10 ways to make an effective study plan

**1. Analyse your individual learning style**

Every student has a different learning style. You can tailor your study schedule to best suit yours.

Ask yourself the following questions:

* Can you focus for long periods of time?
* What time of the day are you most productive?
* Do you need to take a break before returning to class material?

Once you’re across your learning style, you can schedule your study at the times of day that best suits you.

**2. Evaluate your current commitments**

Make sure your classes, work commitments and extracurricular activities are all blocked out within your calendar. This will give you a good idea of how much time you have to dedicate to study.

Does your calendar seem jam-packed? It may be necessary to reschedule some activities or cut back on work or some of your hobbies.

Take some time to visualise your end goal, to decide on what’s most important to you.

**3. Plan your study time for each class**

At the start of a semester, teachers usually give students an estimate on how much time they need to spend on each class.

You can use this as a starting point to calculate the study time needed. This will be different for each student – you might find you require more study time for some classes or less than suggested.

With the VU Block Model, you'll be attending three-hour classes, three days a week, all for the same subject. This focused timetable is structured to give you plenty of time to organise your study around work, your social life and other commitments.

If you’re learning online, it can be particularly difficult to find time to study, or concentrate on the task at hand.

Treat your learning and study time like a job, and don’t let yourself get distracted by your phone or non-urgent household chores.

After some tips and tricks? Read more about [making time to study online](https://online.vu.edu.au/blog/making-the-time-to-study-online).

How do I deal with assignments that take me longer to complete than expected?

Try to create your own deadlines a couple of days before the due date of homework and assessments.

This will give you the gift of extra time, to review your work or deal with any issues that arise.

**4. Develop a schedule**

You might ask yourself: When exactly should I study?

The first step is planning out your week, deciding which days you have available for study. You can also schedule in the amount of time you want to spend studying, according to your learning preferences.

Add your study sessions into your calendar, as you would your work or social commitments. This will drive home the point that this time is specifically for learning.

If you have a busy schedule, you may need to get creative in allocating time to study – such as using the time between classes, or your commute into university on the tram or train.

Here are some tips on how to manage [working and studying full time](https://www.vu.edu.au/about-vu/news-events/study-space/how-to-manage-working-studying-full-time), which outlines other ways you can fit extra study into your day.

**5. Set realistic goals**

While goal setting is important, you don’t want to over-commit, and then find you fall short of what you hope to achieve.

You may have one big goal for a block or semester, but you’ll find success if you break this down into smaller daily or weekly goals.

You’ve set yourself up well by creating a study plan and now have a higher chance of smashing your goal.

VU offers a unique learning experience designed for first-year students, to make you university ready.

Find out more about how we are revolutionising the first year of uni for you with our [First Year College](https://www.vu.edu.au/about-vu/teaching-colleges-schools/vu-first-year-college).

**6. Make study time part of your routine**

If you treat study as part of your daily routine, you’ll cement it as habit. In time, you won’t have to force yourself to do it – the impulse will come naturally.

This is also helpful in managing stress. You’ll approach exam times or intense assessment periods with a far more balanced workload, having spread it out over several weeks.

Make sure you commit to a manageable goal and a study schedule you can keep. Even if you don’t achieve everything you hope for in a session, being consistent with your studies will help you in the long run.

**7. Plan your breaks**

It’s estimated that an adult can hold focus for around twenty minutes. After this, we start to disengage.

So, it’s important to schedule in break time around your study.

You could:

* stretch
* hydrate
* have a snack
* go for a walk or run
* head to one of [VU’s fitness centres](https://www.vu.edu.au/current-students/campus-life/sport-fitness/fitness-centres) for a gym session
* attend a yoga class
* go for a swim.

The main thing is to get out of your head and do something different while you’re taking a break.

This way you’ll be reinvigorated once you resume study.

**8. Try the Pomodoro Technique**

If you find you can only study in short sessions, you could plan your schedule around the Pomodoro Technique.

This is where you:

* commit to 25 minutes of study
* take a break for 5-10 minutes
* repeat this four times
* take a longer break.

Having a longer break to look forward to may help you find the motivation you need to study.

Use the timer on your phone to track study time. If you find your phone to be too much of a distraction, you could use the timer on your microwave, or even invest in an egg-timer!

If you’re struggling to stay on task, you may find it helpful to use distraction apps to block non-essential programs on your phone and laptop.

There are [plenty of apps out there](https://www.vu.edu.au/about-vu/news-events/study-space/10-tips-on-how-to-study-effectively) that can help you study effectively.

**9. Find a study buddy or group**

A study buddy or study group will help you stick to a schedule. As you’ve committed to studying at the same time, you can keep each other accountable and strive for common goals.

Read more about [how a study buddy can help you succeed](https://www.vu.edu.au/about-vu/news-events/study-space/how-a-study-buddy-can-help-you-succeed).

**10. Evaluate your study plan & adjust**

The beauty of a study schedule is that you can change it to suit your needs.

If you find you’re still lacking the motivation to study, not getting the results you hoped for, or don’t feel like you have enough time to study, you may need to re-evaluate your plan.