



## Careers, Counselling & Pathways Service

### WHEN TO STUDY

Your study time will be much more effective if you plan ahead and have a study timetable for each day and week.

It is necessary to budget your time – this means you need to list all the commitments you have in a week and work out which ones are going to be most important. What are the activities that **must** be done and how much time do you have to spend on them. You may find that activities that are important to you in the long term can take a lower priority for a short time while you are studying.

It may be helpful to discuss your study timetable with family and friends and negotiate with them what they want and what you need. Sometimes managing time successfully means saying 'no' to people in your life and if they understand why, it can help reduce the pressure you might find yourself working under.

Below is a list of possible items that you will need to include on your timetable:

- Classes
- Travel to & from college
- Tests & exams prep
- Assignments due
- Revision - going over class notes, summarising
- Paid work
- Home commitments - kids, partners, bills, shopping...
- Friends
- Relaxation/exercise.

When you make your timetable, take into consideration your own working rhythm. Do you work best in the morning, or late at night? Everyone is different so it's important to discover what time you study most effectively. It's a good idea to schedule the more complex and demanding study for your peak study time and assign the less complex study tasks to the other times of the day.

Plan your study session by breaking down your work into small manageable steps and tasks. For example, break up reading material into a number of smaller sections. Turn an assignment into a number of steps including research, rough drafts and final presentation.

## TIMETABLE TIPS

As the term/semester progresses you will probably need to make a new timetable for each week to allow extra time for assignments or exams as they become due. However, don't be tempted to put off these tasks until they are almost due. It will be much more effective to work a little at a time on these. A semester or term calendar can help with this.

Consider the percentage value of different tasks and allocate your time accordingly (eg don't spend 50% of your time on a task worth 10% of the marks). You may also need to allow extra study time for subjects that are more difficult or require more reading.

Be realistic! Don't set impossible goals such as six hours of continuous study without a break. Getting up and moving around regularly – say, 10 minutes for every 50 minutes of study – will help you concentrate better. If you've had a break but still don't feel you are getting anywhere with your study, you may need to adjust your study plan and review. Think about the task you are working on and break it down into a number of smaller parts or steps. It is much easier to return to and complete a small task than it is to return to a large project or a huge pile of reading.

Reward yourself for your efforts and plan to have some fun and relaxation so that you don't experience burnout. Make sure you leave enough time for exercise and sleep, as both are important if you want to achieve your best performance.

## WHERE TO STUDY

A lot of people find it helpful to have a specific place to study – this can encourage an automatic 'work response' when you are there. Ideally, it should be a place that:

- you can use regularly and can leave set up. Making sure your desk is tidy and well-organised means you don't waste time looking for information.
- is quiet and free from distraction.
- is a comfortable temperature – not too warm as this can make you drowsy.
- is well-lit.
- has a table or desk that allows you to spread out papers and write notes.

If you don't have a place like this at home, consider studying in the library.

Remember to switch off phones and email while you are studying so you are not distracted.