



# Time Management Strategies For University Success

University life requires you to make priorities and set specific goals. Often you have to balance many different commitments – courses, tests, readings, group assignments, labs and more. It's also important to make time for health, wellness and personal commitments (e.g. the fun stuff). This resource offers some ideas and tools for planning your time and prioritizing your tasks.

## In these pages you will find:

- ✓ Calendars that break down the month, week and day to help you plan specific tasks, and also give a clear view of the bigger picture of your semester.
- ✓ Tools for brainstorming and prioritizing the different activities, obligations and projects that make up your day and week.
- ✓ Visual aids for organizing your coursework.

**Note:** Pick one or more templates that work best for you or adapt one of them to your needs. These are just some suggestions to get you started.

## Resources Available on Campus

**Resource Centre for Students with a Disability** – Offers services and programming for registered students. Talk to your advisor about services available around time management. <http://rcsd.uvic.ca/>.

**Counselling Services** – Provides a number of appointment options for students on campus. <http://coun.uvic.ca/>.

**Learning Skills Program** – Offered through Counselling Services, and assists students in developing and implementing various study skills. Website: <http://www.coun.uvic.ca/learning/>.

**Academic Advising** – Available at the Advising Centre, room A203 in the University Centre. Assists in providing information about programs, courses and university regulations. Academic advising may also be available through various faculties around campus. <http://web.uvic.ca/advising/>.

**Peer Helping** – Offers students assistance in a number of areas (e.g. information and referrals). Located in the Learning Commons (135e) and at the University Centre. Website: <http://web.uvic.ca/~peerhelp/>.

Compiled by Roslyn Gaetz, Kelly McManus, Lauren D. Goegan & Noha Mols.



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## How to Use This Resource:

These materials are suggestions from Learning Strategists in the RCSD Learning Assistance Program. Use and adapt them in ways that work best for you.

- **Start by Getting the Big Picture First** . Take a look through your course outlines and syllabi, and add all deadlines, assignments and tests into your calendar. You could try using a **four-month calendar**, available through the campus bookstore, or a **free agenda** from the Student Center.
- **Work Backwards from Your Deadlines**. Look at the most important assignments and tests (you could start with those that are weighted the heaviest) and work backwards from your deadlines. Give yourself a few extra days before the assignments are due (e.g. try to finish studying or completing your assignments 48 hours before you need to have these tasks completed). These are called **TARGET DATES**.
- **Prioritize the Important Stuff**. Schedule in your most valued activities (e.g. your weekly yoga session, Friday afternoon coffee with a friend, or scheduled reading time for that super-tough course). Think of these as what Steven Covey called the **BIG ROCKS**. These are the big, immovable items in your calendar. Schedule your other commitments around these “Big Rocks.”
- **Evaluate and Investigate**. As you plan your calendar, it’s important to know what you’re going to do, how you’re doing to do it, and how long each of the steps in that process will take. For example, it’s not enough to say, “I’m going to write my paper tonight.” Be specific and intentional about the parts of that process (e.g. researching, planning, writing, revising), and budget enough time for each of those steps.
- **Identify Your Most Productive Periods**. Determine when you’re at your best. Identify your **PEAK TIMES** and **PEAK ENVIRONMENTS** for completing your coursework. If you know you work best in the afternoons, plan to complete your project in that super-tough course as soon as you finish your lunch. Figure out where you do you best work.
  - What are the variables that contribute to your successful study sessions?
  - Do you need complete quiet?
  - Do you prefer to hear a bit of gentle music in the background?
  - Is there a comfy chair that helps you concentrate?
  - If you know the coffee shop is too distracting, don’t expect yourself to study there.

*Have any ideas about resources we can share with other students or questions about time management?  
Drop us a line at [learning@uvic.ca](mailto:learning@uvic.ca).*

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You can use this sheet (or something like it) to “brainstorm” your tasks for the week. This is a good place to get the big picture, evaluate how to set priorities for the week, and then schedule your tasks accordingly.

## Planning for Weekly Assignments

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Other:

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# Planning for the Month

Month of: \_\_\_\_\_

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday/ Sunday
—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—

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# Planning for the Week

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8:00 a.m.							
8:30 a.m.							
9:00 a.m.							
9:30 a.m.							
10:00 a.m.							
10:30 a.m.							
11:00 a.m.							
11:30 a.m.							
12:00 a.m.							
12:30 a.m.							
1:00 p.m.							
1:30 p.m.							
2:00 p.m.							
2:30 p.m.							
3:00 p.m.							
3:30 p.m.							
4:00 p.m.							
4:30 p.m.							
5:00 p.m.							
5:30 p.m.							
6:00 p.m.							
6:30 p.m.							
7:00 p.m.							
7:30 p.m.							
8:00 p.m.							

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You can use this sheet (or something like it) to organize your tasks for the week. This is a good place to see all of the tasks you have to complete and evaluate their priority, and then schedule your tasks accordingly.

## Getting Organized for Tasks

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment	Due Date	Estimated Time Needed	Materials Needed	Goal Completion Date	Level of Priority

**Additional Notes:**

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You can use this sheet (or something like it) to organize your tasks for the week. This is a good place to see the assignments and exams you have to complete. Then you can evaluate, set priorities, and schedule your time.

## Weekly Task Organizer

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
—	—	—	—	—	—	—

**Assignments:**

Assignment Description	Due Date	Class

**Exams / Quizzes / Tests**

Course	Material to be Covered	Date

**Additional Notes:**

## Additional Tips for Managing your Time

- **Account for the small stuff.** Be sure to plan for the time it takes to walk to class, eat your lunch or wait in lineups.
- **Use transit time.** If you spend one or two hours per day on the bus, schedule in some light activities that you could accomplish during that time, like reviewing cue cards, reading articles, or even enjoying down time.
- **Sync and update your calendars.** If you work with two or more calendars (e.g. your smart phone and your day-timer), make sure you track changes or additions in both of those resources.
- **Be aware of time-sinks.** Identify the environments, situations and media that monopolize your precious resources: time, attention and energy. For example, if you find that you are less productive in the cafeteria, then make a plan to study in the library.
- **Track your most productive periods.** If you work best in the morning, organize your study plans or your most important commitments during that period.
- **Eat the elephant.** If you are having a difficult time getting started on a task, maybe because it feels too big, then try this technique. Think of your task like an elephant. You can't eat an elephant in one sitting, but you can take a few bites every day. If you eat the elephant early in the day, you might feel more satisfied that you've done a little bit more than you had accomplished yesterday.
- For more information on "Big Rocks" check out this YouTube video:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=to-DyF3AL3o>

### Other Time Management Site of Interest

#### **Dartmouth College** – Managing Your Time (From the Academic Skills Center)

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/time.html>

- The Academic Skills Center website offers a number of handouts, videos and links to excellent sources for time management resources.

#### **Lethbridge College** – Time Management (eLearning Café)

<http://www.lethbridgecollege.net/elearningcafe/>

- This website has a number of tips around time management and links to various webpages designed to assist people with time management.

#### **McMaster University** – Time Management (Student Success Centre)

<http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-skills/on-line-resources.html>

- This website includes a number of resources around academic skills, including time management. This section includes great handouts and videos.

#### **University of Guelph** – A Guide for Time Management

[http://www.learningcommons.uoguelph.ca/guides/time\\_management/](http://www.learningcommons.uoguelph.ca/guides/time_management/)

- The website offers a number of resources for planning your time, staying on track, and procrastination management.

