Audio transcript

## Setting goals and making plans

“I just study when I get around to it” “I have no set timetable”  
“My study routine is very haphazard”

You definitely need a routine. And if you establish routines, you are more likely to stick to them. I myself was studying a language last year.  
I would do a lot of my study in the mornings. I got into a habit of getting up early, mainly to miss the traffic. But this meant that I was at work 2 hours early. So I spent that time doing my own study. It was quiet. There were no distractions. Early in your day is the best time for doing concentrated learning. It worked really well and I was very pleased with my results.

So... identify those chunks of the day when you can get a lot done, and choose a place to go to use that time. And just do it!. Make a regular appointment with yourself. You owe it to yourself to keep that appointment. You can have that latte with your friend later.

“I make lists and use my student diary”  
“I try to follow some timetable but it is hard to stick to it”

The tools you have for time management are: - Your yearly planner,  
- your weekly diary and  
- your daily to do list.

Early on, get a semester or yearly planner from the university to display on your wall at home.  
Mark in the exams and tests. You could even colour code these for different subjects. Mark in important personal dates such as a friends wedding or weekend holidays because you will want to plan around these too.

You should also plan out more than just the final hand in dates. You should set some deadlines for yourself along the way things like, having the first draft of an essay completed. Display this planner above your desk so that these things are looking you in the eye and deadlines don’t creep up on you and give you a nasty surprise. You should also have a weekly timetable. Pencil in your lectures and tutorials. Pencil in times for travelling and jobs and eating and sleeping and exercising. These need to be done too. Then identify where the gaps are in your day. Hopefully there are a few chunks of two to three hours in your week. You can even get a lot done in one hour gaps too if you put your mind to it.

Try to stick to your timetable as far as possible. Of course, things come up that you don’t expect week to week. The car breaks down. The cat gets sick. This is life. So your plan needs to be flexible. But some plan that is half kept to is better than no plan at all.

And then, your daily to do list is like a wish list of things you would like to get done. So, you need to prioritize them of course so that the most important and urgent things DO get done.

There will always be things don’t get done and get carried over until the next day. But as I said, it is much better than having no plan at all. “Assignments just seem so big, I don’t feel like I’m achieving anything even when I’ m doing something”  
When you set yourself something to do, don’t write something like “Do Essay”.  
You need to break the task down into steps or smaller goals. The longest journey is always made up of individual steps.

down these smaller goals, they need to be SMART.

That means:

**S for Specific  
M for Measurable  
A for Action oriented R for Realistic, and T for Time guided.**

Now, a specific goal would be a very exact one, like “I will draft the first paragraph of my essay” or “I will read and make notes on Chapter 3”. Measurable means that you can easily say if it is done or not.

Action oriented means that you need to set goals with obvious outcomes like write or produce something.  
If you set a goal that tells you to Study or read something without making notes, it is hard to know whether you have done it or not.

Realistic means that you need to set a goal that is actually possible to do within the time frame that you are giving yourself. For example, you can’t make notes on a whole text book in one night. So there is no point writing that down for yourself.  
If you set your goals using the SMART guidelines, you will feel like you are getting somewhere because you can tick them off as you complete them and this gives you a great sense of satisfaction.

And when you do achieve your set goals, no matter how small, remember to reward yourself with a chocolate biscuit or reading a magazine or 10 minutes playing with the dog. Whatever it is you look forward to.

**Thank you for your attentive curiosity in listening to this Podcast. I hope you have found it helpful. And remember that there are more resources on the MAPP website, on the Counselling Service website and on the Study & Learning Centre website. And of course, you are always welcome to attend the MAPP workshops, or come and speak to a counsellor or a learning advisor in person.**