

Bureau for Student Counselling & Career Development
Study skills pamphlets

Time Management

Introduction

One of the most alarming factors of enrolling at Unisa must surely be the mountain of paper you receive in the form of tutorial letters and study guides. Panic strikes if you do not know where or how to start. The first step in managing your time effectively is to plan ahead and to set specific objectives in terms of your long- and short-term planning.

Long-term planning

The basic objective of long-term planning is to gain an overview of the academic activities over the whole year and to make sure that you keep track of all important dates, such as

- submitting assignments
- preparing for group discussions
- preparing for examinations
- writing examinations
- ensuring that you meet all your commitments on time.

How should you execute long-term planning?

Set long-term objectives:

- Get a year planner or a diary
- Mark all the important dates on your calendar (refer to your study guides and tutorial letters)
- These are your long-term objectives. You should now plan more specifically in preparation for the examinations.

Preparation for examinations

Your main objective is to pass the examination in a specific subject. The 60:30:10 principle can be applied here. Look at some basic guidelines to help you reach your goals:

- Use 60% of your time on general preparation to complete and submit all the assignments to enable you to give your full attention to studying.
- Use 30% of your time, for intensive study, and to grasp the basic concepts included in the course content.
- Use 10% of your time for exam preparation:
 - answering questions
 - going over exam papers from previous years
 - discussing questions with other students and your lecturers.

The benefits of long-term planning

- By consulting your year planner, you can clearly see the following:
 - Provision has been made for each day of your academic schedule.
 - You will know what type of activity and which subject you will spend time on each day.
 - You can regularly refer to your year planner to check your progress. This should really motivate you!
 - You will not have to worry about the future because you have planned your time so that you can meet all your commitments. Knowing that you've done this will give you more peace of mind, which is important in keeping you motivated.

Short-term planning

Short-term planning is something you do weekly and daily. To do this you should work out how much study time you have at your disposal. You need to draft a master schedule which you can use as a basis for weekly and daily planning.

Example of a master schedule:

Hours	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
06:00-07:00	Breakfast; commuting; office					Relax	Family & relax
07:00-08:00						x	
08:00-09:00						x	
09:00-10:00						x	
10:00-11:00						x	
19:00-20:00	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Relax	x
20:00-21:00	x	Meeting	x	Meeting	x		x
21:00-22:00	x	x	x	x	x		x
22:00-23:00	x	x	x	x	x		Relax
23:00-24:00	x	x	x	x	x		

x = available study time

A weekly schedule will indicate the following:

- fixed times (normally non-negotiable) for getting up, having breakfast, travelling etc.

study times marked with an "x".

A master schedule clearly shows when you can do the work you've planned in your year planner.

Your master schedule will not change very much from week to week, so you can make a few copies and just update them each week.

How should you plan your weekly study schedule?

Planning your weekly schedule could be done as follows:

- Use about 15 to 30 minutes every Sunday evening to plan your weekly study schedule.
- Take a copy of your master schedule and write down everything you have to do during the following week (eg meetings, urgent visits, important social gatherings).
- Now consult your year planner to see what study activity you should deal with during the week, and which section of the work you should master every day.

You don't have to do your weekly planning in any more detail than this.

Daily planning

It is very important that you decide how you're going to use each day's time. This will take only a few minutes before you start with your work. The benefit of planning your daily study schedule is that you have some definite objectives to pursue. Let's look at an example of such a schedule:

Monday, 3 June 2003	
60 minutes	Quick skimming for superficial understanding; identification of major points; asking questions; study reading for clearer understanding
10 minutes	Break
60 minutes	Making summaries and gaining more understanding by formulating questions and noting correlations
30 minutes	Break
60 minutes	Testing your knowledge by asking and answering questions

Further TIME MANAGEMENT resources on the Internet

- Time Management video (Dartmouth University)
http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/video_tm.html
- Time Management (University of Waterloo, Canada)
<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocs/Study/time.html>
- Time Management (Edinburgh University)
<http://www.edinboro.edu/cwis/acaff/suppserv/tips/CAT24.html>

- Time Management (mindtools.com)
<http://www.mindtools.com/page5.html>
- The Art of Time Management (Capital Community-Technical College, Hartford, Connecticut)
<http://webster.commnet.edu/faculty/~simonds/time.htm>
- Time Management (Muskingham College, Ohio, USA)
<http://www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database/time.html#Strategies>

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