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Manage Your Time

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Distance Learning is one of the most flexible ways in which you can learn. With the ease of access to the type and variation in courses we provide, studying with us has never been more beneficial to anyone who wants to reach their true potential and fulfil their career goals.

That said, due to the great flexibility of studying, there is an ever increasing need to ensure that you plan and manage your time well to ensure that you successfully complete your course in good time, so you can get started in your dream career as early as possible.



With so many demands and pressures on people these days it's no wonder distance learning and studying from home has grown in its appeal. Many of our students have said how glad they were to have made the choice to study online for their chosen subject as they have too many other commitments that would only serve as a distraction if they chose the traditional classroom-based study. That said, they usually also comment on the strong need to develop and maintain good time management skills to avoid getting distracted.

With the help of our advice and guidance developed by our friendly supports team and tutors we have come up with excellent tools on how to help students build on their time management skills to succeed in their online study.

In line with the Goal Setting guidance, again, to ensure you are managing your time well, there are steps you will need to take:

1. Decide on what exactly it is you want to achieve
2. Plan the steps and smaller goals that is needed to get you there
3. Factor in distraction and other demands on your time when setting out your daily tasks

When planning out your daily tasks, that is Step number 3, planning around all possible distractions will be difficult at first, particularly when your close family and friends are getting used to you having to study now. There can be a lot of demands on you, also known as Time Thieves.

Time Thieves are those distractions in your everyday life, not necessarily work or looking after a family, but instead the little things that can be very difficult to control. For example, leisurely phone calls; friends; television; social media; emails; and for some even the weather, when is lovely and hot outside, the desire to go out and enjoy the sun can be overwhelming and as such act as a distraction.

To properly prepare for these potential distractions, you will need to plan for these distractions. You can do this by first identifying exactly which ones are the most likely to steal your time away from your studies, and more importantly achieving your goals. Though you may not initially be able to accurately identify what or who the main culprits are, after a week or so you will soon see the Time Thieves appear.

Try to remember that time is one of the most valuable, yet restricting, resources we have. There are only so many hours in a day and so succumbing to the many possible distractions offered by so many people or things in our daily life can and will impact on your ability to achieve your goals. Avoid the temptation of distraction by following the steps outlined below, this will help you reduce the impact of ineffective time management.

- Turn your phone off, or at least put it on silent when you are studying. This reduces your availability and before you know it people will realise that you are serious and committed to our studies. This in turn will discourage them from calling you to distract you at any given time.
- Schedule in social meetings with friends or family. It is not wise to simply think that you can cut off everyone in your life while you are studying; apart from the fact that your friends or family wouldn't be too happy, taking a break to relax is good for you also. By scheduling in times this leaves you in control of when you are taking a break enabling you to plan around these times for studying.
- Limit your online leisure activities to certain times of the day. As your online course will inevitably take place on the computer or some other device with internet access, the temptation to keep up to date with your emails, Facebook and twitter accounts is elevated. As with social meeting break, also schedule in times of the day to check you accounts. Take breaks to do so of necessary. It does not matter necessarily how long you take on these breaks if you take control of this and so are able to plan around it.
- Another time thief that cannot be attributed to anyone or anything else is self-inflicted procrastination. It can be very easy to procrastinate and find good reasons to do so when we have a choice about when a task is to be completed. As this is the basis of online studying - that is, the freedom to study when and where we want, procrastination is a major competitor against other Time Thieves. To avoid the constant temptation to procrastinate, follow the advice from the Goal Setting section, the main one being - keep focused.

Use your Goal Sheet, also found in the Goal Setting resource section, which you can print out to help you keep focused. Use this as your constant reminder for why you want to achieve your goals and thus why procrastination will only hinder your progress.

Remember - Use your time wisely! Time is a precious resource not to be wasted.

Effective time management is not just about being able to complete all tasks you might set yourself day in day out; rather it is also about being able to spend time with friends and family, checking emails, social media, talking with friends and so on. Time management is about setting aside the time to do the things you enjoy while also being able to keep on top of commitments you have. By restricting yourself from taking breaks and relaxing in leisurely activities, it will only add unnecessary pressure on yourself limiting your ability to achieve your end goal. In addition to this, this added pressure of constant studying with little or no break is unsustainable and thus unconstructive toward your goal achievement.

Everything in moderation is a good time management tool. Being able to schedule in rests and breaks while also making sufficient time to study is exactly what you need to reach your result.

Bear in mind the Pareto Principle, also known as the 80/20 rule. This states that for 80% of causes brings about 20% effects. Applying this to time management, this can be extended to 80% of results comes from only 20% effort.

Pointers on how to avoid time Thieves - Effective Time Management

- Set yourself SMART goals: Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Time-bound. This is a helpful way of setting the actual goals you need in a realistic manner.
- Stay in control of your time by scheduling in breaks and time away from studying. That is, schedule in time bandits to avoid them distracting you.
- Remember time is a precious resource that is not to be wasted. There is not an abundant fountain of time and so we should respect the time we have by being always productive and forward thinking.
- Prioritise your time well and bear in mind the 80/20 rule. Distinguish between what is important and what can dealt with later, without of course the risk of procrastination.
- Try not to do too much at once. If you have other work or family commitments, or even leisure activities factor this in and simply plan around these times for studying. If not, you will only increase the amount of stress on yourself and in turn become more and more stressed out. This is not the idea behind online studying or setting goals. Be realistic and fair to yourself.
- Make sure your goals are measurable and performance based. This will ensure you are in control of achieving your goals and will be able to clearly identify once you have achieved them. The sense of accomplishment once you have done will be immense.