

Module 10: Managing your Time

Aims of this module:

- To identify the function of time management tools
- To show how using planners and study schedules can help you manage your workload
- To explain the importance of setting boundaries

It can be challenging to manage a busy academic workload at University, while still keeping up with family, part time work and social commitments. There are four tools to help you manage your time effectively at university:

- A. Semester overview planner
- B. Weekly study planner
- C. Daily planning and study session planning
- D. Setting boundaries

A. Semester Overview Planner

This provides an overview of the workload of the whole semester (or year). You can see all commitments at once including due dates for assignments/exams and busiest periods. You can plan the time needed for completing each task by its due date and you can use this as the basis for the weekly plan.

How to use it

1. Write in the dates for each week
 - For example, in the second column, next to Wk 1, write Feb 28 - Mar 6
2. Write names of your courses along the top
 - For example, History, Linguistics, Anthropology, Sociology
3. Write all due dates of assessment tasks and exam/test onto the Planner.
4. Think about each assessment task. What steps are required? For example:
 - Analyse topic
 - Research - find sources, reading, note making
 - Write essay plan and thesis statement
 - Write first draft
 - Edit first draft
 - Write final draft
 - Edit final draft
 - Print and hand in.
5. Looking at your Planner, choose one assessment that is due (e.g. Essay due in Week 6). Working backwards, starting with the blank rows preceding the due date, write in the steps required. For example Week 5 Write final draft → Week 4 Write first draft → Week 3 Research and Plan → Week 2 Research and Brainstorm). Some weeks will have multiple steps.
6. Reflect on your busiest/quietest periods. For undergraduates, assignments are usually due in Week 6/7 and at the end of the semester. The exam block may also be busy if your course has exams. Make sure you allow plenty of time for study in these busy periods.

Semester Overview Planner

Semester		Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4
Wk 1	Date				
Wk 2					
Wk 3					
Wk 4					
Wk 5					
Wk 6					
Wk 7					
Wk 8					
Wk 9					
Break					
Wk 10					
Wk 11					
Wk 12					
Wk 13					
StuVac					
Exams					

B. Weekly schedule

Using a weekly schedule enables you to allocate blocks of time each week for private study each week. Many university and non-university commitments remain stable from week to week (e.g. lectures and tutorials/lab sessions; sports practice; some paid work). It is important to have balance in your life, and a Weekly Planner allows you to plan for it.

How much time should I spend on private study?

Full-time study is like having a full-time job. Most courses require 20-40 hours per week of private study (doing assignments, preparing for exams and quizzes, making study notes and revising). This is *in addition* to attending lectures, tutorials and practicals. The number of hours depends on the course. Naturally, some periods of the semester are busier than others. The first few weeks are less busy than mid-semester and end of semester.

How to use the Weekly schedule.

1. Write in university commitments
2. Write in regular non-university commitments (work, exercise, social)
3. Write in meal, sleep and travel
4. Allocate the rest of your available time to study or leisure.

C. Daily planning and study session planning

Daily planning is essential so that you can see what timeslots you have available each day.

Divide each day into short, medium or long timeslots. Then commit specific tasks to each timeslot.

Short Timeslots (e.g. lunch break, public transport)	Medium Timeslots (1-3 hours)	Long Timeslots (3+ hours)
Revise lecture notes Skim read a journal article Brainstorm ideas for essay	Do essay plan Edit essay Read article in depth Write draft essay Write exam study notes	Divide long timeslots into smaller hourly timeslots

How to use the Daily Planner

Step 1: Fill in your day's commitments (classes, meals, work, socialising). Use your weekly planner as a guide, but modify it depending on your week.

Step 2: Look at your Semester Planner. What tasks are due this week? Allocate them to each day. Write them next to the tick-boxes on the bottom of Daily Planner.

Step 3: Fill in tasks into the available timeslots.

Step 4: Colour in the tick-boxes when you accomplish (some or all of) the task. If you finish half the task, colour in half the box.

Daily Planner

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
8.00am						
9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00
10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
11.00	11.00	11.00	11.00	11.00	11.00	11.00
12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00
1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00
8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00
9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00
10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
11.00pm						
<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input type="checkbox"/>						

D. Setting Boundaries

It is easy to be distracted when trying to study. It can be easy to procrastinate and waste time. In order to make the most of your study time, it is important to know how you waste time and to set boundaries so that you minimise wasted time.

What are your three biggest distractions when trying to study?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Try to work out a way to counter or prevent the distraction from becoming a time-waster. Two major distractions students face are technology and people. Here are some suggestions for how to avoid these distractions.

People distractions: How do I say no?

Here are some helpful things to say to your friends:

“Let’s meet up at 5pm after I’ve finished my first draft of my essay.”

“Sorry, I’ve got a lot on at the moment. I hope you find the help you need. Let’s catch up after the exams.”

If someone continues to insist, use the broken-record technique. Just repeat the same sentence as your response each time. “I wish I could help, but I can’t”.

Technology distractions: Turn them off!

- Turn your phone to silent during a study session.
- Change your settings for Facebook, Skype etc so that it requires a manual sign-in.
- Set times to use technology (e.g. Only check emails or Facebook after 5pm or after you have written your draft!)

If you need more help with time management, you can attend these Learning Centre workshops:

- ❖ **Managing time**
- ❖ **Concentration and procrastination**