Aims of this workshop

• To consider the implications of University study for time management and organisation
• To introduce some specific methods and techniques for time management
• To start the process of introducing these into your programme of study
Discussion

- Combining ‘life’ and university study, what problems do you see for managing your time?
- What has helped you manage your time before? Tips and techniques?
Independent study

• There are many demands on your time:
  – study
  – leisure
  – paid work
  – family commitments
• Many decisions ("Is this journal article worth reading?", "When should I start that assignment?") are guided…
• But – ultimately – rest with you
• You are responsible for organising your learning
Time and task management

• Establish key deadlines
  – From course literature, handbooks, module convenors

• Draw up schedules

• Use term and weekly schedules to organise your day-to-day work

• Remember the key rules of successful time-management: 1. schedules; 2. priorities; 3. using ‘gap-time’ effectively; 4. setting targets
Schedules

Four basic principles

• **1. Schedules**
  – You always need to know what’s happening across
    • The year
    • The term
    • The month
    • The week
  – Record assessment times in particular
    • Coursework + exams
  – Record & set personal milestones
    • “By this time…”
  – Record other commitments & **breaks**
  – **Use** all this information to **plan**
Schedules

• Note that schedules must be inclusive and comprehensive

• They will not work if they just include academic study, and you use some other form of diary for the rest of your life!

• ‘other commitments’ = friends, family, work, clubs, societies, community involvement etc.

• Use schedules to record everything that needs doing!
Schedules

• At the start of the year/term/vacation draw up an overall schedule
  – Make it visible!
  – **Review** the schedule over time!

• Draw up a weekly schedule
  – Again, make it visible!

• From this, monitor your daily time and task management

• Quick end-of-day **review**

• Re-adjust the schedule
Priorities

2. Priorities

– You need to make continual judgements about the tasks your schedules identify
– What needs doing now; what can be left until later; what will need doing eventually but can be left until much later
– Priorities shift over time across the year/term/month/week
– For example exams
  • Perhaps not a high priority now?
  • But more so at the end of Term 1.
  • Time to start thinking & planning for exams at the end of this term?
Gap-time

3. **Gap-time**
   - Much can be gained by exploiting short periods of time
     - e.g. gaps between lectures/commitments
   - Combine this with activities that vary in intensity and concentration
     - So, for example, within a one-hour break between lectures spend 20/30 minutes reviewing recent lecture notes…
   - The combination of lots of short periods used effectively delivers a big time-gain!
   - It also varies activities
   - Try not to ‘drift’ from one thing to another across the day
Targets

• 4. Targets
  – Always have specific targets
  – Try to be precise
  – But not restrictive
  – Examples
    • “Revision” = too vague
    • “9.00-9.15 sub-topic one; 9.15-9.30 sub-topic two etc” = too restrictive
    • “9.00-10.00 Revise topic one + 10 mins self-check on formula/data” = about right
Targets

– Use SMART targets (see below)
– As with schedules, get into the habit of reviewing your targets
– Get into the habit of setting realistic targets
SMART Targets

• SMART targets:
  – Specific
  – Manageable
  – Accurate
  – Realistic
  – Time-defined
Time management: broader issues

• Time management won’t work if it is too rigid
• Constructive flexibility!
• Spread tasks/activities over several time slots
• Vary activities between high concentration, lower concentration and routine/necessary
• Contingency planning: allow time for things to go wrong!
Time management: broader issues

• Always be generous with time allocations
• Work backwards from a deadline?
• Allow time for review/consolidation
  – 1.5 hrs. = read and process one ‘block’ of text? E.g. Journal article for assignment
  – Or 45 minutes concentrated reading; 30 minutes review & note taking; 15 minutes review/revision: spread over 1-2 days?
• *Build in breaks and relaxation!*
Time management: broader issues

• Work with your ‘body clock’, where you can
• Stick to (self)agreed start times!
• Don’t push concentration too hard
  – Cut-off point in the evening?
  – Try and ‘squeeze’ some extra time in the morning?
Organisation and information retrieval

- Organise your desk-top
- Organise your computer use
  - Files & directories
- Organise your notes: e.g. keep dated/numbered files for lectures/practical work & fieldwork etc./ assignment preparation
- Don’t delay! Check, date & file notes as soon as possible
- Make sure that all the information and ideas you process can be retrieved later!
Managing the work-life balance

• Time management, as discussed
• Short breaks + longer breaks
• Flexible breaks
• Clear decisions about not working
  – Some days/evenings for relaxation only
• Controlling/planning paid work
• Eating healthily
• Varying activities
GOOD LUCK

for all your time management and organisation!

The Student Learning Advisory Service

http://www.kent.ac.uk/uelt/about/slas.html