**Efficient Time Scheduling**

**Introduction**

Being successful at the university level will probably require a more careful and effective utilization of time than you have ever achieved before. Using time efficiently involves setting little goals to achieve your big ones. This handout will give you steps to look at the "big picture" and then narrow down your requirements into smaller and more manageable tasks.

Follow these five steps:

1. Prepare an assignment list for all your courses for the entire semester.
2. Make a semester calendar.
3. Create a “fixed” master weekly schedule.
4. Construct a “fluid” weekly schedule.
5. Make a daily "To Do" list.

If you complete these steps, then you will learn how to manage your academic and personal life.

**Step 1: Prepare an assignment list for all your courses for the entire semester.**

These are the steps you will take to complete your assignment list:

* List all your course work for the semester: readings, projects, papers, tests, test preparation time, etc...
* Look at each assignment.
  + Break each one into small units. Fit them into 50-minute blocks.
  + Break big/long-term assignments (ex. paper) into sub-parts:

1. Develop topic
2. Library search
3. Outline
4. First draft
5. Second draft
6. List all readings

* Estimate how long you expect each activity to take then double it.
* List the dates when assignments (or sub-parts of assignments) should be completed.

Why you should do this: Completing the assignment list provides you with the specific things which you need to do during the semester and a timetable for completing them.

Helpful tip: Consider working backward from the due date to help you estimate how much time you will need for each part.

**Step 2: Make a semester calendar.**

Get a calendar for the entire semester. You will add all items from “Step 1” to this calendar. Additionally, add other important events or dates you want to remember:

* Upcoming trips or visits by friends or family
* Concerts and movies you plan to attend
* Birthdays

Why you should do this: This will let you visualize upcoming events and responsibilities (i.e., exam dates, project dates and meeting dates, etc.).

Helpful tip: Keep it in a visible place. Don't be tempted to overfill it.

**Step 3: Create a “fixed” master schedule.**

The “fixed” master schedule will contain all of the regular activities which you expect to remain constant, each week, for the entire semester:

* Enter your course schedule.
* Enter other routine meetings and responsibilities (e.g., work, church, sports practice, etc.)
* Enter routine mealtime, travel time, sleep, exercise, laundry, shopping, cleaning, etc.
* Enter regular times for recreation (social hobbies, athletics, private time.)

Why you should do this: By programming your time, you will gain more time by being able to visualize available blocks in your schedule.

Helpful tip: Be mindful of the leftover blocks of time that are normally wasted to be more efficient and promote self-care.

**Step 4: Construct a “fluid” weekly schedule.**

You are now ready to use your “fixed” master schedule as a base for your “fluid” weekly schedule.

For maximum efficiency during the day, it is vital to:

* Allow for 8 hours of sleep a night.
* Make adequate time for eating a well-balanced diet.

Use these steps to guide the rest of your planning:

* Plan your activities in time blocks of 50 minutes, followed by a 10-minute break.
* Plug your study times into your schedule using your most alert times of the day for studying.
* For a lecture-type class, use study blocks right after the class to keep material fresh in your mind.
* For a recitation-type class (i.e., a foreign language), use study blocks immediately before the class to keep material fresh in your mind.
* Prioritize your most important activities first to get them done on time. Start early.
* Start by allowing at least 2 hours of study for every hour of class time. Then adjust accordingly to master your material, not just cover it.
* After trying your schedule, make needed adjustments to make it better and more workable for you. Fit this to your personal style:

* + Add more details if you aren’t remembering enough.
  + Simplify your list if there are too many details.
  + Remember the self-care guidelines: 8 hours of sleep and adequate time for balanced eating.

Why you should do this: Being able to keep up and revise your priorities is key to an effective living schedule

Helpful tip: Be sure you make enough copies for the whole semester.)

**Step 5: Make a daily "To Do" list.**

This list can be the real secret to your success if you do it every day. Some people end the day by listing tasks to do the next day, while others prefer to make a "to do" list in the morning. A 3 x 5" card that fits into a pocket for easy and frequent reference works very well.

Mark the activities that have a high priority today and will require some special attention.

Cross each item off as it is completed during the day.

Pay more attention to those marked as a higher priority.

Don't go for the higher percentage of tasks (that usually require less time) because you may end with a lower effectiveness level by accomplishing only your lower priorities. Remember, completing your list is not as important as making the best use of your time during the day.

**Other suggestions that students have found useful:**

1. **Study at the same time every day.** Having regular hours at least five days a week will make it easier to habitually follow the schedule and to maintain an active approach to study.
2. **Make use of the free hours during the school day.** The hours between classes may be your most valuable study time yet, ironically, the most frequently misused. You can use this time effectively by reviewing the material and editing the notes of the preceding class and/or studying the material to be discussed in the following class.
3. **Space study periods.** Fifty to ninety minutes of study at a time for each course works best. Relaxation periods of ten or fifteen minutes should be scheduled between study periods. It is more efficient to study hard for a defined periods of time and then stop for a few minutes, than to attempt to study on indefinitely.
4. **Plan for weekly reviews.** At least one hour each week for each class (distinct from study time) should be scheduled. The weekend is a good time for review.
5. **Leave some unscheduled time for flexibility.** This is important. Lack of flexibility is the major reason why schedules fail. Students tend to over-schedule themselves.
6. **Allot time for recreation, campus, and other self-fulfilling activities.** Doing well in your classes is important, but so is doing well in your personal life. It may not be possible to be stress free; however, saving time for the things that let you be you will make the stress more bearable.
7. **When forced to deviate from your planned schedule (and that will invariably occur), you should trade time rather than steal it from your schedule.** Thus, if you have an unexpected visitor at a time reserved for study, you can substitute an equal amount of study time for the period you set aside for recreation (or use some of the time you left unscheduled).
8. **Don’t be afraid to ask for help.** Sometimes that means reaching out to a friend, talking to a professor, or seeking help from other resources like the counseling center or an academic adviser. Asking for help is a strength often underutilized. If you are unsure where to go for help, then follow the link to learn what help is available to current Roadrunners: <https://bit.ly/2QPp7az>

**DSC Counseling Center**

You can call the counseling center during normal business hours to schedule an appointment. Please visit the center’s website (<https://bit.ly/2FBWmHN>) for additional tips on student well-being.

Location: Health Professions 266

Hours: 8am-5pm

Phone: 706-272-4430

DSC Public Safety: 706-272-4461

Georgia Crisis and Access Line: 1-800-715-4225

Tennessee Crisis Line: 1-855-274-7471

\*This form was modified from the KSU form “Efficient Time Scheduling” at: <https://bit.ly/2tVIlSC>