

**What is memory?** Memory refers to the processes that are used to acquire, store, retain and later retrieve information. There are three major processes involved in memory: encoding, storage and retrieval.

## Improve Your Memory Today!

### What can impact on our memory?

- Lack of Sleep
- Excessive consumption of alcohol
- Being very tense when studying

### How human memory works: The Information Processing Model

Memory is divided up into several stages:

**Sensory memory:** This is the first stage of memory and is of brief duration but has high information capacity. Each of the five senses has a sensory store that briefly retains information selection and processing. During the third of a second that information lasts in sensory store it is mentally scanned and only those characteristics that stand out or are important will be retained for further processing.

**Working memory:** This is the second stage in memory and again is of brief duration but has limited capacity. Working memory performs the function of processing information for long term storage. Two important processes that occur here are rehearsal and encoding. To maintain information in working memory it is necessary to rehearse it. To make information more memorable and resistant to fading from long-term memory, encoding the information through pictures, mnemonics or labelling is necessary.

**Long-term memory:** Long-term memory is the third stage in memory where information is stored, usually in an inactive form, and is available for retrieval on demand.

### Strategies for improving your memory

- **Pay attention:** You can't remember something if you never learned it, and you can't learn something—that is, encode it into your brain—if you don't pay enough attention to it. It takes about eight seconds of intense focus to process a piece of information into your memory. If you're easily distracted, pick a quiet place where you won't be interrupted.
- **Involve as many senses as possible:** Try to relate information to colours, textures, smells and tastes. The physical act of rewriting information can help imprint it onto your brain. Even if you're a visual learner, read out loud what you want to remember. If you can recite it rhythmically, even better.
- **Relate information to what you already know:** Connect new data to information you already remember, whether it's new material that builds on previous knowledge, or something as simple as an address of someone who lives on a street where you already know someone.

# Memory

- **For more complex material:** Focus on understanding basic ideas rather than memorizing isolated details. Practice explaining the ideas to someone else in your own words.
- **Rehearse information you've already learned:** Review what you've learned the same day you learn it, and at intervals thereafter. This "spaced rehearsal" is more effective than cramming, especially for retaining what you've learned.
- **Learn some memory enhancing techniques:** there are many techniques you can use to improve your memory such as Active Learning, Review, Notetaking, Rehearsal, Association, Chunking and Grouping, Mnemonics, Rhythm and Rhyming, or Remembering Written Material.

**More information is available in our "Tips for Enhancing Your Memory" tip sheet available from the USQ Counselling Website:**

If you would some assistance with improving your memory contact Student Services.

Free, confidential counselling available for currently enrolled students at  
USQ Student Services  
Toowoomba Campus, G Block Ph: (07) 4631 2372  
Springfield Campus Level 3 Main Building Ph: (07) 3470 4400  
Fraser Coast Campus Student Hub C Block Ph: (07) 4194 3125