

Organisation

- **Use a wall planner/diary/study timetable.** Record important dates (e.g. due dates for assignments, dates of exams/tests).
- **Organise folders for your lecture notes; use coloured dividers.** Keep related notes, handouts and other materials together. Read course objectives carefully.
- **Find a suitable study space** - good lighting, comfortable chair. Remove distractions.
- **Get started on assignments or preparation for tests early to reduce stress.**
- **Prioritise tasks** - make a list of things you have to do with the most urgent tasks first. Tick them off as you achieve them.
- **Build breaks into your study timetable** and view these as rewards.
- **Work out when your best study times are.** Tackle difficult material when you are feeling alert.

Procrastination

- **Clarify your general goals** - What do you want to achieve this year? Why did you pay those fees? Ask friends and family, or make a sign, to remind you of your goals.
- **Clarify your immediate goals** - for example, you need a good mark in an essay in order to achieve your general goal of passing the year's work and gaining a qualification.
- **Set a small achievable goal for a set period of study and make a start** (for example, read one handout or article or section of lecture notes and make a summary). Write your goal down. Do it! When you've finished, tick off your goal and reward yourself (take a break, watch TV, text a friend). Gradually extend study sessions to two or three hours, but build in regular breaks. Once you have started you will begin to feel better about yourself and your study.

Preparing for assignments, essays and reports

- Read the question or topic several times. Analyse it. Find the information you need (e.g. look at textbooks, handouts, journals, Internet etc).

- **Skim through the material quickly for an overview.** Read the relevant sections again and take notes of the important points. Remember to record the names of author(s)/ editor(s), titles, dates and places of publication, page numbers, URLs and retrieval information (for material from the Internet). Make summaries of your notes.
- **Plan your assignment.** Think about how you will organise your material. Most pieces of formal writing have an introduction, a body, a conclusion and references. Start to write your first draft, checking the question frequently. Leave it for a day and then read aloud what you've written and make any changes. Fix errors, check spelling and grammar, and ask yourself whether your writing makes sense and answers the question.
- **Ensure that you have referenced all paraphrases and quotes** (see Learning Resource handout on APA referencing). Write a reference list.
- **When you get your assignment or essay back, read the lecturer's comments carefully.** Use any feedback to improve your writing.

Preparing for tests and exams

Suggested process

- **Read through the objectives for the module or part of the course.**
- **Read your lecture notes, textbook references and handouts, making summaries as you read.** You should be doing this regularly throughout your course, not just two nights before a test. If there is something you do not understand, try to have it clarified at this stage. Ask another student, or your lecturer.
- **Summarise your summary notes by reducing information to keywords.** You may want to write these on small, coloured cards. Some students use these as cue cards, writing a term or question on one side, and the definition or answer on the other. (You can buy packs of coloured cue cards for \$1 from Student Success Reception.) Other students prefer to make visual summaries in the form of mind maps or flow charts.
- **Discuss the information you have learned with another student or someone at home.** Get someone to test you on your cue cards or make an audio of questions, leaving a pause between questions so that you can provide the answer.
- **Test yourself** before the exam by writing out sample answers. Try to obtain previous years' tests/exams from your School. Some Schools have these available on Moodle. Practise writing answers under exam conditions.
- **Turn your course objectives into questions and try to answer them.**

General study skills

- **Keep balance in your life as you approach exams.** Look after your general health: adequate diet, sleep, exercise, relaxation - as well as study.
- **In the test/exam, read the questions carefully and think before you write.** Answer the questions you feel confident about first. If you can't answer a particular question, place a mark alongside it and move on - you can always come back to it later. Manage your time carefully.

Seek help

Remember to seek help early. Don't wait until you reach crisis point before getting support. Talk to your lecturers, classmates or Student Success staff. You can make an appointment for a session with a Learning Advisor at Student Success on campus or online through Kāpehu or the Student Support Te Ama Tauira website.