
GETTING ORGANIZED

Other Handouts:

- Time management

There are many different aspects to university life and it is helpful to organize study times and study materials around priorities and units. The more organized that you are as a student the more time you will have to study and this will help to alleviate stress.

Step 1: Organize your study space

University study takes concentrated effort and for that we all need a space in which to sit and concentrate on the task at hand. This is often a desk. It may be in the university library or in a corner of a room at home; wherever you choose to help you to concentrate. Where do you study?

- Do you need quietness or do you prefer music playing?
- Do you have a space in which other people can't interrupt you?
- Do you have resources for study close at hand, like a dictionary sitting on your desk?
- Do you always study while you are also online?

Tip!

However you choose to organise your study space make sure you spend some time reflecting on what suits your personality and lifestyle and then make some conscious decisions.

Step 2: Organize your study notes

University work involves dealing with lots of 'pieces of paper', which may be handouts from lecturers, notes you have taken from a reading, drafts of an essay you are writing, a unit guide, notes you wrote down in a lecture or PowerPoint slides you printed off from Web CT. Some of these 'pieces of paper' may be electronic rather than hard copy and for these it is important to think about where you will file them on your computer.

Tip!

The more easily retrievable these pieces of paper/electronic documents are the more easily you will be able to revise for your exams or complete your assignments.

Think about what filing system you are going to use for your notes.

- Will you use one folder of loose-leaf paper for all your units while you are on campus and then at the end of the day file your notes in to folders for each unit at home?
- Will you use one folder for all your units and keep the units separate with file dividers?
- Will you use 12 file dividers and separate the lecture notes week by week?
- Will you file the notes you have written out after reading for your tutorials in the same file as your lecture notes?
- Will you use note-books? Will you have a separate note-book for each unit?
- Will you organize your files by themes rather than by weeks?

Step 3: Organize your unit materials

Each of your units has various guides for you to refer to either as a hard copy such as a small booklet called the unit information and learning guide or information on WebCT. It is important to organize this information for easy access so you can refer back to key information. For example where does it tell you:

- When your assignments are due?
- How much each assignment is worth?
- How to contact your tutor?
- Which days and times the unit coordinator is available to talk to students?
- What the unit coordinator expects you to learn from this unit?

Tip!

Read the learning objectives that are set out in the unit guide carefully and think about these for example when you are researching your essay topic, this will assist you to stay on track.

Step 4: Organize your mind

Learning at university is always about both content and process. It is about both the disciplinary in-depth professional knowledge that you will gain (and that will allow you to call yourself a Bachelor of Science or of the Arts or of Commerce) and about training your mind to think in a logical, analytical and creative manner that will last for the rest of your life. Organizing your files, notes, readings and unit materials will help you to organize your mind!