

## **Ref: 0005 Analysis**

Source: "Exam Stress", 04/05/2016

### **What is stress?**

Stress is one of the body's natural responses to something that is threatening or frightening. It is something that we all experience from time to time. Many aspects of university life have the potential to cause stress, including adjusting to a new living environment, fulfilling academic requirements, developing friendships and preparing for and sitting exams.

Stress is not necessarily harmful: mild forms of stress can motivate and energise you. Slightly increased stress levels may make you more alert and motivated to do your work. However, if your stress level is too high then it can cause difficulties, including impairing your ability to prepare for and perform during exams.

### **What causes stress?**

To understand what produces the responses associated with anxiety and stress, think about how your body responded at times when you felt threatened or frightened. It is likely that you will have experienced the following physical responses:

- increased muscle tension to prepare your muscles for use;
- increased heart rate to boost blood flow and energy levels;
- increased breathing rate to supply oxygen required for energy;
- extra alert senses to produce a reaction from the slightest touch or sound.

Going out of my way when writing about the problem in my client brief, after some thought I realised personally, I've seen a lot of students lose their love for a subject when faced with exams. I decided to run with idea; taking this concept of the stress leading up to exams would then be linked to subject- leading to negative effects.

Before talking about a subject I thought I would do some research to ensure that the information I give is not only valid- but presented in a correct and fairly standardised way. These aims are what led me to the University of Leicester's webpage on exam stress. As a university site, I believe that any idea covered in the site would be valid; as it is giving advice to their own students- therefore it would be in their best interest to ensure such.

While they had plenty of information on how to deal with exam stress and how to deal with exams on general, the only purpose I had for this webpage was to get a valid definition of stress to allow me to define in the problem section in my client brief. This then opened up other questions I believed I should research- like further links to the relationship between exams and stress and if

possible- get some information that affects my target audience. While as a definition and cause of stress will not change for anyone, there may be differences in age groups in some aspects that would be dangerous to assume.