

Balancing Life and University

Counselling Service Tip Sheet



Maintaining a balance between life and study/work can enable you to remain productive and happy. It can also help you sustain wellbeing during stressful periods of the semester.

Adjusting to University

As a new student, being in transition

and adapting to a new role requires you to change the way you manage other important things in your life, such as work or family commitments and social activities. Learning how the University operates and what is expected of you will help you take charge of your studies and make a smoother transition to University.

Difficulties that can arise:

- Overwhelming new environment - don't know anybody; perhaps it has been a long time since you last studied; unsure what is expected from you, the system, others; Culture Shock
- Loss of routine and structure - lots of unstructured time; no one there

pushing you

- Financial difficulties - change in financial circumstances; need to take up part-time work; loans
- Unforeseen life events and personal issues - relationship problems; illness
- Homesickness
- Expectations from yourself or others
- Unresolved personal issues

What can help?

- Developing a supportive network - other students, academics, student support services, friends, family.
- Connecting with students from the same or similar background.
- Be aware of other programs and services - Learning Advisers, Counselling Service.
- Knowing your rights and responsibilities.

Who can help?

- Other students - (Support network, similar backgrounds)

- Lecturers, tutors
- Student Central
- Student Support/Information Officers
- Student Connect Officers
- Learning Advisers
- Counselling Service

How to Balance:

- Use tools such as Weekly and Semester Planners to organise and track your time. Be flexible with your study planners and review and adjust them as needed. See Counselling Tip-sheet: Tips for Successful Time Management.
- Goal-set. Set daily SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Recordable, Time-based) goals, which can assist focus and momentum. Keep in mind the 'big picture' and set medium-term goals which are inspiring yet realistic. Avoid setting goals based on proving your self-worth.
- Treat study like a job. Prioritise it as something important and commit to a routine for study early in the semester.

- Pay attention to your personal needs. Schedule in leisure time for balance. Avoid allowing study to 'take over' your life by consuming you mentally and emotionally.

References

More tips and information is available from:

- Counselling Tip Sheet: Managing Stress
- Counselling Tip Sheet: 20 Strategies to Overcome Procrastination
- Counselling Tip Sheet: Tips for Successful Time Management
- Counselling Tip Sheet: Avoiding Burnout
- Balancing Life and University workshop (visit <http://www.ecu.edu.au/student/orientation/events.php> for details)

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

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