



TIME MANAGEMENT

How to complete your assignment one week before it's due

Student Life - Counselling Support

'Time' is one of our most precious resources. It's important to use it wisely so as to cope effectively with the demands of university life. Research indicates that time management skills correlate highly with academic success and satisfaction.

We can learn to manage our use of time. It's a skill that can be learnt and developed so as to promote balance in our lives. Treat your time at Uni as you would a job where you had to attend for fixed hours, and plan what you will do in that time.

This brochure presents some ideas that may assist you to better manage your time. We recommend that you try these ideas early in your university career, and discover what best works for you.

Organise your place of work

Ensure that your study environment is a pleasant space. Organise your books, papers etc. so that they are easily accessible. Searching for things is a big time-waster. "Have a tidy desk" can be the number one priority in your list (see below)!

Establish a timetable

Obtain a planner (see [Writing Centre Academic Learning Resources](#) or call in to the counselling centre). Schedule in fixed commitments e.g. lectures, tutorials, sports training. Also schedule in due dates for assignments, projects etc. Bring these dates forward by a few days to give you 'surprise' extra time, either so you have an opportunity to reflect before submitting, or to allow for the unexpected e.g. illnesses. Decide how you can best use the remaining time, recognising the importance of allocating time for recreation, socialising, family, self etc. (Electronic versions of the planner and smart phone apps are handy alternatives to the planner and diary.)

Plan your day

Begin each day with a list of things you both "have to" and "want to" accomplish. It is better to have more items on your list than less. A task will tend to expand with the time allocated for it. If you have one or two items on your list, it may take all day to do them. If you have ten items on your list, even if you complete seven or eight during the same

allocation of time, you will be ahead! A full day is better than an empty day.

Prioritise the list

What is most important on your list? Rate the tasks in order of priority, and tackle them systematically, starting with the most important.

Know your peak study times

Decide when you have most energy, when you are most able to focus and concentrate. Schedule your most demanding work for these times and your less demanding work for other times when your energy is not as high.

Study strategy

Study for about an hour at a time, then have a short break of 10 minutes. This is an efficient study method because while you are taking a break your brain is still processing the information. Breaks between study blocks ensure that your levels of concentration will be maintained when you return to study. (One hour is an arbitrary start-point – try for more or less, depending on your individual style and needs.)

Divide and conquer

A large assignment or project may appear overwhelming. It becomes manageable and achievable when broken down into several smaller parts. Complete one part at a time. Should you feel 'stuck', move on to another part of the assignment.. You don't necessarily need to start at the beginning.

Allocate thinking and reflection time

After completing a piece of writing, leave it for a day or two, then return to it with fresh ideas and enthusiasm. Effective time management means you will have planned in the time for this.

Avoid procrastination

Develop strategies that combat procrastination (see separate pamphlet). Start early in the day. It is empowering to complete one small task soon after waking up. Reward yourself when you have successfully resisted the temptation to procrastinate and when you have completed your task (or sub-task!).

Learn how to deal with interruptions

Let the person interrupting you know that you are studying and that you really need to continue. If you have planned your time effectively, you will have some planned free time. Learn how to politely and assertively invite people to phone or visit you during these specific, non-study times.

Take care of yourself

Ensure that your diet is nutritional, that you get sufficient sleep, enough exercise and time to “smell the roses.” Plan time just for yourself as well.

Allow time for a social life

Ensure that you schedule time for catching up with friends, doing what you enjoy, visiting family members etc. This helps achieve balance in your life which is essential for effective study.

Spirituality/mindfulness

Life is more than study and work. Give yourself time to reflect on the amazing journey that is your life.

***Keep the big picture in mind – value yourself and your goals
Plan how you spend your time to achieve them!***

Counselling Support is available to assist students with personal difficulties that are affecting their study.

The service provides:

- Individual Counselling by appointment
- Telephone Counselling by appointment
- Mental health emergency response

Counselling Support

Ground Floor, Horace Lamb Building

The University of Adelaide

Ph: +61 8 8313 5663

After hours support: 1300 167 654 or sms 0488 884 197

This pamphlet was written by Flinders University Health and Counselling Services and has been reprinted as part of a collaborative project between the counselling services at Flinders and Adelaide University. Modified by Student Life Counselling Support.

Reviewed Feb 2017