Emergency contacts

UNSW Canberra Campus Contact Details

Student Administrative Services
Ph: +61 02 6268 6000
Address: UNSW Canberra Northcott Drive CANBERRA ACT 2600
Email: sas@adfa.edu.au
www.unsw.adfa.edu.au

Research Student Unit
Ph: +61 (0) 2 6268 8112
Email: rsu@adfa.edu.au

Emergency telephone numbers

In Australia dial 000 from any phone for Police, Fire or Ambulance services. Dial 112 from a mobile phone. Dialling 112 will override key locks on mobile phones and therefore save time.

Making phone calls within Australia

- To make international phone calls:
  - Dial international access code (0011) + the country code + the area code (if any) + phone number. When adding a country code to a number, any leading 0 (zero) on the area code following it is NOT dialled.

- To make domestic phone calls:
  - Dial the area code + the phone number

Welcome

Student Administrative Services is delighted to offer you this university orientation program. The aim of this program is to assist commencing international students to make a successful cultural transition to studying at UNSW and living in Canberra.

Together we will explore the personal and academic challenges that lie ahead and you will find out more about the many great programs and services available to support you during your study here at UNSW Canberra.

This handbook is intended to provide a resource for you to refer to during the semester.

We hope you enjoy this orientation program and that it provides you with valuable learning experiences and new friendships.
Support Services on Campus

» Student Administrative Services

Research Student Unit
Room 101, Building 15

The role of the Research Student Unit (RSU) is to provide quality administrative support, promote the academic programs of students and to enhance students’ educational experience at UNSW Canberra.

Core functions include:

- Helping students with admission, enrolment, timetabling, academic progression and advice on assessment and graduation.
- Providing information through a central enquiries office, orientation sessions and Open Day.
- RSU also coordinates the UNSW Canberra handbook, recruitment and information guide for students.
- Supporting students by providing formal and informal functions and events and offering personal advice and support.

In short, RSU offers ongoing support from the initial inquiry, through the application and acceptance process right through to graduation.

» The Research Office (RO)

The RO works closely with the Grants Management Office and Research Strategy Office at UNSW Kensington campus, administers all internal research grants, monitors research performance and research funding and provides support to academic staff for the development of their research careers. Key people in the RO are:

Professor Joseph Lai
Associate, Dean (Research)
Room 103, Building 15,
Ph: +61 (02) 6268 8272

Ms Danica Robinson,
Manager, Research Office,
Room 361, Building 21,
Ph: +61 (02) 6268 8497

» Some of the SAS staff

Ms Patricia McCauley
Manager
Ph: +61 (02) 6268 8709
Email: p.mccauley@adfa.edu.au

Ms Usha Narayan
Deputy Manager
Ph: +61 (02) 6268 6001
Email: u.narayan@adfa.edu.au

Ms Jemima Glasswell
Research Student Support
Ph: +61 (02) 6268 8597
Email: j.glasswell@adfa.edu.au

Mr Luke Garner
Manager, Research Student Unit
Ph: +61 (02) 6268 9525
Email: L.Garner@adfa.edu.au

Mrs Elvira Berra
Research Student Support
(including Scholarships)
Ph: +61 (02) 6268 8112
Email: e.berra@adfa.edu.au

Ms Dominica Kazan
Postgraduate Student Counsellor
Ph: +61 (02) 6268 8571
Email: d.kazan@adfa.edu.au

Ms Usha Narayan
Deputy Manager
Ph: +61 (02) 6268 6001
Email: u.narayan@adfa.edu.au

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Ms Dominica Kazan
Postgraduate Student Counsellor
Ph: +61 (02) 6268 8571
Email: d.kazan@adfa.edu.au
The Learning and Teaching Group (LTG) is a university centre which provides academic support to all UNSW Canberra students, including newly-arrived international students. Dr David Blaazer is the Manager for the Teaching and Learning Group.

The LTG includes the following units:

The Academic Language and Learning Unit (ALL Unit)
The ALL Unit offers students assistance in all matters relating to the use of academic English in their studies. This assistance takes the form of credit-based courses in academic English for local and international students, a range of workshops and short courses on study skills and aspects of reading, writing and critical thinking, and one-to-one consultations to help students with their written assignments, oral presentations, and more general issues they face in their studies at UNSW Canberra.

Ms Linda Devereux Coordinator ALL Unit,
Building 36 Ground Floor, Room 36-222
Ph: +61 (02) 6268 9514
Email: knowall@adfa.edu.au

The Flexible Learning Team
Building 36, Ground Floor
Ph: +61 02 6268 9514
Email: fltsupport@adfa.edu.au

Arc sub branch
www.arc.adfa.edu.au

Arc is a student life organisation targeting all students at UNSW Canberra Campus. Services and programs offered by Arc are being specifically designed for the Canberra campus which is unique with its prominent military presence. Membership is voluntary and is currently priced at $25.

This is the first time in the history of UNSW Canberra that such a student life organisation has been developed. Take this opportunity to join up and reap the benefits of becoming an Arc member. It is your organisation and its evolution will depend on your interest and involvement.

Becoming a member means that you have greater opportunities for developing social connections; access to a range of discounted products; free legal support and advocacy; trips, tours and sports days; and access to a range of clubs and societies. More information about Arc will shortly be available on the UNSW Canberra international website. DON’T DELAY, SIGN UP TODAY!!
The Connect Mentor Program

The Connect Program was established so that students could use their experience and knowledge of life at university to offer support and guidance to new students. With their help your transition to university life and Canberra will be a lot smoother. The mentor system has many well documented benefits, for example:

- Access to basic information about the university
- Helpful in enhancing your sense of belonging and identification within your university school or faculty
- Positive influence on academic achievement
- Improving interpersonal communication skills
- Preventing some of the negative effects of stress
- Offering many opportunities for developing support networks and making social connections

Counselling Service

This confidential, free of charge service with a qualified professional counsellor, is designed to help people face challenges, navigate change, and regain balance. All enrolled UNSW Canberra postgraduate students are entitled to ten counselling sessions per annum.

What kind of assistance is provided?

- Work Related Issues (Career, Performance)
- Study Issues (Adjustment, Motivation, Resilience)
- Relationships (Couple, Family, Social, Work)
- Behavioral Concerns (Distress, Anxiety, Depression)
- Life Choices (Identity, Career, Spiritual)
- Stressful Circumstances (Health, Bereavement, Break-ups, Cultural Transitions)

The counselling service is located on the ground floor in Building 32 on the UNSW Canberra campus. To book an appointment please phone (02) 9385 5414 or ext. 855418 if you are on campus. Appointments are available on Monday and Wednesday.

Remember -- moving to another culture is an act of bravery and courage on your part. You have already demonstrated the willingness to take risks to achieve your goals. It may help to remember that CT is an emotional roller coaster with five predictable stages described in more detail in the Cultural Transition Handbook.
» Equity

The role of the Equity Office is to provide advice, training and support to all staff, postgraduate students and, occasionally, to undergraduate students on equity and diversity issues. For example; if you feel that you are being discriminated against on the basis of your cultural background, sex or religion you can contact the Equity Officer. Or if you are suffering from any level of physical or psychological handicap the Equity Officer will be able to assist you with information about available support.

» Cultural Transition

At UNSW Canberra, we recognise that settling in a new country, adapting to another culture, and adjusting to a different academic environment can be an emotional roller coaster. It is normal to feel anxious when you move to a new city or country to live and study. What can happen to you is sometimes called “Cultural Transitioning” (CT), otherwise known as ‘Culture Shock’.

CT happens when you do not understand the cultural norms of the new society; miss the food you normally eat; or can’t speak the language you normally speak. Everything seems different from what you expected when you left home. Life is different in different countries; everyone is different in the feelings they experience. It’s all OK, there is no right or wrong way of being at this time.

Some things that might be difficult: transport, finding accommodation, addressing your lecturer, standing in a line at the food store, understanding the Australian accent, using the Australian Health system, finding a social network. CT can cause distress and add pressure on students whose expectations of themselves are already very high.

You may experience some of the following during the transition:

– excitement
– lots of social activity
– anger
– resentment
– an unwillingness to interact with others
– longing for life back home
– sleep disturbances
– loss of confidence
– sadness
– loneliness

If you would like to talk to someone about CT or any other personal issues please make an appointment with our Postgraduate Student Counsellor.

» Research Student Hub

The Research Student Hub is located next door to the Research Student Unit in Building 32. The Research Student Hub is a great new space for all research students to come and unwind, relax and catch-up with friends. The hub includes new couches, air-conditioning, a projector and big screen. All research students are welcome to use this space all day Monday to Friday!

» Helpful Resources:

Mental Health Crisis Service
Ph: 1800 629 354

Lifeline Phone Counselling
Ph: 13 11 14

http://moodgym.anu.edu.au/welcome
www.blackdoginstitute.org.au
www.relationships.com.au
Helpful Hints

To assist you in making this transition as smooth as possible Student Administrative Services would like to suggest the following:

- Examine your expectations
- Get involved right from the start
- Draw upon previous experiences of managing change
- Accept invitations
- Make an effort to make friends.
- If you get homesick, get it out- tell someone, write it down, send an email

- Make an effort to LIVE here not THERE by virtual reality.
- Participate- join a society or club
- Be Proactive
- Ask Questions
- Listen and Observe
- Keep an Open Mind
- Be Patient with yourself and remember:

  We’re here to help!

Manage your Transition

Coming to another country and embarking on a study program in another language is indeed a challenging endeavour which requires courage, determination and adaptability. In the months ahead you will be required to fit into a new culture and a new way of learning. You will have to find your way around, find accommodation and get used to different foods as well as changes in the climate.

Any kind of change whether it is a change of school, change in address or just a change in timetable produces some level of stress. As a result all of you have already developed some skills in dealing with change. How well you adapt to your new situation here and how long it takes you depends on a number of things including your personality, the distance between the two cultures and how many times you’ve done it before. Although individuals differ greatly in the way they react to a new culture, it is well established that there are distinct stages in the adjustment process that new arrivals go through. For example, you may feel unusually confused, nervous, irritable and dependent on others when you first arrive. This process is called the "U-curve" because of the way your feelings rise and fall. Usually the first 3 – 6 months are the most stressful and then you start to settle in.

This process of transition can be quite stressful and is sometimes referred to as "Culture Shock". However, it is a perfectly normal response that most people experience to a greater or lesser extent when they move to a new social and cultural environment.

Remember that much valuable learning comes from experiencing and understanding a new way of life different from your own. It may surprise you to discover that you will learn things about your own culture that you may not have thought about before. It is a rare opportunity not only to broaden your viewpoint but also to mature personally and to realise and establish your own unique set of values. You will gain an understanding of Western ways of thinking and develop competence in the English language, appreciation of cultural differences and improve your ability to work and relate to people from diverse backgrounds. All these things add significant benefits to your future career as a professional.
Points of Transition

Take a short walk through your life and identify the change points. Where were the spots your life took a turn? Perhaps they were a conscious decision or events happened that were out of your control. List these changes in the order they occurred, including your age at the time. Then on a scale of one to ten, rate how difficult these changes were for you.

(1 = very smooth transition, through to 10 = very difficult transition)

I was ______ years old and the transition was: /10

I was ______ years old and the transition was: /10

I was ______ years old and the transition was: /10

I was ______ years old and the transition was: /10

I was ______ years old and the transition was: /10
When going through a transition period it often helps to think about the following: How well do you know yourself?

1. Knowing yourself
2. Knowing the new situation
3. Knowing others who can help
4. Looking after yourself
5. Leaving the past behind
6. Looking for the benefits
7. Transfer old skills to new situation

Based on Hopson and Scally (1980)

Even if you’ve studied English for many years in your home country, you may understand very little of what people here are saying to you and you may also have difficulties in expressing your ideas in English. This is normal so try not to get too discouraged. Here are some reasons why you may be experiencing language difficulties.

People speak too fast
- Spoken English will sound very rapid to you at first. Don't worry – your ability to understand will improve after a little while. People won’t mind if you ask them to repeat what they have said or to speak more slowly.

Vocabulary
- Many common words in Australia and many words used in university life may not be in your vocabulary. Don’t be surprised. Just remember that academic English is not the same as using the language in everyday conversation in an English speaking country.

The Australian Accent
- Remember that every English-speaking country has its own particular accent and way of pronouncing English words. You may find that the Australian pronunciation of many familiar words is quite different from what you are used to. With time you will soon get used to the Australian Accent.

Abbreviations
- Australians like to abbreviate, shorten words or just use initials. Australian often becomes 'Aussie', food Technology, becomes 'food tech', breakfast becomes 'brekkie', and a tutorial becomes ‘a tute’. Acronyms in Australia have become almost a second language hence you get SAS instead of Student Administrative Services and QMA instead of Quantitative Methods A. Ask if you don’t know what an acronym stands for.

Slang
- Australians, particularly students, love to use slang. Slang can be very specialised and is always changing. If you don’t understand a word or phrase ask the speaker what it means and how it should be used.

Anxiety
- You may feel nervous when you try to communicate with English speaking people. Try not to worry – it is natural be nervous with people who don’t understand your native accent or language. Your ability to communicate in English will improve more quickly the more you practise. Remember that language assistance is available on campus through the Learning Centre.

Body Language
- Every culture has certain ways of standing, moving, using hands, eyes, arms, nodding the head, etc. There may be meanings associated with these movements or gestures and the meaning may be different in Australia from the meaning in your culture.

- In Australia for example, it is usual to look someone in the eye when you talk to them. To an Australian this shows directness, attentiveness and sincerity; but in another culture it may be considered rude to do this. In some cultures it is an insult if someone gives you something with the left hand – in Australia it makes no difference. When talking to you, Australians don’t like to stand very close and they also don’t touch other people as much as members of some cultures do. After you have spoken to a few Australians you will notice these differences.

Conversations
- Don’t be worried if you are not fluent in the English language. Our hosts will understand this and if they speak too fast ask them to slow down. Meeting an Australian family is a very good way to improve your English and the more you speak, the more fluent you will become.

- Questions about a person's age (especially an older woman), how much someone earns, the cost of a person’s house or the land on which the house is built and the cost of the various things in the house are sometimes considered impolite in Australia. If you would like to know the cost of something, ask the question in a non personal way. For example, you could say, “How much does the average house in Sydney cost?” This kind of question is quite acceptable and will not cause embarrassment.
Manage Yours and Others’ Expectations

TIME MANAGEMENT

Studying at university is often a balancing act. Your life revolves around juggling classes, studying, paid work, household responsibilities, spending time with friends and families, hobbies or sporting commitments. There are also variations within the academic year – you can reasonably expect that your study commitments will increase from the middle of the semester as you try to manage exams and assignments.

The key to managing these different and variable commitments is to use effective time management skills. Follow the steps in this handout to get on track and stay on track with managing your time. While many of these strategies seem like commonsense, if we all remembered to follow common sense then we would not experience problems with time management. The reality is that we can all get off-track from time to time, and by taking action before things get out of hand we can easily get back on track.

Step 1: Identify how long tasks actually take

We often underestimate how long a task actually takes. This can range from underestimating how long it takes to complete small, daily tasks such as having a shower, to underestimating how long it takes to complete a major assignment. Quite often, students set themselves the task of reading 3 chapters in one evening, not taking into account that there are 50 pages for each chapter, the chapter is about a very complex topic, and of the one evening there are only two available hours once you exclude preparing dinner, eating, and doing the dishes. Underestimating the time it takes to complete tasks can create the following negative cycle:

![Diagram showing the cycle of unrealistic time estimation, inability to meet unrealistic goals, thoughts, feelings, and behavior]

How do we stop the negative cycle from perpetuating? You could try one or two of the following suggestions:

1. Obtain a realistic estimation of how long everyday tasks take. Time – rather than just guess – how long it actually takes you to iron a shirt, make a ‘quick’ phone call, have a shower, prepare dinner, get ready in the morning, go grocery shopping, etc. The amount of time these tasks take up can be quite surprising!

2. Work out where your time is spent. Keep a diary over a period of one week. Every hour, make a note of what you have spent the previous hour doing.

3. For each task that you estimate, you may wish to multiply the estimated time by 1.5 to 2 times. Research shows us that underestimating how long it takes to complete a task is a very common phenomenon.
Step 2: Identify how much time you really have

Now that we know how long tasks actually take, let’s look at how much time we actually have available to us. The reality is that many students think that the time that they have for studying is what is left over after classes, dinner, and work. For them, their timetable may look like this:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday</th>
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<tr>
<td>6-7 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-9 am</td>
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<td>Gym</td>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>Lectures &amp; tutorial</td>
<td>Sleep-in</td>
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<td>9-10 am</td>
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Unfortunately, there is a lot missing from the timetable above, including activities such as socialising, relaxing, household duties, and travelling time are missing from this timetable. These are all activities that take up time. A more realistic version takes into account:

- Commitments: Classes, work, sports, gym, committees, etc. Include travelling time.
- Personal time: Grooming/hygiene, relaxing after returning home from university, watching television, listening to music, shopping, socialising (including emails, phone calls, on-line chatting or gaming), etc.
- Essential time: Showering, eating, and sleeping.
- Housework: Preparing meals, doing dishes, cleaning house, doing laundry, etc.

A more realistic timetable may therefore look something like this, which shows far less available hours than the first timetable:

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Your turn: Use the blank timetable over the page to gain a realistic estimation of how you spend your time and how much time you have to devote to academic study and then what is left unallocated. Photocopy it as many times you need – maybe even one for each week of the semester.
Week beginning: _______________________       Semester week: ____________________________

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
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Step 3: Prioritise your tasks

By now, it may seem that fitting everything into your schedule may not be possible. When this occurs, it is important to prioritise. A useful tool to help you prioritise is the Time Management Matrix from Steven Covey’s The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.

### Time Management Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quadrant 1 (Important/Urgent)</th>
<th>Quadrant 2 (Important/Not Urgent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Contains tasks that need immediate action as they are deadline-driven (e.g. assignment due tomorrow)</td>
<td>• Contains tasks that are important to your goals and direction but do not require immediate action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focusing on tasks in Quadrant 1 certainly produces results when you need them</td>
<td>• In effect, this quadrant focuses on laying the groundwork for future successes.</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Focusing on tasks in Quadrant 1 can lead to stress and burnout because you are constantly managing crises.</td>
<td>• Quadrant 2 tasks can include building working relationships, setting longer term goals, looking after your health so that you are physically and mentally prepared.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quadrant 3 (Not important/Urgent)</td>
<td>Quadrant 4 (Not important/Not urgent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contains tasks that are not important, but because there is a time limit to achieving them we view them to be more important than they are.</td>
<td>• Quadrant 4 tasks are those types of tasks that we typically procrastinate with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quadrant 3 tasks include some types of phone calls, some emails, and some assignments.</td>
<td>• These include surfing the Internet, watching television, and taking unimportant phone calls.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Focusing on tasks in this quadrant can mean that while you complete tasks, you may lack a sense of achievement because these are not integral to your overall goal.</td>
<td>• Focusing on these tasks distract you from your overall goal and take you away from more pressing tasks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focusing on Quadrant 1 tasks helps you attend to urgent and important tasks, but they can also increase stress and contribute to burnout in the longer term. Putting your main focus on Quadrants 3 and 4 means that you spend time on tasks that do not contribute to your longer term goals.

Quadrant 2 is where we are encouraged to spend most of our time. These tasks are aimed at achieving goals and sustainability. Tasks that enhance our physical and mental health fall in this quadrant, including making time to exercise, ensuring that you eat a healthy meal, and scheduling time for relaxation to recharge your batteries.

Step 4: Use your time efficiently

The key to using your time efficiently is to know your circadian rhythm and the times at which you are most alert. We commonly identify with labels such as ‘morning person’ or ‘evening person’, and there is an element of truth behind these. Research has shown that periods of peak capacity to focus differs between morning and evening types. Our concentration and reaction time varies with our circadian rhythm, whereas our memory and our ability to do calculations are less affected.

What does a circadian rhythm mean for time management? As a university student, even though the focus is on studying and completing assessments, there will certainly be tasks that require high concentration levels (such as reading and understanding a chapter), and tasks that are less demanding on your concentration (such as remembering information, typing up a reference list for your assignment).

- Schedule tasks that require high concentration levels for times when you are most alert.
- All other tasks can be scheduled around these high concentration tasks. For example, if you are less alert in the evenings after dinner, you can use this time to format your assignment, find research on the Internet, do housework, socialise etc.
Sometimes we have the benefit of having ‘dead’ time when we are engaged in tasks for which we may be able to do another task at the same time – in effect, to multitask. Travelling time is one such opportunity if you take public transport; you may be able to use this time to revise lecture notes, to test your memory of significant theories or studies in your subjects, to plan a timetable for the coming week, to plan social activities or listen to music or re-listen to an audio lecture.

While multitasking may seem to be the magical cure for our time management problems, in reality it can be a double-edged sword. There is a difference between useful multitasking – for example, making the most of ‘dead’ time – and inefficient multitasking. Research has shown that multitasking can actually be counterproductive. Specifically, each time you switch from one task to another, there is a cost associated in refocusing your attention. Overall, switching from a familiar task or switching to an unfamiliar task is associated with larger time costs. Each time you shift from one task to another, you have to refocus your attention. You may even spend more time trying to do both tasks simultaneously, than each task in sequence.

Examples of inefficient multitasking include:
   a) Studying while watching television,
   b) Driving while talking on your mobile,
   c) Working on an assignment on the computer with your email open so that you read it each time you have a new message.

These are inefficient because both tasks in each example demand your concentration and attention, and you cannot attend to both simultaneously without your performance on either task suffering. In contrast, travelling on public transport requires minimal concentration, thus you are able to focus effectively on another task.

In order to use your time efficiently:
   • Be realistic when identifying which tasks are compatible from a multitasking perspective.
   • Examine where you can eliminate ‘wasteful’ time. For example, if there is a television show that you must watch, rather than try to study simultaneously and end up feeling like you have not accomplished anything, record the program; you can then watch the replay and skip the commercials.

**Step 5: Reward and recharge yourself to maximise efficiency**

Staying on track with your time management plan is easier when you reward yourself regularly. This means scheduling in time to treat yourself to something that you like – whether it is spending time with friends, spending time on a hobby, or spending time just relaxing and resting. Your mind and body need rest and recharging in order to function optimally.

Sometimes students find it difficult to justify taking a break, particularly at times such as exam times or late in the university semester when assignments are due. Not only that, but they cut down on exercise, sleep, and a healthy diet. Instead, it is often replaced by late nights spent cramming or rushing to finish assignments, living on unhealthy takeaway food, and using caffeine to stay awake.

One way to think about why it is important to reward yourself and to relax is to think of your body as a car. In order to ensure that your car maintains its peak performance, you would make sure that you rest it (certainly, you wouldn’t drive it non-stop for 20 hours in a day!), make sure that you put the right type of fuel in it so that it runs properly, and maintain it regularly. Your body and mind function on much the same premise – it needs rest, the right types of food, exercise, variety of activities and generally looking after. That way, you are able to function with maximum efficiency.
Rewarding you and recharging your batteries therefore become Quadrant 2 tasks in the Time Management Matrix. However, it is important to note that they can easily fall into the Quadrant 4 activities. Where the line is drawn, of course, is subjective. A useful guide is whether the task is truly aimed at relaxing and recharging, or whether you are procrastinating to avoid doing an unpleasant task. If it is in the latter category, it is most likely to be a Quadrant 4 task.

Step 6: Review regularly

Circumstances change from time to time, predictably with increasing workload towards the end of the university semester, but also with changes in work and personal circumstances. These will impact on how your time is managed. Regularly review how your time management plan is working in order to increase its effectiveness.

Troubleshooting… when time management doesn’t work

Problem 
I can’t seem to get anything done.

Causes 
Procrastination, feeling depressed, feeling anxious – these can all affect your ability to maintain motivation and stay on track.

Solutions 
Procrastination – or putting off a necessary task – is something that we all do from time to time. Procrastination can have many contributing factors. See also the information on perfectionism available from the Counselling Service. One way to manage procrastination (due to feeling overwhelmed or uncertain about what to do) is to break a larger, more overwhelming task into smaller, less overwhelming steps. For example, the larger goal of 'finishing an assignment' can be broken down to the following steps:

1) Decide on topic,
2) Gather readings on the topic,
3) Read an article/chapter and note down ideas (repeat this sequence for as many articles/chapters as there are)
4) Draft a detailed essay plan (outline topic for each paragraph)
5) Write the introduction
6) Write the body
7) Write the conclusion
8) Write reference list
9) Revise essay draft
10) Proofread

By breaking down the task, you get a clear idea what needs to be accomplished step-by-step to achieve the overall goal of finishing the assignment. Also, seeing a goal as ‘read one article/chapter and write down notes’ is less overwhelming than finishing the whole assignment, and you are more likely to make a start on it.

Another strategy is to use a ‘20 minute rule’ where you focus on the task for that period of time. When 20 minutes is up, if you have gained momentum and can keep going then great, if not then at least you have already done 20 minutes of that task.

Procrastination is often linked with feeling depressed or feeling anxious. If these feelings interfere with your studies and your life in general, it may be helpful to speak to a mental health professional (e.g. psychologist, counsellor) who can help you to get back on track.
Problem While I spend hours drawing up a timetable, my timetabled activities keep moving on to the next day and the next week.

Causes This is likely to be caused by both overestimating how much time you have available, and underestimating the amount of time required for completing the tasks.

Solutions Go back to Step 1 (Identifying how long tasks actually take), and Step 2 (Identify how much time you really have).

Problem There just isn’t enough time to get everything done.

Causes Many people mistake time management as the same as finding ways to fit even more in to an already busy schedule. The reality is that time management is meant to help you focus your available time so that you can achieve goals that are important and meaningful to you, rather than try to do everything.

Solutions Refer to Step 3 (Prioritise your tasks). Learn to identify which tasks on your ‘To Do’ list are important, which tasks are less important, and which tasks are distractions. Focus on achieving the tasks that are important first, so that distractions can be completed if you have any extra time rather than taking away time from more important activities.

It may also be useful to refer to Step 4 (Use your time efficiently) to see if you are making the most of what time you have available to you.

This handout is based on the following resources:


Managing negative feedback/criticism & giving constructive feedback

Giving and receiving feedback is an important part of university life. As students, we expect to know where we can make improvements in our work, and look to lecturers and tutors to give us feedback to help us to learn. We may also be in the position of giving feedback to others including giving feedback to other students we work with on group projects, to friends who seek feedback on their assignments, and perhaps giving feedback in social situations.

In spite of how important giving and receiving feedback is, we are rarely taught how to do so in a respectful manner. At some stage, we have probably received feedback that we felt was unfair or led us to feel annoyed, angry or hurt. When we do not manage feedback in a constructive manner we may seem reactive and defensive to others. Similarly, we may also give feedback to others that raised negative feelings for them, and may be experienced as negative, critical, or even hurtful. Below are some tips on how to receive and to give feedback.

Managing Negative Feedback or Criticism
At some point in our studies, we will receive some form of feedback, be it positive or negative. We may feel motivated to ask for sincere feedback because it helps us to learn. Overall, positive feedback is easy to manage. Negative feedback, however, can often be difficult to take. We can feel attacked by criticism that we do not feel is justified, and end up focusing on our emotional reaction rather than learning from the feedback. In such an instance, it will be helpful to learn to manage this type of feedback.

Managing your own reaction
Allow yourself time to process the feedback, especially if you feel angry or distressed. Before you respond, reflect on the feedback – there may be some truth in it and learning from it will help you change and grow.

The feedback may have some validity, even if the person delivering the feedback has been critical. If this is the case, focus on the content of the message, rather than how it has been delivered. Not everyone knows how to give feedback in a meaningful and non-critical manner. So, try to focus more on the meaning of the message rather than how the message was presented.

For example, someone giving feedback about your assignment could say:

Option 1  Well, I wouldn’t have done it that way – the fifth paragraph is all wrong; it’s unclear and your concepts are weak and misunderstood.

Option 2  The fifth paragraph needs more clarification, perhaps adding a sentence explaining the difference between the two concepts may help to strengthen your argument.

Both statements provide feedback that the fifth paragraph requires further work, but the manner in which each has been said is what elicits different reactions in the recipient. By focusing on your emotional reaction rather than on the content in Option 1, however, you may overlook some useful suggestions.
Think about the feedback
Feedback is meant to help you rather than hinder your progress. It isn’t there to point out your ‘weaknesses’ although it sometimes feels that way! Instead, look to see what areas of potential improvement may exist. Be honest and identify which aspects of the feedback may be legitimate, even if it is a bit (or very!) uncomfortable.

If the feedback is too general, ask for specific areas that you can work on. For example, in response to feedback such as “This sketch just looks wrong. It’s ugly, it’s got no sense of proportion.” you could say “I can see that there are some areas that can be improved on. Can you tell me which specific part of the sketch needs some modification?”

You may also wish to ask for specific skills that you can work on – skills relevant to university students include communication, essay writing, conceptualising ideas, interpersonal skills, as well as research and problem-solving skills.

Practice using the feedback
Finally, take initiative to learn from the feedback. For example, if communication is the issue, seek help by practising with others, or seek assistance from the Counselling Service. If the feedback is related to your study skills (e.g. essay writing, giving an oral presentation) you can seek assistance from the Learning Centre or go to Toastmasters. If the feedback is specific to your program you could look for further guidance from someone in your department, or seek out a private tutor.

While criticism may sting in the short term, it can be extremely helpful in the longer term.

Giving Feedback
Giving feedback can also be challenging. It is important for comments to be constructive, accurate and based on observation, provide guidance for improvement, and be valid and fair. Unjustified criticism arises when it is inaccurate, fails to give options or direction for change, is presented in a disrespectful manner, and targets the person rather than the product or the behaviour.

While some people may subscribe to the “tough love” philosophy wherein criticism is given harshly with the aim of improving future outcomes, it can be very demotivating for someone on the receiving end, particularly if it is of a personal nature or if that person has put a lot of effort into a task. While it may be important to tell others what you think, it is necessary to think about how others may receive the message that you are sending.

Feedback or criticism delivered in anger or sarcastically will be lost by the emotional reaction it generates. For example, if a group member tells another “This is really awful, we are definitely going to fail if we submit the assignment with your section as it is. It is written poorly, there are spelling mistakes throughout, and the style is completely different to how we all agreed we would do it.” the recipient is likely to react more to feeling attacked and be defensive rather than be open to making changes.
Tips for giving feedback

Be specific, using examples where possible, so that the recipient learns something from it.

Try: Your presentation is really good. One thing that may be worth considering is the use of examples; maybe using examples that are more relevant to your audience will help to increase their involvement in the exercises.

Instead of: Your presentation needed a lot of work.

Use “I” statements rather than “You” statements so that the recipient is less likely to feel attacked.

Try: I know that getting feedback from tutors and lecturers can be quite challenging, but I’ve noticed that at times when the feedback has been positive it’s been difficult for you to accept the compliment without feeling a need to defend your work.

Instead of: You should stop being so sensitive when tutors and lecturers comment on your work.

Frame weaknesses in a constructive, rather than destructive, manner.

Try: I know that you feel strongly about this topic, but trying to fit a discussion of it into our assignment weakens its focus and potentially affects our marks. Is there a way of making the link between these two clearer and more relevant so that we can keep some mention of your area?

Instead of: Look, we all have our sections to complete in this project. You only care about your own agenda, and when you try to include it in the assignment the rest of us suffer because it weakens the focus of our argument.

Start and end on a positive note.

Try: Thanks for your section of the assignment, you’ve clearly done a lot of research and put effort into it. The content is great; would you be able to modify some aspects of the structure of the paragraphs so that the sections of the assignment become more cohesive?

Instead of: Your section is written terribly.

Consider your choice of words. Phrases such as “You should” and “Do it this way instead” seem like commands rather than suggestions.

Try: From what you’ve said, it sounds like you feel that working on some study skills may help your exam preparations. I’ve heard that the Learning Centre is very helpful and that the library also has books on studying, if you would be interested in these options.

Instead of: If you think you have a problem with studying then you should learn better study skills. You should go to the library and get a book on studying, or you should go to the Learning Centre where they can tell you what to do.

Ask the recipient about their own experience, thoughts, reactions and impressions.

Try: I know that group assignments can be challenging because we all have different ideas and different ways of doing things. There seems to be a fair bit of conflict in our group – what has been your experience of working with the team?

Instead of: You’re a terrible group member. You can’t work with us and you don’t know anything. The only reason why you’re in our team is because no one else wanted you.

Finally, giving feedback isn’t just about what you say, but also how you say it. For example, the same verbal message “That’s a really good job you did.” can be delivered in a sincere tone or in a sarcastic one and end up taking on entirely different meanings.

Nonverbal signals are also critical to the impact of the message. Your tone of voice, body language, and facial expressions convey as much as the message itself. If your message is delivered with a raised voice and an angry expression, your message will likely be perceived as critical. The focus then becomes the emotion, and the message that you want to convey gets lost.

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## SUPERVISION EXPECTATIONS

Read each pair of statements below and then estimate your position on each. For example with statement 1 if you believe very strongly that it is the supervisor's responsibility to select a good topic you would put a ring round '1'. If you think that both the supervisor and student should equally be involved you put a ring round '3' and if you think it is definitely the student's responsibility to select a topic, put a ring round '5'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. It is the supervisor's responsibility to select a research topic</th>
<th>The student is responsible for selecting her/his own topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. It is the supervisor who decides which theoretical framework or methodology is most appropriate</td>
<td>Students should decide which theoretical framework or methodology they wish to use</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The supervisor should develop an appropriate program and timetable of research and study for the student</td>
<td>The supervisor should leave the development of the program of study to the student</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the student is introduced to the appropriate services and facilities of the department and University</td>
<td>It is the student's responsibility to ensure that she/he has located and accessed all relevant services and facilities for research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Supervisors should only accept students when they have specific knowledge of the student's chosen topic</td>
<td>Supervisors should feel free to accept students, even if they do not have specific knowledge of the student's topic</td>
</tr>
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<td>6. A warm, supportive relationship between supervisor and student is important for successful candidature</td>
<td>A personal, supportive relationship is inadvisable because it may obstruct objectivity for both student and supervisor during candidature</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. The supervisor should insist on regular meetings with the student</td>
<td>The student should decide when she/he wants to meet with the supervisor</td>
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<td>8. The supervisor should check regularly that the student is working consistently and on task</td>
<td>The student should work independently and not have to account for how and where time is spent</td>
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<td>9. The supervisor is responsible for providing emotional support &amp; encouragement to the student</td>
<td>Personal counselling and support are not the responsibility of the supervisor - students should look elsewhere</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. The supervisor should insist on seeing all drafts of work to ensure that the student is on the right track</td>
<td>Students should submit drafts of work only when they want constructive criticism from the supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The supervisor should assist in the writing of the thesis if necessary</td>
<td>The writing of the thesis should only ever be the student's own work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The supervisor is responsible for decisions regarding the standard of the thesis</td>
<td>The student is responsible for decisions concerning the standard of the thesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted by Margaret Kiley & Kate Cadman from work by I Moses, Centre for Learning & Teaching, University of Technology, Sydney
Student Profiles

Priyanka Dhopade’s story

Having been raised in three different countries (India, Saudi Arabia and Canada), for me, the term “culture shock” is really just a “culture mild surprise”. Instead of doing something any sensible person would, like buying a map, one of the first things I did upon arriving in Australia was run to the nearest toilet and see if it flushed the opposite way. Alas, I was disappointed to find that the water does not actually spin; there is so little of it that it is sucked downwards – you will find that this is one of the many clever ways Australia has imposed its water restrictions due to frequent droughts.

The biggest hardships I faced (though you can hardly call them that) were the curious discrepancies in language. Although my first language is English, even I was stumped on a few occasions, most of them leading to looks of utter confusion and “IS THAT EVEN ENGLISH?!?”

“No thongs allowed” read the sign outside a restaurant I was about to enter. “Who is going to check?” I thought, as I glared at the bemused waitress and protectively tightened my belt. It wasn’t until a trip to the beach that I discovered that thongs are actually flip-flop sandals and a staple footwear here in Australia.

And so began the encountering of many “Australianisms” that although I resisted at first, I am now guilty of using in everyday conversation and not just when recounting the week to my family in whispered monologue-style segments with the occasional “CRIKEY, MATE!” (I really miss Steve Irwin).

A half-pint of beer is a “schooner,” fries are “chips,” detergent is “washing powder” and a quilt is a “doona”. Next is the Australians’ tendency to shorten every word longer than two syllables: breakfast is “brekkie,” present is “pressie,” even Christmas is “Chrissie”. In the land “down under,” a “mate” is actually a friend and not someone to reproduce with and people here don’t “think,” they “reckon.” If your head isn’t spinning yet, I applaud you.

All of this was fun for the first couple of weeks, the length of a normal vacation. After a few near-death experiences as a pedestrian because of not yet being accustomed to Australians driving on the left side, it was starting to sink in that I really was on the other side of the world, a long way from home. For once, I did what any sensible person would do – grab a couple of newly made friends and head to the nearest pub for a pint of Pure Blonde (great beer, I reckon).

Zhiqiang’s story

Two and half years ago when I arrived in Australia by myself, I had no idea about what kind of life was waiting for me in this totally foreign land. Thanks to the kind people in my school, I settled down and started to get used to living and studying in the quiet and beautiful Canberra.

During the past two and half years I learned and developed a lot. Being independent is one of the most important things I have learned. The meaning of being independent may vary from person to person. When it comes to me, I think it means good management of every aspect of life on your own and good decision-making skills. Left behind family and friends, like any other international students, I faced many challenges at the beginning of my stay in Canberra, such as settling in a totally new environment, learning foreign language and cultures and finding new friends. I had to take full responsibility of my study, health, finance, everyday chores like shopping for grocery and cooking, and even emotions.

Thus, my advice to the newly arrived international students is to get ready to be independent physically, mentally and emotionally to build up a new life. Actually, you will find that getting independent is more like an adventure and you would benefit from it for your whole life.

Being independent doesn’t mean living alone and isolated and not caring for others and helping others. This becomes even more important when dealing with the feelings of homesickness and loneliness. One of the best things to combat the feeling of homesickness and loneliness is to make new friends. Like any other cities in Australia, Canberra is a multicultural and diverse city; you have a good chance to meet and know people from all over the world. So my suggestion is to be open-minded and positive towards new things and ready to learn about new cultures and values from different countries. It is not only important for you to have something available to balance when your study becomes very stressful, but also to enhance your cross-cultural communication skills as well as your personal network for all your future.

Hope you find my advice useful and enjoy your stay in Canberra.
Now take a minute or two to think about what your personal mission statement is. Most people who come to Australia do so with a specific goal in mind. You may be here with the ultimate aim of advancing your country’s knowledge in your field of study. Or you may be hoping to help your family by returning home with a better education. On the other hand you may simply be here to advance your own personal and professional goals in life. Whatever your reasons are, it can be helpful to jot down some thoughts at the beginning of your journey and reflect on this at the end of your time in Australia.

My personal mission in studying overseas is to help:

my family by....

my country by...

myself by...

other comments