

Managing Study and Work

It would be nice if you had unlimited time to devote to your studies, but the reality is that most of us also need to earn money while we study. Below are some strategies to help you manage your academic and occupational commitments.

Before Trimester

Draw up a timetable

Draw up a detailed timetable that lists all of your shifts or days at work as well as all your other commitments, including family and personal commitments. The Academic Skills Office's weekly study planner can be directly typed into, and amended each week if you have variable shifts. To access this, [click here](#). Work out when it is going to be feasible for you to study. While it's good to be optimistic, you also need to be *realistic* in what you can achieve. For example, are you likely to have more energy to study before or after working? Are you a morning or an evening person? Do you have relationship or family commitments also competing for your time?

Some units have mandatory on-campus intensive schools and you will need time off work at these times. You can check whether your unit has an intensive school and what its dates are in the online course and unit catalogue [here](#). You will also need time off to attend your exam. The exact exam dates for individual exams are announced once the trimester has started, but the dates of the exam period are available online [here](#).

Remember that it's likely you'll need more time for your studies in the week or two before a major assignment is due and immediately before your exams. Ideally, if you factor assignment time and exam revision into your weekly schedule, you can minimise the need for larger chunks of study time later on.

Communicate

It's important to speak to relevant parties who may be affected by your work and study balance. These parties can include employers, co-workers, family members and your partner. Often employers will be supportive of you undertaking studies and will try and accommodate your needs as much as they can; especially if your study is related to your work. Give your employer as much notice as possible of times when you may be unavailable or especially busy. Check your leave entitlements at your workplace. You may be eligible for study leave, or can negotiate to take annual leave, leave without pay, or to reduce your hours temporarily. If you work casually, consider speaking to co-workers who may be open to covering some of your shifts at peak study times or swapping shifts for times when you're less busy.

Your family members and partner can be important sources of support, so it's a good idea to explain the nature of what you're doing, why it's important to you and what negative and positive effects it will likely have on all of you. There might, for example, be less income, and less time for housework and socialising, but more shared tasks, more shared values and goals in terms of how study can enrich your lives, and more celebration opportunities as you meet study milestones. Talking early on can help avoid conflict at times when you need to give more attention to your studies and are less available to those around you.

During the Trimester

Connect with Other Students

Many other students are in similar situations with regards to work and study, so if you find yourself having difficulties in balancing all your commitments, then consider posting a question on the Moodle discussion forums to see if your fellow students can offer any advice. Connecting with other students early in the trimester can help enrich your learning experience and often leads to sharing helpful tips that can save you time when you may need to hunt down research or revise for exams.

Explore Employment Options

If you start to fall behind in your studies, it may be worth exploring what options are available to you in your workplace. For instance, flexible work hours may permit you to structure your work day differently, or you may be able to work up flexi time or rostered days off, or to take hours or days of annual leave rather than a whole week at a time. If possible, consider whether or not finding another job might be more conducive to your study needs.

Study Efficiently

If you have a limited amount of time available in which to study then you need to make sure you maximise how much you can get done within that time. Check out the Student Support Counselling Service's other tip sheets [here](#) for some hints on studying effectively. The Counselling Service can also offer short half-hour "study gym" appointments that focus on study skills to improve your concentration, memory, confidence, planning, and more.

Know the Census Date and other "Principal" dates

It may be that your employment commitments do not allow you the time needed to complete all your units, in which case you may need to drop down to a more manageable study load. The Census date refers to the last date that you can withdraw from units without accruing the HECS financial liability. If you look at the "principal dates" calendar [here](#) you will also see dates by which you can withdraw from trimester, year long, or semester units without academic penalty. You can withdraw from a unit by going into your MyUNE student portal, and within the myEnrol tab you will find a link to "enrolment and enrolment variation".

If you are still not sure how to manage your enrolment, you can send an enquiry through AskUNE [here](#). To understand what withdrawing from a unit during the trimester might mean for your enrolment, you may wish to speak to Enrolment and Progression. They can be reached by sending an email through AskUNE [here](#) or by telephone on 61 02 6773 4444. If you are working but also receiving some type of payment from Centrelink, it is advisable to check with Centrelink the implications of reducing your study load. Information on this can be found [here](#).

Extensions

In most cases, your employment commitments will not be grounds for an extension on your assessments. In rare cases, unforeseen circumstances arising from your employment may be viewed as grounds for an extension, but supporting documentation (ideally from your employer) is typically required in these instances. It's a good idea to check out your School's policy on this and to seek clarification from your unit coordinator if unsure.

After the Trimester

Evaluate your Situation

It's important to strike a manageable balance between work, study and your personal life. Often it can take some experimenting to find a balance that works for you. It's always a good idea to review how you went over the course of the trimester and to think about whether there are any changes that you'd like to make in order to provide a study/work/life balance that's better for you. Ask yourself what helped you manage study and work and what hindered you. Consider working out strategies to increase the benefit and minimise the difficulties. If you wish to discuss this, you can make an appointment with a UNE counsellor (either in-person for on-campus students or via telephone for off-campus students).

Implement Changes

After evaluating your situation, it may be worth making changes that afford you a more manageable study/work/life balance before the next study period. These changes might include studying fewer units at a time, working less, finding another job or seeking more support from your family. The more you can feel that you are living in line with what's important to you, the happier you will feel and the more chance you will have at succeeding in all aspects of your life.

The support you need to succeed

UNE Student Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) - (02) 6773 2897 for appt.