

Your Dissertation: managing your time

Learning Enhancement Team

Your project

Freewrite to these prompts for 5 minutes ...

- The issue, concept or question I want to explore is ... because ...
- The sources/data/methods I will use include ...
- My contribution will be ...

OR

- What I am most interested in is ...
- The idea I keep coming back to is ...



Managing your project

On post-it notes write down **your time management concerns or questions.**

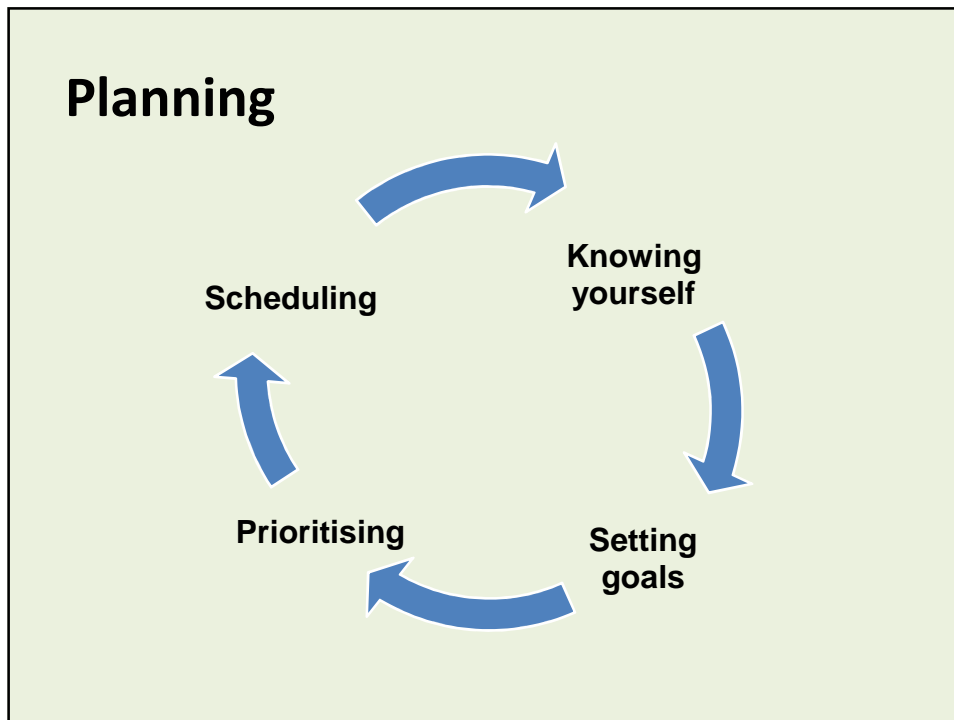
- What stops you from working on your dissertation?
- Where is most of your time spent?
- Where do you need to spend more time?

Top tips

1. Plan

“In preparing for battle I have always found
that plans are useless ...
but planning is indispensable.”

Dwight D. Eisenhower
(34th President of USA, 1953-61)



2. Know yourself

- Do you know which hours of the day you are more productive?
- Do you do your most important/difficult tasks in those hours?
- What motivates you?
 - Do you like to work steadily towards a goal?
 - Are you motivated by the pressure of a deadline?

Try working in short bursts ...

www.pomodortechnique.com

3. Setting goals #1 *Writing to prompts*

What work for my dissertation have I done and what do I need to do (in the long, medium and short term)?

- 5 minutes
- In sentences
- Private writing – no one will read it
- To be discussed in pairs or groups

Murray, R (2006) *How to write a thesis*, 2nd edn. Maidenhead: OUP, p.86

3. Setting goals #2 *'Drill-down'*

“In order for that to happen what has to happen?”

Plus [semester planner](#)

3. Setting goals #3 *Writing in layers*

- Outline the structure: write a list of chapter headings.
- Write a sentence or two on the contents of each chapter.
- Write lists of headings for each section in each chapter.
- Make notes, below the headings on how you will develop each section.
- Write an introductory paragraph for each chapter.

Murray, R (2006) *How to write a thesis*, 2nd edn. Maidenhead: OUP, p.125

3. Setting goals #4 *From notes to draft*

- Freewrite on the 'story' of your chapter (5mins)
- Write three or four prompts for this chapter e.g. sections headings or questions (5mins)
- Outline the chapter you are drafting: what will be addressed? (5mins)
- Write about a prompt you wrote above (5mins)

Rowena Murray, *How to write a thesis* (OUP, 2006), p.134

4. Prioritise

Ask yourself ...

- 'What needs to be done **Now? Soon? Later?**'
- 'What is **important** and what is **urgent?**'
- 'What would happen if I didn't do this **Today? This week? This month? At all?**'

5. Scheduling

Remember ...

- 'Good judgement comes from experience, experience comes from bad judgement'
- 5 – 30 – 60

And finally ...

Keep moving forward

'Progress' means ...

- Getting results, good or bad
- Being able to explain them
- Feeling confident in your research
- Completing a certain amount of work
- Learning new skills
- A better understanding of what's going on in the literature

Your work is good enough when ...

- Your arguments and conclusions are plausible, even if you are not completely happy with them
- You have made a recognizable contribution to knowledge, even though it is not earth-shattering
- You have achieved some or all of your aims

Rowena Murray, *How to write a thesis* (OUP, 2002) p.139.

Learning Enhancement Team

- Drop-ins: Mon-Thurs, 4-5pm in the Dean of Students' Office
- Tutorials: 50min individual appointments

www.uea.ac.uk/dos/let/tutorials

www.uea.ac.uk/dos/dissertations

twitter 

@uea_let #ueadissertations