

STUDY, ORGANISATION AND TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS

The following suggestions are offered to help improve your level of motivation, to reduce the impact of any difficulties and to capitalise on your strengths:

In Lectures and Tutorials:

- Sit at the front of the lecture/tutorial to reduce distractions.
- Ask for information to be repeated, if necessary.
- Ask tutors to write important points on the board, and to repeat key areas clearly and slowly to assist with note-taking and comprehension.
- Ask lecturers for a written explanation of mathematical/other symbols used on lecture overheads.
- Ask lecturers for a list of recommended texts that closely follow the lecture materials.

When Studying:

- Use point-form notes as an efficient method of note-taking and condensing information to be learned.
- Vary the method of study used (i.e. visual, kinaesthetic, auditory). For instance, summarise information and display it in visual form (eg, diagram, posters); type information or use card to sort/categorise information; listen to tapes of lectures or make your own tape of the material and listen to it.
- Use repetition and visual imagery/auditory techniques to encode information.
- Study with someone who is enjoyable to work with and who is motivated.
- Schedule study periods for times in the day when most motivated, such as in the morning. Some experimentation may be needed to discover other suitable study times.
- Varying study environments can improve motivation.
- Break tasks into steps and check off each step before moving on. This may help reduce frustration over taking a long time to complete whole tasks.

- Alternate between study topics that are less difficult/interesting and those subjects that are more difficult/uninteresting.
- Design and implement a reward system for completion of steps / tasks.
- Take regular short rest breaks when studying.

In General:

- Practise efficient techniques regarding diary-keeping and note-taking.
- Rehearse new information and skills until they become over-learned and automatic.
- Monitor fatigue levels and avoid tackling demanding tasks when tired.
- Set goals that are attainable, clearly defined and realistic.

To Improve Organisation:

- Use a diary and notebook to record new information and tasks.
- Use a checklist to monitor progress by ticking off completed tasks or steps. The checklist can be divided into “Essential” jobs that must be done today and “If-I-have-time” jobs. Make sure “essential” jobs workload is realistic. If not, re-reschedule least important tasks. Complete all “essential” jobs before starting on “If-I-have-time” jobs.
- Tackle one job at a time. If in the middle of one job a new job is remembered, write the new job in diary or notebook to be scheduled later.
- Try to reduce time pressures at stressful times by planning and preparing as much as possible in advance. For example, as mornings can be busy and stressful, you may benefit from preparing your bag, clothes (including shoes and socks), and lunch the night before. Ensure items such as keys, wallet, diary, bus/train tickets and student card will be readily accessible without a search.
- Set aside the same time (at least once a week) to clean out bags and desks. At home, use folders and trays to keep study areas tidy and organised.
- Allocate more time to complete tasks. It may be useful to monitor (ie, time) the amount of time required to complete tasks, such as getting ready for university/Tafe or completing assignments. To reduce time pressures and subsequent feelings of frustration, add 10-15 minutes extra to time estimates for every activity. This will

help to allow for unexpected events. Activities such as getting ready for university/Tafe are comprised of several activities (for example making breakfast, eating breakfast and getting dressed), so this may require allowing an additional 5 minutes for every step.

Recommended reading:

Allen, D. (2001). "How To Get Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity". Penguin Books.