

Planning Study Time

How to manage your study and still have a life!

Why Plan?

Planning will allow you to identify what you need to do and when you need to do it.

Planning will help you to

- achieve more
- gain free time
- gain confidence in ability to handle difficult tasks
- adjust your plan to cope with the unexpected
- gain satisfaction from achieving goals
- have the feeling of being in control.

At the beginning of your study ask yourself the following questions:

1. Am I too busy?
2. Do I know how to set/reach goals?
3. Do I know what's coming?

Figure 1. Questions to ask yourself (from Brueckner, 2011a, 1:48)

Am I too busy?

Non-discretionary activities

We all have tasks that we need to do. The following table gives an estimation of the time required to complete these tasks.

Table 1

Non-Discretionary Activities

Activity	Number of hours
Sleep	7
Prep and eat	2
Travel	1
Personal hygiene	1
Shopping	
Family	
Housework/gardening	

Note. Adapted from Brueckner, 2011a

Generally, we spend at least 12 hours a day on things we need to do.

Study hours

Be aware of the number of hours you are expected to attend lectures and study for each course. Generally, at EIT, you will need to spend 10 hours a week on each course. You may find that some courses require less than 10 hours per week while others may need more time.

Work hours

How many hours a week do you spend in paid employment?

Total study and work hours

Add up your lecture/study and work hours.

If your answer is ≤ 56 hours and you do not have excessive family commitments, you should be able to cope with your study.

But, if your answer is > 56 hours, you may find it difficult to find time for the required hours of study. However, **you** are the one who knows/decides what you can cope with (Brueckner, 2011a).

Do I know how to set/reach goals?

You can create **S.M.A.R.T.** goals to improve your study.

SMART goals are

Specific

Measurable

Action/oriented

Realistic

Time-based

(Brueckner, 2011, 13:31)

- Set specific goals, for example, I will pass all my courses. Or I will get As for course one and two, and a B for course three.
- Know if you have achieved your goal. Monitor your progress – make sure you're on track.
- Plan how you will achieve each goal.
- Set a realistic goal for each paper.
- Know the time frame for achieving each goal.

Do I know what's coming?

You can use the following planners to keep track of what you need to do:

- assessment planner
- weekly planner
- daily to do list.

Assessment Planner

An assessment planner is useful because it gives you dates for the holidays and you can write the due dates for all your assessments for every course on one page.

Keep your assessment planner in a prominent place, for example:

- inside cover of folder
- by computer screen
- on your phone or computer
- on refrigerator door.

[Assessment Planner - Semester 1](#)

Unfortunately, there will be times when you have several assessments due in one week. Your assessment planner will show you where these busy weeks are and, hopefully, this awareness will push you into action well before the assessments are due.

Weekly Planners

Weekly planners are useful for keeping track of what you need to do during the week.

[Weekly Planner - Version 1](#)

[Weekly Planner - Version 2](#)

When writing a weekly planner start with the tasks you need to do, such as,

- attending all lectures
- meeting family commitments
- completing other non-discretionary tasks.

Then write down the things you want to do, for example,

- having time for relaxation
- spending time on hobbies and sports
- having family time.

NB.it is important to spend some time (but too much) doing the things you want to do.

Finally, enter your study tasks, such as,

- writing assignments
- revising for tests and exams
- previewing and reviewing lecture topics.

Daily to-do list

Writing down what you plan to do each day can help you feel organised and in control. It can be very satisfying crossing tasks off the list.

There are a number of ways to create a daily to-do list:

- diary
- apps for smart phone
- computer
- paper
- post-it notes
- whiteboard

Know your energy cycle

Are your energy levels higher in the morning or in the evening?

Try to study difficult and/or boring courses when your energy levels are highest. During your low energy levels, you can concentrate on easier courses or do tasks that require little mental concentration, for example, photocopying or filing.

Procrastination

To procrastinate is to delay doing a task that needs to be done. We often procrastinate even when we know there will be negative consequences as a result (Jaffe, 2013).

While most of us procrastinate from time to time, a study by Ferrari showed that 20% of adults are chronic procrastinators (Jaffe, 2013).

Why do we procrastinate?

- fear of failure
- feel overwhelmed - where to start
- find course difficult or boring.
- live in the moment and not plan for the future
- give in to distractions and temptations

(Brueckner, 2011b).

Ways to overcome procrastination

- Divide jobs into smaller parts; write subject plans.
- Include deadlines for each task; remember tasks usually take longer than expected.
- Be accountable to someone; tell your partner or friend what you plan to do during your study session.
- Always include rewards.
- Expect to be successful.

(Brueckner, 2011b).

Studying is a job

- Make studying a habit; try to study at the same time each day.
- Tell family and friends the times you plan to study.
- Avoid distractions.

References

- Brueckner, S. (2011a, February 7). LBCC- Organizing your study time – Part 1 [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_EIR-uPOhw
- Brueckner, S. (2011b, February 23). LBCC - Organizing your study time – Part 2 [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNMbYLEGmHA>
- Jaffe, E. (2013). Why wait? The science behind procrastination. *The Observer* 26(4). Retrieved from <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/publications/observer/2013/april-13/why-wait-the-science-behind-procrastination.html>