

# STUDY AT A DISTANCE

This advice sheet offers some ideas to help you study at a distance. The content includes:

- Making best use of your time
- Planning your study
- Think about your progress
- Keeping motivated and on track
- Identifying resources

## A study plan

A realistic study plan will take account of all your commitments and provides opportunities for looking back over your progress. Set aside a regular timeslot, perhaps weekly or monthly, to take stock and plan how you will continue. Typical questions could be:

...how am I getting along?

...am I on schedule?

...if not, what can I do quickly and efficiently to get back on schedule?

...can my recent course feedback help me?

...what problems have I encountered?

...what are my priorities for the forthcoming week/month?

### Successful Distance Learners...

- are confident at **self-assessment** (how am I progressing? what help do I need?)
  - **motivate** themselves to study, despite other commitments
  - have **access** to relevant resources (people, publications, IT facilities)
- and above all...
- are **well organised**

## Making the most of your time

The Time Audit activity below will show roughly how your time is spent now, and can be used to quantify how many hours a week are likely to be available for study.

The right hand column lists a range of activity areas. After considering each area in turn, write the total number of hours spent on each activity in a typical week in the left hand column. Blank rows are provided for your own headings. The weekly total for all activities should come to approximately 168 – the total number of hours in a week.

<b>Time Audit Sheet</b>	
<b>Time spent</b>	<b>Activity</b>
(Number of hours per week)	
	Work
	Sleep
	Travel
	Cooking/ Preparing meals
	Domestic Chores
	Family
	Exercise
	Private reading
	Relaxation
	Entertainments
	Social Life
	Other
<b>Total = 168 hours</b>	

## A study lifestyle

Answer the following questions in the boxes provided before you start your course.

Questions	Your responses
<b>How many modules/courses do you plan to do?</b>	
<b>How many hours does each unit of study involve? (see * below)</b>	
<b>How long do you have to complete this?</b>	
<b>How much time can you allocate to study: In a week? In a month?</b>	
<b>When are you able to study:</b> <b>Evenings? Weekends? Scheduled leave from work?</b>	
<b>At what time of day do you study best?</b>	
<b>How do you prefer to study:</b> <b>Short intensive bursts? Prolonged period of time?</b>	
<b>Where do you prefer to study?</b>	
<b>How organized is your place of study?</b>	

\*For example: a diploma course may involve six modules over two years.

Each module may take 100 hours of study over four months; 25 hours each month; approximately 7 hours per week.

## **Identifying resources**

Distance Learners can draw upon a wide range of resources, human and material, to support their study. Ones to make a note of include:

### **Loughborough University**

- course handbook including aims and learning outcomes available on Learn
- contact for academic issues
- contact for administrative issues
- central support e.g. Library, IT Services, Student Services

### **Community**

There may be organisations and businesses that can offer additional information and services, for example:

- local and university libraries
- internet cafés
- photocopying and printing units.

### **Workplace**

Your work colleagues and line manager can be useful resources by providing listening ears and practical advice

for example:

- discussing ideas
- organising financial support
- approving access to resources and equipment
- suggesting project ideas
- supplying mentoring support

## Keep motivated and stay on track

- Maintain links with your lecturer or module supervisor or other students on your course  
- use email or phone
- Use your time wisely; identify what can be done in short bursts of time
- Identify a mentor, perhaps a friend or workplace colleague, to talk through general issues
- Give your eyes a break: try recording material which you can listen to when you are driving or exercising
- Vary your study tactics
- Keep a learning log or diary as a reminder of what you've achieved
- Write down your long term goal and keep it close for inspiration

## Stay on track

Remember:

- the main reasons for taking the course
- self-management skills can help you study
- the sense of achievement from completing your studies

All study advice sheets are available to view and download on the Library website:  
<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/library/students/learningsupport/adviceandplanningsheets/>

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