

Success Tip: Get Organized, Part 2

Once you have completed a weekly schedule, it is time to work out a course assignment schedule for the entire semester. For this, you need a planner with every month in it.

Step 1.

Using the syllabi you have for all of your courses, record all assignments for each month. You might want to use different colors for each course. To make test dates stand out, write "(course name) EXAM" in large, capital letters or **highlight**.

Step 2.

Look at long-term project due dates (term papers, lab reports, group projects, books to read, etc.). Divide each project into smaller tasks and set deadlines to complete them. Estimate how much time each phase will take and then plug them into the calendar. Do this for every major reading, paper, or project.

Step 3.

Take a good look at each week. Do you see where you have some "light" weeks and the "pull your hair out" weeks? Every 4-5 weeks, you should have several exams or papers due, so plan accordingly.

Semester Planning:

You have plotted out when you are going to study each week (the daily/weekly class/work schedule) and what you have to do each week, each month for the semester (the monthly calendars). To help you stay on track, refer to your monthly calendars to make out weekly and daily to-do lists. It may be helpful to do something for each course, every day.

Prioritizing:

Now, prioritize each study task and consider when you will accomplish each task according to your daily schedule. Determine what can be done between classes, what activities need more time, and what tasks need to be done in the library, computer cluster, or other area where there may be restricted hours of access. Make this list out each week, accounting for any changes that might have occurred with each class.

Realistically, it takes less than one hour per week to plan out study time. But, it is time well spent, as you will account for all of your work that must be completed each week, for each deadline throughout the semester. If you make a habit of utilizing time between classes, available daytime study hours and weekends, instead of putting everything off until the night before assignments are due, you will be less stressed and more confident in your abilities. You will be able to keep up with long-term projects as well as short-term projects and exams.