

Planning for your assignments


Forward planning for the semester

1. **Find the [Course Specification](#)** for each course in which you are enrolled this semester. Ask yourself the following questions.
 - **What are the course objectives?**
Each course has a defined set of objectives. You will be assessed on these in your assignments and other activities.
 - **What is the assessment for this course?**
Check under 'assessment' in the course specification.
 - **When are the assessments due?**
Dates indicated are the dates when assessments should be handed in or mailed. Evidence of mailing is usually required. Always make a copy of each assignment before you submit it.
 - **What is the weighting for each assessment?**
How many marks is each assignment or exam worth, and how much time do you need to spend on each?
2. **Obtain a calendar** for the semester and include the assessment dates for all your courses in the calendar. Draft study schedules are often provided in lectures or in online and distance education materials.
3. **What other important events are happening while you are studying?**
Are there any other important events for which you might have to plan? For example, plan in practical work in your courses, medical appointments, sporting commitments, family and work commitments. Note that holidays should be planned outside of study periods.
4. Put all of the above information together into a Semester Timetable, using this template: <http://www.usq.edu.au/learningcentre/alongline/effstudy/timeman/weekplan.htm> See also **SEMESTER PLANNING QUICK TIP**.

Planning for each assignment

The semester timetable will reveal clusters of assignment submission dates or other activities, This means that you can now plan to space your preparation for assignments to avoid bottle necks.

Start by pinpointing the assignment submission date. Then work backwards through the stages of preparation required for completion to identify a start date. There are five key stages:

 <p>End with assignment submission on date due</p> <p>Begin early in the semester</p>	5	Final check of the assignment
	4	Write, proofread and re-rewrite the assignment
	3	Read and organise information in terms of the questions or assignment tasks
	2	Gather information
	1	Make sure you know exactly what you have to do for the assignment

Template for assignment planning

Create your own assignment plan using the template below. All you have to do is put deadline dates in the third column, and put the number of hours you wish to allocate to each stage in the second column. Again put in the submission date first and work backward from stage 5.

Print it out, put it on the fridge, and reward yourself when you meet a deadline on time.

The Five Stages	How long will it take?	When will I do it?
Stage One: Initial Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early brainstorming, reflection and discussion with others • Identify what is required • Analyse the assignment question 		
Stage Two: Principal Preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what information/data is required • Gathering information • Digesting and reflecting on the information collected 		
Stage Three: Organizing the Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grouping and organizing information • Selecting what to include 		
Stage Four: Writing the Assignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking about each draft • Improving on each draft and perhaps getting feedback • Revising each draft 		
Stage Five: Completing the Assignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing up the references • Completing the final draft • Editing the work • Submitting the work on time 		Due date

Source: Adapted from Cottrell, S 1999, *The Study Skills Handbook*, Palgrave, London, p.73.

Need more help?

The Learning Centre can help you to develop your academic learning language and maths skills for success at university. Consultations are available face-to-face, by phone or via email.

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