

Weird times (Facebook Forum post 18 March 2020)

Hi everyone,

These are weird times.... Most of your courses have now shifted to online delivery; placements have been cancelled or postponed; means of assessment have changed. Just when it felt as if term might be settling down into some sort of routine, it's been thrown up into the air. And that's just looking at things from the purely academic point of view.

This will be difficult enough for returners to adjust to; my guess is that it's even more destabilising for new students, who haven't yet been able to get a sense of what a normal uni routine might be like.

So – how can we feel in control of things when it seems that things are slipping out of control?

There's a lot we can do.

Structure

The most important thing is to create some **structure** around your days.

You still have regular mealtimes. Tick.

Around that, you need to plan your time so that (a) you have clear times for working, (b) you have clear times for not working, and (c) you stay on top of your work.

Use an Outlook calendar, or get a **weekly planner** – there are some on A4 paper at the front of Downer House, and in the Academic Centre – and block out when, eg, you'll watch your on-line lectures, link in to an on-line seminar, and other obvious academic commitments. Then stick to those times.

Accountability

If you're struggling with motivation to watch a lecture, then find a course-mate to watch it with (observing the 1.5m rule!).

If no-one else is doing your subject then find someone else who has a lecture to watch (hint: that will be pretty much everyone!) and agree to watch them in the same time-slot so you have someone to be accountable to. Then tell that person three things you learned from the lecture.

You'll also need to allocate time for independent study, outside of online lectures etc – things such as reading, research, problem sets. Again, agreeing to work at the same time as a friend can help a lot with this, so you don't feel so isolated, and so you have someone you're accountable to.

Time off

You'll also want to build into your routine time for stuff you like doing, and that you know makes you happy. Things like hanging out with friends, reading, kicking a footy.

Obviously some of this will be spontaneous – but you'll also find it helpful to know that, if you're doing a block of work for a couple of hours, there's something to look forward to at the end of it.

The student leaders are working to develop some activities to help break up and brighten the coming days – watch out for posts from them, and come along and try something new!

Choose kind

Finally – be kind to yourself, and be kind to each other. A lot of us will be feeling a bit on edge, and anxious. But every one of us can play our part in creating a supportive and encouraging atmosphere in our college community.

Stay safe, keep your hands clean, and we'll get through this together!