

TIME MANAGEMENT

Managing your time at university is very important and time management is about establishing ways to complete tasks associated with your goals. Developing strategies aimed at managing your time effectively include:

- Listing and specifying goals
- Identifying tasks associated with goals
- Prioritising tasks, allocate time according to the overall value of the assessment items
- Monitoring and evaluating your progress.

Listing and Specifying Goals: Write down what your long, medium, and short-term goals are for being at university. Long term goals include your career, degree, semester, and other life goals. Medium term goals are your weekly activities and your short term goals are your day-to-day activities.

Identifying tasks associated with goals: Using an electronic or USQ wall calendar, record your tasks for achieving your long terms goals for the semester, such as reading course content, completing assessment items, assignment due dates, research tasks, exam preparation, exam dates. Record semester breaks, holidays, and other important dates, so you can plan for your semester and your life. Remember that semester 1 and 2 consist of 13 teaching weeks, 2 weeks mid-semester break, 2 weeks of exams, with a 4 week break in July and semester 3 is 10 weeks of teaching, a Christmas and New Year break and a shorter exam period.

Develop a **weekly timetable** that includes activities to achieve your medium term goals. On this weekly timetable, record your essential contact hours (lectures, tutorials, MEETUP, assignment or study groups) then include private study time and your other responsibilities in life.

Prioritising Tasks: Each day plan what your short term, daily activities will be, bearing in mind what activities you have on your weekly timetable and semester calendar. In terms of planning for your day, make a list of the things that you have to do, prioritize them and focus on them, one task at a time. Bear in mind that your assignments may be due around the same time, so you need to start each 2-4 weeks prior, so you can finish one and easily move on to the other.

Monitoring and Evaluating Progress: Keep an eye on your use of your plans to re-evaluate your weekly progress and identify where you can make some adjustments and make time in your holiday periods, to accomplish the things you want to do.

Tips

- Start studying early and establish a routine that includes uni, work, other commitments, and time out. Be flexible and review it.
- Studying is about managing time, maintaining your commitment and motivation, and putting in effort
- Ask yourself whether you are expecting too much or doing too much and whether you may need to reduce other activities to find time to study?
- Let your family, friends and workplace know about your study schedule and when you will and will not be available to do things
- Arrange to do spend more time with family and friends in the semester holidays (April, July, November – February)
- Writing things down helps to manage your time and remind you of what you need to do
- Monitor the time you spend on various activities

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- Establish the best time and place for you to study (morning, afternoon, and/or evening, alone or in a study group, when the kids go to bed, in silence or with music, at a desk or on the sofa, at home or at uni, in the library or computer labs, etc.)
- Turn off or move away from any distractions while working on an assignment
- Break tasks down into doable bits, complete one at a time or move onto jobs that will make you feel empowered when you finish them
- Study in chunks of time and take a short break after 1 hour
- With the right information and support you will succeed
- Contact the Learning Centre staff for assistance with study skills, critical thinking, structuring and writing your assignments and math and computer software assistance
- Learn how to use the Library catalogue and talk to the friendly staff
- Use the times in between lectures to do short tasks or read while on public transport or during breaks at work
- Keep your balance, exercise daily, eat healthily, keep in touch with friends and family, and have your own interests
- Recognise that asking for help is a normal behaviour at university, start early and chat with the lecturers, students, mentors, MEET UP Leaders, Librarian, SRO, counsellor, etc.
- Do your weekly readings and prepare for assignments ahead of time
- Learn to say “No” to distractions or unreasonable requests once your study priorities are set
- Recognise when you are procrastinating, use positive self talk and actions, such as saying, “My mood will not get my assignment done, action will, I will break down the task, focus on what I know, achieve that task and move on”.
- Learn some new strategies to overcome procrastination or to deal with any personal difficulties by chatting with a Student Services counsellor
- Plan ahead and try to stay ahead of tasks so you can cope with any unexpected events
- Reward yourself for your hard work
- Research shows that working over 25 hours per week in a job may jeopardize your successful completion of fulltime study.
- Taking control of your life and study schedule will reduce your stress levels

Online Tools

The following tools can assist you with your own time management skills:

- The **USQ Academic Calendar** <http://www.usq.edu.au/handbook/current/accal.html>
- The **USQ Learning Centre** has useful information on time management and planning <http://www.usq.edu.au/learningcentre/tips>
- The **University of Melbourne** has useful advice on setting a study schedule <http://cms.unimelb.edu.au/student-services/asu/study/TimeTaskManagement>
- **Virginia Tech** (USA) provides some useful exercises and a self evaluation form on time management strategies <http://www.ucc.vt.edu/lynch/TimeManagement.htm>
- **Mind Tools** provides strategies for managing your time http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_HTE.htm
- The **University of St. Thomas, St. Paul Minnesota** (USA) has an online electronic planner <http://www.studygs.net/schedule/>
- The **USQ** has an academic reflection exercise to improve academic performance <http://www.usq.edu.au/aware/>

Free, confidential counselling available for currently enrolled students at
USQ Student Services

Toowoomba Campus, G Block Ph: (07) 4631 2372

Springfield Campus Level 3 Main Building Ph: (07) 3470 4400

Fraser Coast Campus Student Hub C Block Ph: (07) 4194 3125

[Acknowledgements: Burns, R. (2003). *Unwind 10 Ways to manage stress and improve your wellbeing*. South Australia: Allen & Unwin]