
& Make sure u
understand all the
concepts, that way
u'll be up to date
with the info &
it'll be easier
when u revise
it later.

Make written notes
of lectures during
revision, summarising
the key points

Make revision cards from
LOs

Copy the LO's into a word doc
and write the answers underneath
during the lecture. I then go over
this afterwards and add info

Year 2

Read through lectures
before hand; Make notes by
answering the lecture learning
objectives



Work out what the key points are
and learn them!

Make funny
pneumonics

underline

Bullet points

- FLASH CARDS - need to get down the
- write notes - do not "need to know"
spend too much time points
on them
- Do all pet/deposit
throughout year

I make notes in
different colours so
they stand out better

Highlighter ~~~~~

Consider a variety of approaches to help you remember the material.

What works for one person might not work for you.

First get a broad theory / overview
THEN add details.
DON'T FORGET THE BIG PICTURE!

Flick through lectures
at high speed discussing
key points with peers.
Making funny stories helps.

- Colour coding
eg diseases in green
treatment in blue...

1 Make case studies for
44 clinical notes
OSPE / OSCE topics with
all the skill techniques with
pictures / diagrams
Posters & diagrams

I read through lectures,
write notes + then make revision
question cards

Make sure have
full set of typed notes
by getting friends to share
typing load (eg 5 friends
type up 2 lectures each before
week commences - then you'll
have notes there to add
to).

Do Pebble post carrier!



helps things
to flow

Spider diagrams

looks pretty

Helps you
to condense
notes.

Use flashcards
- make a
quiz from
your lecture

In lectures I make
notes on the slides in
onenote and then write
them up on paper in the
evening in brief bullet
points.

In CR we make notes
as a group and email
them around

Use lots of
different formats

Flashcards - one word on the
front and everything relating to it
on the back. Test yourself on each
word by writing on the whiteboard

Y2

put posters on the
toilet door
(makes parasite learning
more interesting...)

also make up stories
about arteries + veins
(LEARN ASSOCIATIONS)

Mindmaps
Bullet points
Tables
Diagrams

Not too many
words, lots of
pretty pictures &
colour

Flashcards
get everything together
in 1 place

Cut each lecture down
to key points one page
summary sheet / brainstorm

Big flow diagrams
which can be pinned up
on the walls to help
visualise everything

Write all my lectures up
in OneNote then read
through them & make
revision posters

Use a variety of resources to help your learning.

Don't rely just on the lecture material.

Year 2

Make a time

Use CLIVE

Draw out
goes in!

table to help you plan
+ digital slidebox for histology
diagrams to make sure the info

I make my own
notes from lectures
including diagrams
and info from
textbooks

Use Wikivet for Clin Rel cases
↳ PDF print-out format
↳ Book/revision guide
make.

When making notes from your
lectures use Dge + other relevant
textbooks from the library to
supplement your notes.

Use your condensed notes for your final revision.

Summarise each lecture to a page of concise notes for easy reference & revision.

Yr 2

- I make notes on slides in lecture
- then write up revision cards for
- so all notes are ready &
- keep a practical notebook →
- print out 12/1 & 12/2's

every lecture
revision for exams
lots of paper for 1st & 2nd!!
too, to read over

Condense lectures to the bare points.

Read over them with someone else a week before exams so they can teach you the bits you don't know.
Cram it all in.

All notes in 1 folder for each module. Scrap paper to one side & scribble it all down. Screw up piece of paper and try & get it in the bin! (challenge)

Consider working with friends or in a group

Work with another person
and test each other at
the end.

Ed Asked questions
by a friend after
revising a topic as
a check

Do a quiz in the
style of MCQs for your
friends.

Write colourful
notes from lecture slides
and go through answers
with other students.

- Work with others
- talk it over
- Ask for help + advice
- Put notes up around the house
ie. parasites in the bathroom so you see them all the time

Ask friends that you
trust not to bullshit to
help you answer questions.
I find peer learning very
helpful.

Year 2
Use Report cards
to make a + A
cards at end of each
lecture. You can then
test your friends!

I tell people
what I have
learnt so it
sticks! ☺

Try explaining
key concepts to someone
who is not on this course.
It will make you simplify
things in your mind and
then make it gradually
more complex ☺

- Make Flashcards
for each module → so far
have someone test you -
talking through helps/
teaching helps...

I make flash cards
with questions to test
myself or get friends
to test me.

Look after yourself!

Have
Many
breaks

~~Exercise~~ before you work!

& plan your day - have lots
of regular breaks e.g. walking
the dog to break up the day.

Work in short bursts
of lots of activity. Do something
you enjoy at least once
a day!

Years 2

Read over lectures, but don't
waste time writing them up.

Use the free time to do something
you enjoy instead 😊

Make sure you have
one nice thing
planned each
day.

Short sessions then
breaks - make posters
and spider diagrams

Take regular
revision breaks,
you can't concentrate
for long periods of time!

Take a
break - do
some exercise

DRINK LOTS
OF TEA

Pace yourself throughout the year and don't leave all your revision until the last few weeks!

- Don't leave to week before
- Make sure your notes are clear and concise
- Teach a friend, Q/A sessions

Write up lectures during term. Write revision notes pre-revision period. Learn notes during revision period.
... hopefully :)

I work through the modules methodically, writing them all up in one big A4 book. This 'BOOK OF THE YEAR' then contains everything! (I find this much easier to revise from).

- Y2 - little + often throughout year
- dictaphone (in lectures)
 - take notes + pictures in practicals
 - use textbooks in SDL's = better notes than wiki.
 - Less stress → more work stressing isn't constructive

Remember that not everyone learns in the same way!

What works for one person may not work for another, so try a number of approaches until you find what works for you.

don't compare yourself to others
~ We all learn differently

And, if the worst happens?

Resits aren't the end of the world



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Other resources you may find helpful

Nottingham University Academic Support:
[www.nottingham.ac.uk/student-services/
support-for-your-studies/academic-support](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/student-services/support-for-your-studies/academic-support)

Nottingham University Counselling Service:
www.nottingham.ac.uk/counselling

University of Southampton Academic Support:
[www.southampton.ac.uk/edusupport/ldc/
academic-skills](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/edusupport/ldc/academic-skills) Has some useful advice in
downloadable PDF files.

www.learnhigher.ac.uk

Centre for excellence in teaching and learning -
contains loads of advice including videos

<http://library.leeds.ac.uk/skills>

Skills@library support for students

www.dyslexia.uk.net and
www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk for more
information about these specific learning
difficulties

www.studentdepression.org

Advice for students about depression and where
to go for help

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