



STUDY GUIDE

TIME MANAGEMENT


HOW TO MANAGE YOUR TIME

Learning how to manage your time pays dividends when studying for a degree. You will feel more in control of your studies, you will escape that unpleasant feeling of always trying to catch up, and you will enjoy your course to the full.

Taking responsibility for how and when you study is one of the main differences between school and university. Your lecturers will let you know what is expected, but it is down to you to plan your study time, find the resources you need and meet deadlines.

WHAT IS TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management is the act of planning the amount of time you spend on activities, so you can achieve what is important for you. The modern concept of time management has its origins in the work of the 19th century American Frederick Winslow Taylor, who aimed to improve industrial productivity.



“At uni, it’s easy to get motivated and find the time to study because you’ve chosen a subject you’re already interested in.”

Matilda, first year student

When you reach the end of this guide, you will:

- UNDERSTAND**
Your study habits.
- HAVE A GRASP**
Of what good time management is.
- HAVE LEARNT**
A range of techniques for setting goals and planning your study time.
- KNOW HOW**
To stay on top of your studies, keep motivated, and get support.

ACTIVITY 1: GET TO KNOW HOW YOU STUDY

Understanding how you like to study is the first step to planning your time well. Here are six statements about study habits and preferences. For each of them, tick **A** or **B**, depending on which is closest to your own approach to studying, then read the feedback that follows.

Statement A	OR	Statement B
I like detailed instructions		I like to try things out for myself
I like to work on my own		I like to work with others
I like to do one thing at a time		I like to have several things on the go at once
I prefer everything to be tidy and organised		I can cope with things being untidy
I need the discipline of a set timetable		I can motivate myself to do things
I like to type and make notes on screen		like to write and make notes on paper

FEEDBACK

If you ticked mostly **A's**, you are likely to be someone who responds well to clear boundaries, structure and timetables. If you ticked mostly **B's**, you are probably more creative and spontaneous, and able to work with uncertainty or even chaos. You may have a fairly equal balance of **A's** and **B's**, suggesting you are adaptable and able to change your approach depending on the circumstances. Both have their strengths and weaknesses, but the most important thing is to understand what works for you.

THREE THINGS THAT MAKE A GOOD MANAGER

- Being fully aware of the choices you make about how to use your time.
- Acknowledging the consequences of not acting on the choices you have made.
- Learning from experience and adapting how you manage your time.

"I always used to work in a muddle, and I honestly felt that suited me best. But when I tried to keep my desk tidy, I found it actually helped me study more effectively."

Max, second year student

ACTIVITY 2: HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR TIME

How wide is the gap between how you think you spend your time and how you actually spend it. Here is a simple exercise to help you find out during your first term at university.

MOTIVATING YOURSELF


Self-motivation is the drive that forces you to do things. You already know you are self-motivated because you are planning to go to university. Self-motivation is what will get you studying once you arrive and will keep you going even when things get tough. Daniel Goleman, author of a number of best-selling books on emotional intelligence, identifies four elements that make up motivation:

- Personal drive** to achieve – the desire to improve or to meet certain standards.
- Commitment** to personal or organisational goals.
- Initiative**, which he defines as ‘readiness to act on opportunities’.
- Optimism** – the ability to keep going and pursue goals in the face of setbacks.

When your timetable is settled and you have got into a bit of a routine, make a note of how you spend your time for one week.

Have a look at what it tells you. Are you surprised by what you see.

Decide on three things you can change so you manage your time better the following week.



“I spend one hour at the end of each week going through the evidence I have collected for my professional practice portfolio. That way, I stay on top of it but don’t feel I’m wasting time by doing it every day.”

Chidike, first year student

For additional help contact the **HE Study Support team** on **01803 540780** or email **hestudy@southdevon.ac.uk**

ACTIVITY 3: HOW TO PRIORITISE

If you are finding that there are not enough hours in the day to do all the things you need to do, an important first step is to accept that you can not do everything. Next, make some decisions about the things that are really important, those that are less important, and those that are not that important. Here is how:

- Make a list of all the study-related things you need to do e.g. reading, attending scheduled learning activities, or borrowing books and articles.
- Mark up each item with an **A** for **really important**, **B** for **less important**, and **C** for **not that important**.
- Work down the list and get rid of all the **Bs** by deciding whether they are really **A's** or **C's**.
- Finally, work through the **A's**, listing them by how important they are.
- That is it! You have prioritised your time. Now get started on task **A1**. Only start on the **C's** if you have time left over.

Here's the marked-up to do list of a first year health student:

Complete literature review for essay **A**

Select journals for final piece of work at the end of the semester **C**

Make notes on chapter on improving reflective practice in the NHS **B**


Revise paper on issues around hear loss in the over 70s **A**

Plan for essay on the development of holistic hearing treatment **A**

See what audiology text books are in library **C**

Read Kelley Morrison's article on a new look at assistant practitioner training in Global Practitioner Practice, Vol 58, No 3 **B**

Write a practice blog to help with my reflective review **B**



"I make lists on my phone, rather than in a notebook. It makes me feel more in control of everything as I have my phone with me all the time."

Carmel, first year student

ACTIVITY 4: SETTING REALISTIC GOALS

Goals give you something to aim at, a regular sense of achievement, and motivation to start a study session. Here is how to set realistic study goals for yourself.


- List what you need to do and your target date for completion. Set targets that take account of times when you will be unable to study, such as weekends away or visits from friends or family.
- Check your goals to make sure they are **achievable** (you know you will

be capable of meeting them), **reasonable** (if you set goals you cannot meet, they will reduce your motivation rather than increase it), and **sufficient** (your goals must ensure you achieve what you want to achieve).

- Once you have set your goals, record them in a way that works for you. You could put them in a free app, into an electronic or paper calendar, or onto a spreadsheet or wall chart.

ARGUMENT CHECKLIST

- Take a load off your mind by drawing up a **timetable**. You will feel more in control when you can see what you have already done and what's coming up.
- Break your study goals down into smaller steps using an **action plan**. You will find smaller steps are easier to achieve than one big overall goal.
- **Reduce interruptions.** Visitors knocking on the door, your smartphone in front of you, the TV on in the background; all of them will stop you studying.



“If something comes up and I don’t manage to achieve a target I’ve set for myself, I try not to give myself too hard a time about it. Having targets gives me a structure for my studies and that’s valuable in itself.”

Xiu, first year student

ACTIVITY 5: FIVE-FOR-FIVE

About to go out for the evening. Waiting for a meal to cook. Lying awake in the middle of the night worrying about the studying you have not done. Here is a simple way to get on top of things when you feel they are getting on top of you.


Grab a piece of paper and set aside five minutes to do these five things at speed:

- **Take stock.** Jot down things you already know about a subject you are about to study, to underline that you have a head start.
- **Make a summary** of something complex you have studied recently, to consolidate your studying.
- **Write questions** about a topic you have to study and are keen to know more about, to show yourself that your motivation levels are high.
- **Test yourself.** Perhaps on something you feel relatively confident about, to boost your confidence.

FIVE WAYS YOUR LECTURERS CAN HELP WITH SELF-MOTIVATION:

Be proactive as soon as you get to university by building up a good relationship with your lecturers. Ask directly for their feedback and use it to help you improve. There are lots of ways you can involve your lecturers. Here are the top five ways they can help:

- Encourage you to get going and keep going.
- Talk through ways for you to tackle your essays and coursework.
- Comment on your essays and other coursework once you have written them.
- Help you identify your strengths and make the most of them.
- Suggest ways you can improve your work and contributions in seminars and tutorials.



“Best place to study? For me, it’s the library. I wasted a term of my first year trying to study in halls until my lecturer made the obvious suggestion!”

Alexei, second year student



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