

Using a Weekly Planner

A weekly planner allows you to keep track of your different responsibilities, and schedule your time appropriately to meet those responsibilities, including your study. It is important to remember that most of the time that you will require for your university studies will occur outside of lectures and tutorials.

Follow these steps to use your weekly planner effectively:

What requires your attention?

Think about all the different things that require your time or attention during a week such as:

- Uni classes (lectures & tutorials)
 - Work commitments (paid/voluntary)
 - Family commitments
 - Shopping
 - Socialising
 - Housework
 - Sleep
 - Study time (reading, assignment prep)
 - Travel time
 - Sporting commitments
 - TV
 - Exercise
 - Personal grooming
 - Hobbies
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Must do commitments

Put essential and non-flexible commitments into your planner first (e.g., classes, work shifts, family, and sporting commitments etc).

Make sure that you are realistic about how much time you allocate for these activities, considering travel time, how long it takes to get ready and so on. For example:

- You know it takes 30 minutes to travel to uni, include this time allowance in your planner.
 - Your child has a 60 minute swimming lesson, and you know it takes 20 minutes to get there, 20 minutes to get home and at least 10 minutes either side to get them ready and then cleaned up. Make sure you block out an appropriate amount of time (e.g., at least 2 hours) in your planner.
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Find time to study

Once you have scheduled in all your 'must-do' commitments, you will see how much time you have left to do your uni work. Think about a full-time study load as equivalent to a full-time job, that is, about 37-40 hours a week. This includes class time, reading, assignment prep etc. This is the amount of time for study that you should be thinking about until you know how much actual time you need for your course. Some units or courses demand more time than others.

When do you study best?

Work out when you study best during the day and the week. This is when you should tackle your more demanding units, assignments, practice etc. Identify other times that are good for less challenging activities like going to the library to find books and journals, photocopying etc. Schedule these activities into your weekly planner so that you can clearly see what time is allocated to what study task.

Prioritise

Remember that it is generally not possible to fit in all the things we would like to do in a week. You will need to prioritise what you need to do to ensure that you have enough time to make it happen.

If you cannot fit all your 'commitments' into your planner then you will need to re-think how much you have taken on and make changes as appropriate.

Relax

Make sure that you schedule in some relaxation or down time into your schedule. Not every cell in your planner needs to be allocated to an activity.

Be realistic

Be realistic about how you are allocating your time. For example, if you know that you cannot concentrate when you are tired, do not schedule a regular study session after a long day of work/uni/family commitments.

Review often

Some people like to have very fixed schedules while others like a more flexible approach. Whatever your preference ensure that you have regular blocks of study time.

Depending on the nature of your commitments it may be necessary to review your planner every week to account for changing shifts etc. If this is the case allocate some time each week to prepare your planner for the coming week.

Follow it

A weekly planner is only useful if you follow it. Once you have put it together make sure that you put it somewhere where you can easily, and frequently, refer to it.

Scan to access
additional tip
sheets



Want to chat to someone?

For a confidential – and free – chat about your general situation, please contact our ECU Psychologist, or the Psychological Counselling Support Team service to make an appointment at any of our campuses.

Alternatively, you can discuss study techniques and tips with a Learning Adviser in our Academic Skills Centre.

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