

Learning Object:

Planning Online Study Time

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the importance of planning and prioritising;
 2. Knowing how to set study goals;
 3. Dealing with distractions;
 4. Getting back on track if you fall behind.
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Planning and Prioritisation

It is important to plan your studies and prioritise your learning activities to successfully make the most out of online learning. Try to look ahead and answer the following questions:

- How familiar are you with the module?
- Do you know what is required to pass the module?
- What dates are your assignments due?
- What are the expected module learning outcomes?
- How much time do you have to study?

YOUR TASK:

Take a look at the module guide and assessment brief(s). Make a note of the key deadlines and put these into your diary or online calendar.

Knowing how to set study goals

You have likely chosen to study a degree because you have a long-term study goal (to complete a degree level qualification). Study goals can also be shorter-term and can be applied to a particular module or semester.

For this module ask yourself the following:

- What shall I do with the study time I've put aside today?
- What is important today for this week's goals?
- What do I need to do before the next live session?

- Would I be better off if I studied a section of my module, or worked out the tasks I need to do to complete my assignment?

Setting a weekly schedule can help you to break down study goals into small manageable chunks. Many people find it useful to complete a daily or weekly 'to do' list to help keep on track.

Creating an Action Plan:

An action plan can be a simple list of things to do, a chart giving deadlines, a diagram showing how you will spend your time, or a digital task list such as Microsoft Planner. If you break down the overall task (to complete the module) into a series of smaller targets, you can map your journey to success in more detail. Your action plan should not only record your progress, but also list any sources of support you may need - such as speaking to a Librarian, or submitting work for feedback comments.

YOUR TASK:

Create an online learning plan for the module. You can use whichever approach you feel comfortable with, and whichever tool suits you best. Be realistic, and make sure you factor in down-time from your studies.

Share five of your key targets from your action plan with the rest of the class.

Dealing with Distractions

We can all get distracted from a task or procrastinate to put it off until later. Some people say the need the pressure of a deadline to help focus on completing a set of activities. Ask yourself if this is a realistic way of working? Your module has been designed so that you engage with activities throughout and discuss ideas with peers as you learn them.

Try some of the following to minimise distractions:

- Set realistic goals for your study session (e.g. 'I'll read this section, or work for 40 minutes before I make that coffee');
 - Aim to minimise real interruptions (e.g. turn off your phone, close social media in the background, study somewhere quiet if possible);
 - Remember to break down your tasks (such as complete the assignment) into smaller targets;
 - Do a deal with yourself - 'I'll wake up later on Monday, but this means that I'll need to get up early on Tuesday to study instead'.
 - Reward yourself as you complete your tasks. Make a hot drink, or treat yourself to a healthy snack.
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Getting Back on Track if you Fall Behind

It is perfectly normal to fall behind sometimes. Don't worry. Your tutors and University support staff are here to help you. If you are worried about falling behind, don't be afraid to reach out and get in touch with us - we can provide advice and support.

- If you are struggling to understand a particular concept or problem, speak with the Module Leader who will be able to clarify things for you. You might also find it useful to post to a discussion forum - other students might have the same question as you.
- If you can't make it to sessions, let your Module Leader know. They will be able to guide you with support and advice.
- Make sure you read the assignment brief. If you understand what you need to complete, you can prioritise your time accordingly.
- If you are struggling because of issues of ill health, bereavement, or something else outside of your control, contact the student support teams - we have extra help on hand.
- If you are still worried about your studies or feel you are falling behind, you can call our Student Engagement Centre who are here to listen to your concerns and help to get you back on track.

YOUR TASK:

Save the telephone number for the Student Engagement Centre onto your phone. The telephone number is [+44 \(0\) 24 7765 6565](tel:+442477656565). The team are available Mondays to Fridays between 8AM and 8PM UK Time.
