

Time management

University life is busy with many activities—how do you balance it all?

Succeeding in university isn't just about being good at writing essays or passing exams. To do your best, you have to juggle lectures and seminars, giving presentations, doing research, finishing assignments, and studying for tests and exams.

On top of that, you also may need to find time for a job, staying active, and hanging out with friends and family. It's all about finding that balance.

The key lies in mastering time management



Get organised

To stay on top of things, you should:

- Know what you need to do (assignments, readings, work)
- Keep track of when things are due (deadlines, lectures, seminars, work)
- Figure out how to divide your time between all your tasks (setting up a schedule or timetable)

Organise both online and physical materials.

For paper notes:

- Label and number your notes.
- Include titles and dates.
- Use colour or different notebooks for different topics.
- File loose handouts in A4 wallets, box files, or ring binders.

For your computer:

- Avoid using the desktop as a dumping ground.
- Create a clear file structure.
- Rename downloaded files immediately and use dates when possible.



Deadlines

If you only had one assignment to do in a semester, finishing it on time would be easy. But usually, you'll have many deadlines for different modules throughout the academic year.

Think about adopting the following principles:

- Enter all fixed tasks and commitments to your diary/calendar
- Highlight assignment deadlines - know when assignments are due and if they're grouped close together, you can then identify and plan how to manage them.
- Organise your notes and paperwork or files on your computer. If you read something new and use it in your assignment, make a note of it as you'll need this information to reference it.

Having a simple system to manage your work is very important. The easiest way is to create an A4 plan and pin it where you can see it often.

You can download a weekly plan and a semester plan template in AberSkills.



Study timetable

Pick the times of day that work best for you to study. Figure out when you're most alert and use those times for tasks that require more concentration. If you plan out when you're going to study ahead of time, you won't have to waste time figuring it out every day. Just block out some study time in your schedule alongside your lectures and other commitments.

To make it easier, create a plan with sections for each day and time of day - mornings, afternoons and evenings and pencil in your scheduled study time. Be sure to stay flexible - if something else comes up or clashes with your timetabled session, you can always swap it for a free one.



Prioritise

No matter what you're trying to accomplish, there will always be a task that needs to come first at any given time.

When it comes to university work, what you focus on first will vary depending on a few things:

- Is the assignment graded?
- How much of your grade does the assignment count for? (You will need to give more time on the ones with more weighting.)
- Will completing this task improve your final grade?
- Will doing this task enhance your understanding of the material?
- How long will it take?
- Is the deadline soon?



Self-discipline

This comes back to independent learning.

- Motivate yourself to study.
- Do you find it challenging to stay focused in the morning or resist distractions like your phone during late-night study sessions? Identifying your peak concentration times can boost your study efficiency by scheduling sessions around these periods.
- If you notice that you're spending a lot of time on a module that comes easier to you and not enough on one that's challenging, try to put in more effort on the harder one.

Tips to improve self-discipline:

- Switch your mobile phone off completely.
- Reward yourself when you complete a task, goal or target.

Building self-discipline takes time, so try to work on it a little bit each day. Eventually, you'll see a big difference in how well you can study and how productive you are.



Top 3 tips for effective time management

1



Prioritise tasks

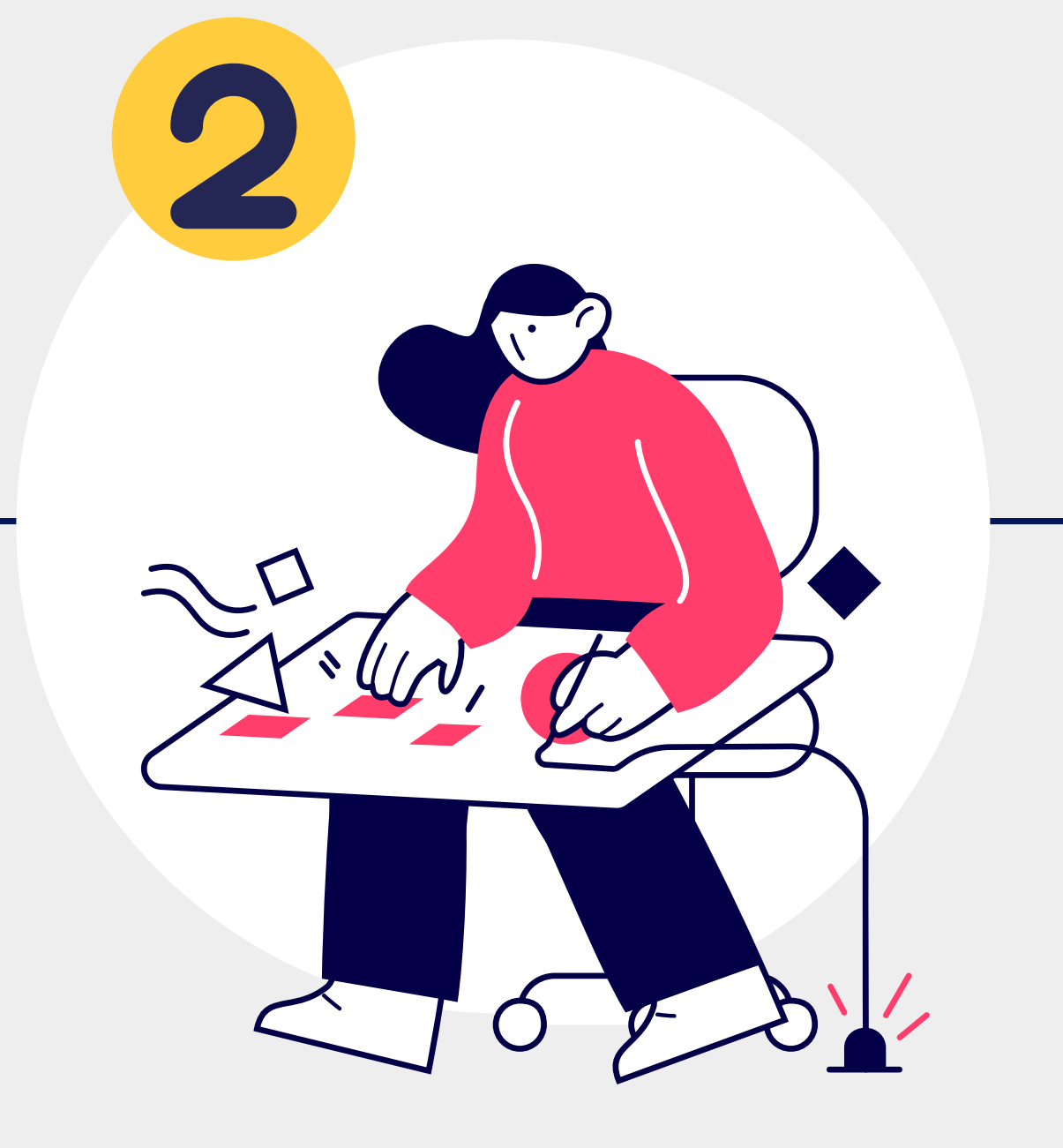
Identify and rank tasks in relation to their importance and urgency:
Important/less important
Urgent/less urgent

Ask yourself what do I need to:
Do now? Do soon? Do later?

Break the task into smaller bitesize chunks and tackle each one at a time. This will make it easier to fit them into your schedule.



2



Make a schedule

Organise and plan your week around when you have lectures and how much studying you need to do on your own.

Mapping your weekly tasks on one sheet allows for a more accurate assessment of workload and identifying gaps.

Create to-do-lists for each module identifying key dates such as deadlines so you know what you need to do and by when.

3



Set targets (with rewards!)

Setting yourself targets will keep you motivated. Make targets achievable and realistic.

When you reach your target, give yourself a reward! This could be a coffee, watching a film or just relaxing!



Work through your tasks and enjoy ticking them off your list!