Managing your time: How to Succeed at Uni

ANU Library Academic Skills
ANU Counselling
The Australian National University acknowledges, celebrates and pays our respects to the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people of the Canberra region and to all First Nations Australians on whose traditional lands we meet and work, and whose cultures are among the oldest continuing cultures in human history.
Outline

• Managing your time
• Maintaining balance
• Motivation
• Positive mindset
• Not all of this content will be relevant to you
• See what makes sense for you
• Focus on taking away two or three key points!
Too much time?  
Too little time?
Know yourself
Expectation

Reality

Accountability
• What helps you to stay accountable when meeting an expectation?

• What strategies have you used in the past?

• What do you think might work in your studies?
THE TASK I MUST UNDERTAKE IS TOWERING OVER ME LIKE A GREAT BIG MONOLITH

IT IS TOO BIG TO CONTEMPLATE, SO I THINK I WILL GO AND HAVE A LITTLE LOOK AT THE INTERNET
# Semester Planner

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Bigger picture planning = break down your tasks
Establishing a routine - work out your weekly pattern

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**Time Budget:**
- **Blue zone (must do):** 12.5 contact hrs
- **Orange zone (independent study blocks):** 27 hrs
- **Purple zone (would like to do):**
Completing tasks - Develop lists to plan study sessions

Task list

1) PREPARATION
   - choose competitor
   - get background info

2) ANALYSIS
   - gather data
   - perform calculations
   - for your research

3) WRITING
   - report plan
   - First draft
   - Re-draft + edit

Today’s to-do list

TO DAY
* Summarise ECON lecture
* Practice for STAT quiz
* Prepare for STAT assignment 1

* Perform calculations for BUS report
* Revise for ECON tute test
How do you work out what to prioritise?
Covey’s Quadrants

- Quadrant I: Important and Urgent
- Quadrant II: Important but Not Urgent
- Quadrant III: Not Important but Urgent
- Quadrant IV: Not Important and Not Urgent
• What sort of activities do you think fall into the quadrants?

• How do you distinguish what is important?
The diagram illustrates a Quadrant of Necessity, Quadrant of Deception, Quadrant of Quality, and Quadrant of Reward. Each quadrant is further divided into categories of tasks or activities. The Quadrant of Necessity includes Urgent (I) and Not Urgent (II) tasks, with Urgent tasks being further categorized as Important (I) and Not Important (II). The Quadrant of Quality includes Quadrant of Planning (II) and Quadrant of Organising (IV). The Quadrant of Deception includes Quadrant of Interruptions (III) and Quadrant of Messages (IV). The Quadrant of Reward includes Quadrant of Social media (III) and Quadrant of YouTube (IV).
Break bad habits

Develop good habits
• What’s your schedule like this semester?

• Given what we just discussed, how do you think you will arrange your time? What tools will you use to help you?
Maintaining Motivation
Is it normal to feel unmotivated sometimes?
Barriers to maintaining motivation

• Boredom
• Anxiety
• Uncertainty
• Habit
• Competing priorities
• Feeling tired or lacking in energy
Maintaining motivation

Too easy / familiar

Too complex / challenging

Just right!

Too easy / familiar
Maintaining motivation

- Academic study is complex, with many steps
- Acknowledge the challenge
- Break down the complex task
- Stay positive
Extrinsic
Intrinsic
Self-regulation
Self-efficacy

Grades, wanting to please the tutor (situational interest)
Belief in one’s ability

Individual interest
Ability to manage yourself, belief in your control over achieving goals

Mackiewicz & Thompson 2013, p. 45
What’s motivating you? What’s your intrinsic motivation?
When things go wrong

• Not everything will work out just as you’d hoped
• That’s ok
• Mistakes are a crucial part of learning
• Emotions are ok (disappointment, worry, frustration), what you do next makes a difference

Hughes, 2020
Setback

Emotional response

Paralysis

Avoidance

Analysis

Rumination

Negative spiral

Inaction / negative action

Positive critique

Motivation and planning

Positive action

Hughes, 2020
Small steps

It takes time and practice to manage our time well and maintain motivation.
Balance and wellbeing
Is poor sleep a normal fact of life, especially for a uni student?
Is poor sleep a normal fact of life? **NO.** Giving up sleep to study has the opposite intended effect: without good sleep, we are more likely to forget the things we learned.
What do we mean by wellbeing?

- Sleep/rest
- Good diet/exercise
- Good relationships
- Positive mindset
- Good self-belief

Hughes, 2020
Social well-being and learning

- Community of learners
- Isolation leads to poor health

Not all friendships need to be close:
  - Convenience
  - Shared interests or pleasures
  - Emotional intimacy

Hughes, 2020
True or false:

At university, I should expect to be stressed. Working hard and stress go hand in hand.
I should expect to be stressed. Working hard and stress go hand in hand.

**Stressed** vs **Stretched**

**Stressed**
- Fear response
- Reduces ability to think
- Leaves you feeling out of control
- Negative impact on performance

**Stretched**
- Challenged
- Pushed to the limits, but believe you can succeed

Hughes, 2020
Academic performance

Physical health

Social health

Psychological health

Academic skills, effort and approach

Hughes, 2020
Growth mindset
GROWTH MINDSET
Is Freedom
- Persevere in the face of failures
- Effort is required to build new skills
- Find inspiration in others success
- Embrace challenges
- Accept criticism
- Desire to learn
- Build abilities

FIXED MINDSET
Is Limiting
- Avoid challenges
- Give up easily
- Threatened by others success
- Desire to look smart
- Effort is fruitless
- Ignore feedback
- Fixed abilities

Dweck, 2016

Photo: https://www.techtello.com/fixed-mindset-vs-growth-mindset/
• What messages have you received about a fixed or a growth mindset?
• How do you define ‘failure’? How would you feel if you failed at something?
What can you do to develop a growth mindset?

• **Monitor your thoughts**, watching out for negative self-talk. “I’m not good at this.” “Everyone else is better than me.” “I can’t let anyone know I’m confused by this problem.”

• **Use positive language**: “What have I learnt?” “Things I can improve are...” “What’s another way to approach this?”

• **Seek feedback**: the more the better, it’s how you improve

• **Feel inspired** by others’ success. Not only famous people, but classmates, friends, tutors, lecturers, and try to spend more time with those people.

Dweck, 2016
Important takeaways:

• You can enjoy uni, be mentally well, and learn well.
• Negative emotions are ok.
• No one knows how to do everything straightaway.
• You can learn and get better at being a student (and at life).
• The basics matter—breathe, sleep, eat healthily, exercise, and enjoy time with friends.
• We got to uni to learn, not to acquire grades.
• Using support is a great skill, and one you can improve.
• You don’t have to be perfect to create a life that makes you happy.
• One step at a time. (Small changes build into big change.)

Hughes, 2020
Be well, learn well: success!
ANU Counselling
Level 3 of the Health and Wellbeing Building
counselling.centre@anu.edu.au
+61 2 6125 2211
ANU Counselling

• Free confidential counselling - no referral required, students can come about any issue

• Sessions in person or via zoom

• Mental health resources on our website including audio tips and wellbeing handouts

• Group programs each semester

• Get up and Go walking program
Individual consults to support your academic writing and research skills

**LEARNING ADVISERS**
- 45 minute booked consults for research and coursework students
- Face-to-face, online via Zoom, or written feedback
- Available throughout the year

**WRITING COACHES**
- 30 minute booked consults for coursework students
- Face-to-face, online via Zoom, or written feedback
- Available during semester

**PEER WRITERS**
- Receive academic advice from a fellow student
- 10-15 minute drop-ins
- At Chifley Library or online via Zoom
- Available Mon-Fri during semester 12-3 pm

**DIGITAL LITERACY TRAINERS**
- Receive support for your thesis formatting, EndNote and subject-specialist research
- 30 or 60 minute booked consults on Zoom
- Available throughout the year

anu.edu.au/students/academic-skills/appointments
References:

