Prioritizing and time management

When you've feeling overloaded with assignments and work, it's important to prioritize tasks and manage your time wisely. It isn't difficult to create a time management plan. The challenge lies in internalizing the habits of monitoring time and regularly analyzing and revising your time management plan until it works for you.

Tips and tools you can use

You can gain extra time by:

- Doing tasks in less time than usual
- Using time that you previously wasted
- Carrying work materials with you for when you are waiting or have extra time
- Planning your schedule in advance and keeping a planner or date book
- Using a daily to-do list
- Avoiding procrastination

To better manage your time, try to:

- Break projects down into smaller tasks, updating plans as necessary.
- Set priorities and estimate the time required for each task. Be aware of what needs to be done first and when things are scheduled.
- Create, maintain and use to-do lists and calendars with scheduled tasks and appointments on them.
- As you work, focus on your top priorities and on completing tasks in the time allocated.
- Periodically ask yourself, "What is the best use of my time right now?" Change tasks as appropriate.

Time management techniques

Try the following techniques to increase your productivity:

- Clear your desk before you go to bed and plan your activities for the next day.
- List time-specific items, such as group meetings or labs, followed by the items you must accomplish for that event.
- Once you have prioritized your tasks, make a to-do list. Work through the items in priority order.
- Be sure to give yourself sufficient time to complete your list, taking into account normal daily interruptions.
- Do difficult tasks first, when you are at your best. Don't postpone important, but unpleasant, tasks.
- Set deadlines for tasks and stick to them. A task should take only the amount of time set aside for it.
- Try to set specific times for routine tasks such as checking email, study breaks and reviewing assignments before submission.
- Take your breaks at times when you are not able to work effectively.

Setting priorities and managing time more effectively are essential skills for being a successful student. They will help you complete assignment and projects with ease, reduce your stress and make you a better performing student. It's a positive cycle!