Returning to Study
(Tips for Mature age students)
Counselling Service Tip Sheet

Commencing university studies after some time away from school and tertiary education can be a daunting task for many students. Given the many demands of life, it is likely a lot of thought has been put into your decision to return to study. For some of you this time will be exciting, for others it will be nerve-racking. Here are a few tips to help you adjust to university as a mature age student.

1. **Recognise that you are going through a stage of transition**
   Be aware you are in transition and you are adapting to a new role. You may need to change the way you manage other important things in your life, such as work or family commitments and social activities. There are only 24 hours in a day - prioritise and be realistic about what you can reasonably accomplish. If you need some help with managing time and juggling your commitments, see an ECU Counsellor.

2. **Familiarise yourself with the University, how it works**
and what is expected of you as a student.
Get hold of the Survive and Thrive Student Guide and read it. Familiarise yourself with the Student Charter and make sure you understand your responsibilities, as well as those of the University and academic/support staff.

3. Make sure you know what information technology and communications requirements you need to succeed and be active in ensuring you are prepared.
There are workshops available during Orientation and smaller workshops during specifically designed to upskill new students in this area that you may consider. Ask around - maybe other students, friends or family members can help you.

4. Explore the support services available to you as an ECU student and use them.
Check out the support services advertised in your Survive and Thrive Student Guide and during Orientation. Think about how these services might be able to help you and contact them for assistance.

5. Become your own self-advocate.
While there are many services available to you as a student at ECU, they cannot help you if they don’t know you need help. Look after yourself, take responsibility for your studies and your wellbeing, and be active in making sure you stay on your feet or ask for a helping hand when you need it.

6. Know your timetable and course outline (including assessments) and manage your time effectively.
Make a weekly and semester planner. Consider all the things you need to do and organise your time accordingly, prioritising the most important and immediate tasks. Remember to schedule in non-study activities as well. Check out our time management tip sheet for more.

7. Don’t forget to have fun!
Make friends with other students and take part in campus life. Remind yourself of why you wanted to study and enjoy your time at ECU.

References
More information is available from:
• Counselling Tip Sheet: Balancing life and University
• Counselling Tip Sheet: Tips for Successful Time Management
• Counselling Tip Sheet: Managing Stress

Acknowledgements
Editors: Mel Johnston and Bronwyn Williams

Please note that this tip-sheet provides information and guidance only - it is not a substitute for professional counselling and support.