Here are some strategies that can help you to understand better when listening to lectures. They are divided into three areas: strategies for BEFORE the lecture, DURING the lecture and AFTER the lecture.

**Strategies for BEFORE the lecture**

1. Prepare by:
   - checking any useful information your lecturer provides in advance, such as notes, slides and important reading
   - checking key concepts and vocabulary in your dictionary
   - comparing thoughts with a friend

2. Identify the purpose of the lecture by:
   - checking how the lecture fits with the rest of the module
   - checking the intended learning outcomes, i.e. what you should know by the end of the session or module
   - recognising the gaps in your knowledge and working out what information the lecture might provide

**Strategies for DURING the lecture**

1. Recognise main points by:
   - concentrating very hard at the beginning (introduction) and end (conclusion) of the lecture
   - listening for signposting (the words which indicate how the parts of the lecture are related, e.g. however, and, because of, due to, etc.)
   - listening for emphasis and intonation (as a general rule, a lecturer will put strong emphasis on an important point, i.e. their voice will sound slightly louder and with a higher pitch)
   - checking visuals

2. Deal with new vocabulary by:
   - guessing meaning from context
   - noting down and check later
   - ignoring it and leaving a gap to check later

3. Work with other students by:
   - sharing note-taking
   - agreeing to compare notes after lecture
4. Try a more active approach by:
   - checking your own understanding as you listen
   - asking questions about what you hear

5. Use a note-taking technique which suits you, for example you could try:
   - writing as you listen
   - typing as you listen
   - drawing a visual to help you understand
   - listening and summarising later
   - recording the lecture (with permission) and completing notes on a second listening.
   - printing key visuals and writing on them

**Strategies for AFTER the lecture**

1. Listen to the lecture again if it has been recorded; even better, do this with a friend.
2. Rewrite your notes.
3. Make a summary of the main points.
4. Explain the content of the lecture to someone or record key points for yourself.
5. Check your notes with a friend.
6. Look at past exam papers or assignment briefs to see if the notes are adequate preparation.