

Choosing your study method

This worksheet is designed to help you figure out the best study method for you. Work through each section, making notes as you go, and by the end you should be clearer on what methods of studying work best for you.

1 Reflect on your study skills

Think back on when you were last in formal education.

How did you study best at that time? And more importantly, which study methods got you results?

Your study methods at that time are likely to resonate with you now. Note down the study methods you found the most effective, and easiest to adopt. Some examples include studying in groups, using flash cards, or noting things down in your own words to review later.

If several years have passed since you were last in formal education, you'll have gained different, unofficial learning experiences, perhaps as a parent or in a workplace. Consider which skills you can use for your upcoming studies, and note them down in the box below, e.g. planning ahead, structuring your time.

2 Teaching methods and materials

Today, teaching comes in many forms, so let's outline what your ideal scenario would be as a starting point. You could rate each method 1–10 from not useful to best fit, to help you decide how to proceed. When giving a value we recommend talking it over with someone who knows you well and will offer constructive criticism. For example, you may feel you learn best watching a video, but your critical friend might disagree, and think you work better researching other resources on your phone.

Traditional classroom learning

Traditional classroom learning involves going to classes at a specific time, alongside other students. Classes are led by a teacher.

How have you managed with classroom learning in the past? Do you get on well with peers and a teacher? Do you enjoy a group atmosphere and making friends with other students all working towards the same goal? Is this the best way of learning for you?

If you're not a fan of classroom lessons, would you consider a course which includes a minimal amount of classroom work that's tailored to your specific needs? Make a note on how this method might work best for you.

How do you like to get your study materials?

Do you find it overwhelming to get everything at once? Do you like being able to see what's on the horizon via a schedule, with materials sent to you as and when they're relevant? Do you like to work at your own pace and want to have all the materials available?

Are you willing to compromise? Note down your ideal methods below.

Live streamed sessions/webinars with your teacher present

A recognised specialist broadcasts key points and explanations for groups of students to make notes. There may be opportunity to ask the presenter questions, depending on the volume of participants and delivery structure.

The presenter may answer questions and explain aspects of the presentation from new angles.

Do you think this could work for you? Are you skilled enough to take detailed notes and confident enough to ask questions? Are you excited at the idea of watching webinars and learning from your home?

Watching a pre-recorded video or webinar

Alternatively to live-streamed webinars, you may encounter pre-recorded videos or webinars. This may take the form of a video which you're asked to pause at certain points to complete an exercise, or it could be a series of videos with questions to complete as you progress. Would you use pre-recorded materials?

In previous studies, did you make notes from a video or ask questions about the content? If using a previously-streamed lecture at home, would you try to complete tasks in a meaningful way? Will you self-mark questions in a constructive way?

Are you confident you can stay on track and remain motivated when studying to your own schedule?

Reading textbooks or online notes

If you do this, how do you go about it? Do you read pages or a section before answering questions?

What do you do with the new information obtained? How do you deal with new subject specific vocabulary? Will you only read the textbook when prompted to, or will you use it of your own accord to seek out answers to problems? Do you need to be told when to read certain sections?

Questions with given answers

This could involve lots of will-power, which science has shown wanes as the day progresses. Are you able to work through the questions before checking the answers?

If you find an error in your responses when checking model answers, what action do you take to ensure you remember the improved information?

Online questions that are automatically marked

These may be in the form of your first attempt being marked, or you may get a few attempts to get the correct answer. If you were just told if your answer was right/wrong, would you go off on your own to figure out why?

The presenter may answer questions and explain aspects of the presentation from new angles.

Do you think this could work for you? Are you skilled enough to take detailed notes and confident enough to ask questions? Are you excited at the idea of watching webinars and learning from your home?

Online questions that are automatically marked that also provide feedback

These come in several styles. For more complex questions that require several steps, each step could provide feedback, stating how you should modify your working or giving reasons why your answer is correct.

Some may only allow a fixed number of responses before giving the correct solution and moving to the next question. How do you think you would do with this format?

Action plan

Having reviewed your learning experiences to date, you now need to plan your next steps.

- What style of teaching do you want to go for?
- What style of teaching will work within your budget?
- What establishments will you contact to find out if they have the teaching style and times that you want?
- When will you contact them?
- What questions will you ask?
- What communication with your employer, if any, will you initiate?
- What form will this communication take?
- Will you need to sign an agreement with your employer?
- Have you made a study plan?
- When will your course start?
- How long will the course run for?
- How long do I have access to online materials?
- When is the assessment date?
- Do you have an idea of you steps after this course?

Good luck in your studies

If you have any questions or want further advice, please get in touch with us below.

Call us on **+44 (0)20 3735 2400**.

Lines are open 09.00 to 17.00 (UK time), Monday to Friday.

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