

Managing Your Time Effectively

Time management is an important part of life at university. It is common for many students to have paid work and significant responsibilities. In the changing world of higher education, it is not surprising that all students need to use their time in the most effective way. The following six strategies will help you to make the most of the seven days of the week.

1 **Plan your study, family, work, and leisure activities over seven days rather than five.**

If you plan in terms of a seven-day week, this strategy will enable you to see that some parts of the week that you may have allocated for leisure can be used for study during busy periods. Many students find that it helps to plan the coming week every Sunday afternoon or evening.

2 **Photocopy or buy a large semester planner and then mark in all the due dates for each assignment.**

Use different coloured highlighters to indicate if an assessment task is a shorter or a less time-consuming task or a longer, more demanding one. Also write in the weighting of each task. Highlight examination periods, semester breaks, and work placements; as these will mean fewer formal classes and an increase in the time available for study. (You will be able to buy large planners for your wall from a bookshop.)

3 **Use a 7- Day Planner to carry out a quick review of how you spend your time.**

Make two copies of the 7-Day Planner. Look for ways to re-order your time so that study occupies a more prominent place over the seven days. Plan your study time in 'blocks' so that you have study periods of two or three hours in length. Then you will have enough time to read intensively, write the first draft of a report, or tackle work in two different areas. Finally, on the second copy of the Planner, re-draw your schedule so that your reorganised weekly plan is in place for the coming week or month.

4 **Although you might feel that all your time will be spent studying or working, you can make the most of your free time by combining activities.**

For example, by walking or going to the gym with friends, combine your social life and your fitness program. If you make the most of your leisure time, you will feel more relaxed and committed when you eventually sit down to revise a lecture, read a journal article, or polish the draft of an essay.

5 **Think in terms of 'high quality' time for study and 'low quality' time for study.**

High quality times are those blocks of time in which you feel freshest. Always use high quality time for the most challenging tasks such as reading journal articles and writing the first drafts of essays. Use low quality time for routine tasks such as downloading course materials, checking references, deleting e-mails, and re-organising your own electronic files.

6 **When you study, focus your attention on the task and minimise distractions.**

If you find that your study areas at home are busy or noisy, do the most demanding tasks in the university library or in your nearest local library.

For further information:

- Contact the Academic Skills Adviser on your campus
- Visit our web pages on myACU.

Print the Pamphlet Series

Last revision:
December 2006