How to study

STATISTICS

Is statistics not really your favorite course? Has math never been your strongest point? Some students see statistics as a big obstacle. For this reason, when it comes to the quantitative courses they often experience stress and fear of failure. It is therefore important to follow a good approach where theory, exercises and software are closely linked to each other. Below and on the back side you can find some useful tips and ideas.

Theory

- A thorough understanding is necessary to start working with exercises and software.
- More context and explanation make formulas more 'digestible'.

Exercises

- Applying the different concepts gives you extra insight in the theory.
- Practicing requires quite some time, but can be highly rewarding!

Software

- Processing complex data helps you establish links between different notions.
- Through software you can easily recognize the practical relevance and usefulness of statistical analysis.

Need extra support? Contact Study Guidance!

Study advisors
Individual guidance for mathematics/statistics

Tutoring
Intensive help (private lessons) by VUB-students
Use your formula sheet to make the links between theory and exercises explicit:

- From formulas to exercises: When do I need to use this formula? For which kind of exercises? How do I combine different formulas?
- From exercises to formulas: How can I choose the right formula for this exercise? Are there any keywords which immediately remind you of certain formulas?
- Compare several kinds of exercises to find similarities and differences. In this way you can learn to recognize the right method in any situation.

Understand

- Focus first on the general principles and make sure you master the basic notions of each chapter.
- Make then sure you pay enough attention to details. This is the only way to be able to make a distinction between different concepts and techniques.
- Alternate theory with exercises so that you can immediately see how it works. This helps as well to better memorize the material.
- For each chapter think about what you have learned, how you have to use it and why it is important.

Practice

- Get to know your formula sheet really well! Do I understand every symbol in the formula? Can I make links with other formulas?
- Practice a lot so that you learn to work efficiently with your (basic) calculator and with the software.
- Work step by step and check every time whether the result of the intermediate steps makes sense. E.g. Is the value of the variance positive?
- For each topic make exercises with an increasing level of difficulty; start with simple examples and then move on to more challenging exercises.
- Try also new exercises, sometimes you just need to dare! Work independently, without looking at the solution.
- Don’t give up if you don’t immediately succeed: it’s ok to make mistakes! Try to find your own mistakes by checking your calculations. In this way you can learn from your experience!
- Practice regularly from the start of the semester. Using formulas and making calculations should become an automatism, so that you don’t lose time during the exam.

Establish links

- Use your formula sheet to make the links between theory and exercises explicit:
  - From formulas to exercises: When do I need to use this formula? For which kind of exercises? How do I combine different formulas?
  - From exercises to formulas: How can I choose the right formula for this exercise? Are there any keywords which immediately remind you of certain formulas?
- Compare several kinds of exercises to find similarities and differences. In this way you can learn to recognize the right method in any situation.