

PLANNING YOUR SEMESTER

HOW WILL YOU ALLOCATE TIME?

One of the challenges faced at university is managing time effectively. Planning for the semester should start early and can be revised repeatedly as needs arise. To begin the process, ask yourself the following questions.

- How good are you at allocating, prioritizing, and managing time?
- Have you considered how you will allocate your time so you do your very best in all your courses?
- How will you make yourself accountable so that once you have drafted a plan for your semester studies, you actually keep to it, and reward yourself for meeting deadlines?

Most courses have a workload of 165 hours each semester. This is a workload of 10-12 hours each week and includes lectures and tutorials for on-campus students and reading study material if you study off campus.

To plan for the semester you will need to include study and non-study commitments (e.g. work, family).

WHAT ARE YOUR STUDY COMMITMENTS?

To know your study commitments, use the course specification, introductory material, lectures or information on the study desk to help answer the following questions.

1. How many hours a week are you requested to study for each course?
2. How are you going to be assessed in each course?
3. How many hours are you expected to input into each course assignment?
4. When are your first assignments for each course due and what are they?
5. When are the subsequent assignments due?

WHAT ARE YOUR NON-STUDY COMMITMENTS?

Your life is made up of more than study, so it is important to carefully reflect on what these other commitments will be. Some will be regular (e.g. work, family activities), while others may occur only once or twice in a semester (e.g. work training courses, sporting events). Don't forget to allow time for rest, fun and recreation.

PREPARE A SEMESTER PLAN

1. **Find the Course Specification** for each course. Note when each assessment is due.
2. **Obtain a calendar for the semester** and include the assessment dates for all your courses in the calendar. Draft study schedules are often provided in lectures, online and in study materials.
3. **What other important events are happening** while you are studying?
We all lead busy lives. Think about any other important events that are happening during your study that you might have to plan around, e.g., practical work in other courses, planned surgery, sporting commitments, birth of a baby, work commitments.
4. Put all of the above information together into a Semester Timetable, using the following template:
<http://www.usq.edu.au/learningcentre/alsoline/effstudy/timeman/semplan.htm>

ORGANISING YOUR STUDY TIME

By the end of the first five weeks you should have completed about 50 hours of study for each course. That is 200 hours of study for on campus students (4 courses) and 100 for external students (2 courses). Think now about the activities you would do in the first weeks of study and write your own timetable for the first 2 weeks. Study activities in the early weeks could include:

Read introductory material	Prepare an assessment plan	Prepare for early assignments	Join a discussion group
Complete readiness tests	Read first module	Summarise first lecture	Participate in learning workshops

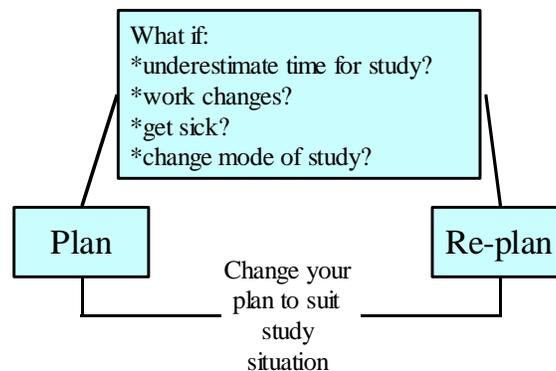
Here is an example of a study timetable for the second week of semester. This student works and studies two courses (one on-campus and external).

Timetable for week 2 (example only)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
5-6								
6-7	Work	Work		Work	Work			
7-8								
8-9								
9-10			Lecture				Shopping and home activities	Activities in module 1 Discussion group
10-11								
11-12			Tutorial					
12-1						Prepare for assignment 1		
1-2								
2-3								
3-4	Lecture		Assignment reading at Library					
4-5	Tutorial				Do online quizzes			
5-6			Gym					
6-7	Dinner	Dinner		Family	Family and recreation		Family and recreation	
7-8	Family	Family	Dinner	Dinner		Work		
8-9	Read lecture notes, do questions			Family				
9-10		Read Module 1 of external course	Read lecture notes, do questions					
10-11								
11-12								

Your timetable for study will look very different from this, so use the following weekly timetable template to plan your own: <http://www.usq.edu.au/learningcentre/alongline/effstudy/timeman/weekplan.htm>

Effective planning for study means that you are in control of your study. If your situation changes then be prepared to change your plan accordingly.



If your personal situation changes or if your planning involves concerns about career directions, then talk with a Student Services counsellor: <http://www.usq.edu.au/student-services/>

RESOURCES

- Other QUICK TIPS FOR STUDENTS <http://www.usq.edu.au/learningcentre/tips.htm>
- Online resources
<http://www.usq.edu.au/learningcentre/alongline/effstudy/timeman/weekplan.htm>
<http://www.usq.edu.au/learningcentre/alongline/effstudy/timeman/semplan.htm>
- Attend a Learning Skills workshop
<http://www.usq.edu.au/learningcentre/workshops>
- Talk with a tutor at The Learning Centre (tlc@usq.edu.au)

The Learning Centre
 T: +61 7 4631 2751
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 W: www.usq.edu.au/itsu/learnsupp/

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