

## Time Management Strategies

An important step to studying effectively and efficiently is managing your time appropriately. You may find that through managing your time you can create more free time and significantly reduce your stress levels and chances of burning out. You may also find that you are more motivated to complete your tasks (maybe even ahead of time)! Time management includes planning and discipline. You can use different types of schedules to organize your time. We recommend a three part time management plan.

### 1. Long Term Scheduling

- Term Schedule
- Monthly Schedule

In general, for long term scheduling, make sure you include:

- Assignment deadlines, appointments, social events, application deadlines.
- You can use colour to distinguish between different types of events or courses (e.g. blue for tests or blue for all due dates for one course).
- Use a large wall calendar, print off a term template, or use four separate monthly templates so you can visually see your commitments over a longer period.

Having the big picture can help you make good scheduling decisions for your time week by week. If you can see that you have some heavy weeks with many things due, you can choose to work on some things earlier in order to more evenly distribute your workload over a couple of weeks.

### 2. Mid-Range Scheduling

- Weekly Schedule

Prepare an updated schedule for the beginning of the week. When creating a weekly schedule, remember to be specific. Detail how you will use the hours in your days throughout the week:

- First block off time commitments for the week that are fixed (e.g., classes, work or volunteer shifts, meetings, and scheduled social activities or hobbies).
- Next, when looking at the remaining available time, block in commuting time, meal times, and time to study and work on assignments. Be realistic with your plans and schedule time for school work when you are alert and productive.
- Don't forget to schedule in time for socializing and relaxation. Looking after yourself is important for staying healthy and well and preventing burnout.

- Limit blocks of time for studying and working on assignments to one or two hours and spread these out over each day and throughout the week. Distributed time helps you maintain focus and productivity and, if something happens and you cannot work one day, you haven't lost a large chunk of time on any given task that is hard to make up.
- You can use different colours to help identify different types of commitments.
- Keeping some unscheduled time in your planning helps build some flexibility into your schedule.

### 3. Short Term Prioritizing

- Daily Tasks Lists
- If you find a weekly schedule too restrictive, try a weekly task list.

At the beginning of each day or week, create a new task list and be sure to do the following:

- Prioritize each item on your list.
- Assign an amount of time to each task.
- Check off the activities you have completed.

There are many ways you can prioritize. Having a clear idea of the priority level of each task will help you decide which tasks to tackle first. Here are a few ways you can prioritize:

- Number your tasks from most important to least important then re-write them in that order.
- Group your tasks into what needs to be done (A) immediately, (B) soon and (C) what can wait. Then prioritize the tasks in each group from one to five, one being the most important and five being the least. When you are done, re-write your tasks list.
- Prioritize according to what needs to be done in each class, in what order.
- Prioritize which classes or events are most important.

### Making It Work for You

Don't forget to **review** your schedule(s) and/or task list(s) regularly. Revisiting your weekly schedule or prioritized task list will help you:

- Determine how realistic your planning was;
- Identify where you are wasting your time;
- Decide whether the amount of time you allocated for each thing was appropriate;
- Realistically plan for future events.

Remember, effective time management takes practice. By creating, committing to, and regularly reviewing your schedule, you can boost your own efficiency. Not only will you complete your prioritized tasks, but you will also be able to create time for fun and relaxation.