

TIME MANAGEMENT

Welcome! Learning how to manage your time is a skill which will serve you well through many different phases of life. Whether you are balancing study with a social life or work with a young family, the skills you will learn through this worksheet can help you.

You will learn how to:

- Understand your goals.
- Map and plan your tasks
- Maintain energy and motivation

Before you start make sure you have a pen and paper in front of you. Also make sure you are willing to be open and honest with yourself as you work through the steps. You will gain a lot more!

Step 1 – Understand your goals

Before getting down to specifics of managing your time, you need to think about why you are studying. As noted above, you may use the skills you learn here in other phases of life, but for the purposes of this worksheet we will focus on your university commitments.

Firstly, you need to think about your long term goals in life, and how your study fits in. This will help you maintain motivation and focus.

- Write down five things you want to achieve in life.
- Write down what you hope to achieve from your degree and where this fits into your broader life goals.
- Write down where you want to be in five years time.

What do your answers say about your focus and intended path for life? Are there clear goals developing? Or is everything a little hazy? Where does your degree fit into your answers?

If a clear goal has presented itself in your answers, that's great! If not, think a little further. Try to get an idea or a vision of yourself – who do you want to be? How will you achieve this? Why did you choose your specific degree? There are no wrong answers, just be honest with yourself.

Next, you want to make your goals clearer and more purposeful. You can do this by following the SMART rule. Follow the instructions below to map out your goal or goals:

- Specific:** What is your goal? Give a clear indication of what you want to do.
Measurable: How will you measure or check that you have reached your goal? What indicators will you use?
Attainable: Ensure you have the skills or resources to achieve your goal, or that they can be acquired.
Relevant: Is your goal taking you to where you want to be in the long term?
Time Frames: Give a specific time for your goal to be completed.

How does your goal look now? Is it clearer? Do you feel more focused? If so, great! If not, reassess each of your answers to the above questions.

Your aim is to have a clear path to an attainable goal. What is stopping your path becoming clear or your goal feeling attainable? Does your goal need to be reassessed?

Step 2 – Mapping and Planning

Mapping and planning helps you to achieve your goals by making the day to day steps manageable. In a way, by learning to manage your time, you are ensuring that the small but essential steps are taken on the way to the bigger goal (ie, getting your readings and assignments done!)

Map your time

Firstly, you need to have an understanding of what needs to be done and when. You will do this by mapping out your semester, week and day. Once you have it all down on paper it will be easier to see how you can balance out all the pieces. This practice also stops you from carrying everything around in your head and the worry that you might forget something.

Semester mapping

Fill in the semester planner (downloadable from the website) with the assessment due dates for each unit. You will find these on your course outline for each subject.

Add in any other planned events that you know of – for example, a weekend out of town, a friend's birthday party.

Tip: Use different coloured pencils or markers to brighten up your planners. It might help with motivation. Blue and black pen can be very dull particularly if you use them every day to take notes.

The purpose mapping out your semester is to help you gain an overview of the demands on your time. You only have to do this once for each semester, at most you will need to review or add new work if it arises.

Take your semester planner and review the information. Look at each piece of assessment and think about how much time you will need to complete it. Be realistic about the way you work. Do you spend a lot of time getting your first draft word perfect or do you like to do lots of drafts until you get it right?

Also look for:

- Assignments due on the same day or within the same week
- The word length or complexity of each assignment
- Assignments due later in the semester but will take a lot more work than some of the earlier ones
- Study/review time needed for exams

Once you have a basic understanding of each piece of assessment and where it fits into your semester, mark down a date in the semester planner indicating when you want to begin working on it, even if it's just preliminary reading or planning.

Tip: Double your time estimate! Most people have a tendency to underestimate how long tasks will take.

Rather than rushing to get each project finished, you want to have an understanding of how a project will pan out. You are aiming to maintain a flow to the way you work. This flow means that you don't have weeks of idleness followed by a mad rush to get an assignment in on time.

Next, we break it down week by week.

Weekly mapping

Fill in the weekly planner (downloadable from the website) with everything you do each week.

That is:

- Lectures and tutorials
- Work
- Exercise
- Social/family activities

- Study/lecture readings

It is likely your weekly planner will be flexible as it will have to change with the different demands on your time such as changing work schedule.

For now, just start with the current week and what you have planned, or expect, to do.

Take your semester planner and have a look at what is noted down. Do you have assessment due? Are you planning on starting an assignment? Are you going out of town?

Note all these things in your weekly schedule. If you have a big study workload, is there anything you can drop for a short time? If you have some free time, can you spend a bit more time at social events or start another assignment early?

Looking at the weekly planner, think about the following:

- Do you feel confident that you can stick to this plan?
- Is the weekly planner a true reflection of what you do? Make sure you haven't tried to make yourself look better – you are the only one who will see it!
- Do you have lots of clear space on your weekly planner, yet have always felt rushed to get things done? If so, think about the approach you have taken to getting everything done – for example, if you have tended to keep it all in your head it may have felt out of control.

The weekly planner should help you find balance and show that there is enough time for all your activities. If there isn't enough time you might have to think about what you can do without!

Daily Mapping

Now that you know how to break down your semester and your week, you can set daily schedules. A daily schedule is downloadable from the website.

In order to be really time efficient, you need to have a workable plan of action for each day. It's a good idea to spend a few minutes each morning simply making a list of everything you need to do.

Your daily schedule should be more specific than the others. That is, if you need to begin an assignment, you should include the time taken to go to the library to borrow a particular book or to spend an hour researching on the internet.

Keep your daily schedule in clear dot points and tick each one off as it is done.

Also remember, there is often wasted time during the day. Can you use your travel time on the train to do your readings? Or can you use your lunch break to borrow a book you need later?

Make sure that you work in chunks. Ask yourself – what can I do in half an hour?

Don't set yourself work that will take more than 10 – 14 hours in any one day. More than this is too much and you will work less effectively!

Now that you have a clear idea of how to manage your time, there is one last step for you to think about... maintaining the motivation to get the work done!

Step 3: Maintaining energy and motivation

The purpose of thinking about your goals in Step 1 was to help you have a clear idea of what you want to achieve. This helps you to remain motivated to do the day to day steps on the way. It gives you a sense of purpose in that you are aiming towards achieving something big!

Maintaining energy on a day to day level is a little different. It's easy to fall into unhelpful habits like procrastination. The following tips will help you address these issues:

- Know what time of day your work best – don't schedule to do reading at night if you are likely to fall asleep
- Don't work for more than a couple of hours at time. Make sure you take small breaks to rest your mind.
- Exercise – by keeping the body active, the mind follows. Make time to have a break and go for a walk, a ride or to the gym.
- Don't be too hard on yourself if you have flat days. You will have some flat days, these days can be helpful as you need to re-gather your thoughts, rethink your ideas and review your work.
- If you tend to procrastinate, address the problem. Use our procrastination worksheet ([LINK](#)) or contact us ([LINK](#)).
- Eat well. A good diet helps to keep your mind alert.
- Try to maintain a stable level of energy throughout the semester rather than relying on adrenaline to get the job done at the last minute

One last note:

Don't be too hard on yourself if you find it hard to keep on track at first. It will take a little practice to become a really efficient time manager.