

Time management

We cannot control time, but we can learn to use it more efficiently and effectively by planning carefully.

How much time should be allocated to study?

The credit value of the course generally indicates the number of hours per week of study required per semester, including the hours you spend in class:

- A 15 credit single semester course requires **12** hours per week
- A 15 credit double semester course requires **6** hours per week

This is the average time requirement and will vary depending on previous study experience, whether English is your first language, individual study methods and the weekly demands of the course.

Time management strategies

Allocating your time

Decide what is important. Define your priorities by deciding what your goals are for that week or that day. Using this goal-oriented approach to your work also helps you plan your time. It helps you decide which of the goals are likely to take more time and, therefore, what day, when and where you will be able to fit them in.

Managing your limited time

Once you have established what your goals are create an action plan to achieve them, that is, plan step by step what you will do to achieve each goal. Regularly make a “to do” list which sets out your priorities.

Making the best use of your time

- Use down time, such as waiting time or travelling time.
- Set your own deadlines - they provide motivation for completing tasks.
- Share your goals - this increases your motivation because you are making a public commitment and you do not want to let yourself down.
- Be aware of time wasters in your life, such as television or long coffee breaks.

Establish a routine

Set aside definite study times, with equal amounts of time allocated for each course per week, such as Sunday 2-5 pm, Wednesday 8-11 pm. Create a pattern of expectation of study at those times. Study time should be planned in the same way as you plan leisure, meals, work, sport and exercise, and sleep time.

Three-point plan

1. Semester timetable
2. Weekly planners
3. "Things to do today" lists

Semester timetable

A semester timetable is very important as it gives you and others an overview of what you are doing during the semester. Schedule important dates such as:

- examination and assignment due dates
- important family/personal events
- important work commitments

Weekly planners

Fill in all your existing commitments (things like household duties, gym sessions, hours at work, sports practices, church times, plus social time with friends and family). Look at the time that is left and **block out study time**.

"Things to do today" list

The "to do" list requires you to reflect on your progress each day and think about the next steps. It keeps you focused and motivated. You are more likely to spend your allocated study time productively. If you have thought through in advance what you want to do in that time (for example, read a particular article, or start drafting an assignment).

The D.I.N. rule

One of the most difficult stages of academic tasks is getting started. Some assignments look pretty scary, especially if they are different from previous activities. So, to overcome this barrier, **Do It Now** is a very good strategy. It gets you started and, once a task is started, you are likely to finish it. This also avoids issues with procrastination and other time wasters.

Use rewards

Because you are now in charge of your own learning, you also have to reward yourself when you have done a good day's or week's work. You can keep yourself working with the knowledge that when the current task is finished you will check your emails, text your friend, or go for a run. You can arrange a bigger reward for yourself when a major assignment is completed.

Be persistent

If the time plan does not work straight away, do **not** give up; spend some time thinking about what has happened that interfered. It may be something unanticipated, over which you have no control, such as illness. However, if this is not the case, it can be very educational to keep a time diary for two or three days and

note down what you do are doing every 20 minutes throughout the day and how long you do the different activities. You often find out where and when you are losing or wasting time.

- Did you leave something out of the plan?
- Are you not allowing a realistic amount of time?
- Are there better times to schedule your study?
- Do you need an additional motivator?

Academic writing and study skills support

1. Academic Q+A

If you have a quick question about study skills or academic writing, then they can ask it on the [Academic Q+A forum](#), which can be accessed via the [Academic Support Stream site](#).

2. Consultations

One-to-one consultations with learning advisors and writing consultants are [available online and on campus](#). Consultants can answer your questions about academic writing and study skills or give you feedback on your assignment's structure, focus, paragraph structure, flow, presentation, use of sources, and referencing.

3. Online Writing and Learning Link (OWLL)

Develop your academic writing and study skills with the [Online Writing and Learning Link \(OWLL\)](#) website from Massey University. OWLL includes information on assignment writing, assignment types, referencing, study skills, and exam skills.

4. Pre-reading Service

The [Pre-reading Service](#) is a free service, which gives students an opportunity to send their draft assignment to [CLS consultants](#) for review and advice. Students receive individual written feedback on their assignment's structure, focus, paragraph structure, flow, style, presentation, referencing, and use of sources. The service can be accessed via the [Academic Support Stream site](#).

5. Workshops

Free study seminars and workshops are run on campus and online. See [Workshops page on OWLL](#) for [programmes and registration details](#).