Audio transcript

## Time Management & procrastination

“I just always run out of time”  
“I feel like I’m always trying to meet some deadline”

There are so many possible reasons for this... First of all you have a whole lot of external factors.

Effective studying might be just a matter of physical and spatial organization. You need to have a quiet space that is dedicated to study. You can’t study properly in front of the TV for example.  
You can also spend a lot of time looking for papers or losing important notes if you don’t have some system, or desk space, specifically for your study. As well as the physical space, you need to have a study routine built into your weekly schedule as well.

And Ask yourself: is your lifestyle crowding in on your study time? Some full-time students are just trying to do way too much... whether it is too much paid work, or too much social life or sport or hobbies. It’s really important to have a balance in your life, but at some point you must learn to say NO to some things and sort out your priorities.

Secondly, there are the internal factors......  
This is about the way you manage study and your enthusiasm for what you are doing.  
There are some ways to study that are more effective... and efficient... than others. If you are actually spending a lot of time studying...or trying  
to read everything then this is not a good thing. You need to think about more active learning processes. You might like to listen to our other podcasts to learn more about these. An important part of Active Learning is having clear goals to work towards. I don’t just mean the long term goal of getting a degree although you do need to have these goals and keep them in sight. You also need to have short term goals. Something as specific as: “Today I will find three journal articles for my Business Management essay”. Something you know you can go out and complete.

Your own motivation to do what you are doing counts for a lot even if you are motivated to do your course, you may be a terrible procrastinator which means that you put things off to start tomorrow, next week etc. until it is too late. And some people are able to start but may have great trouble finishing projects. So, lack of motivation to start or finish or to do well at all can be very undermining. Everyone experiences this to some extent at different times or in different areas of their life. So it’s quite normal and very human. There are ways to help overcome it but If you feel that this is a serious problem affecting your life and your studies, you may want to talk to a counsellor.

## Procrastination

“I’m a terrible procrastinator”  
“I always put things off that I don’t like doing”  
If you are a procrastinator...and lets face it, many of us are, you need to identify WHY you are putting things off til later.

For many people, the simple answer is....that doing an essay is tedious and boring... and there dozens of other things that you would rather be doing. This may be true. My answer to this is, think of it as Investing in Future Enjoyment. How much more will you enjoy doing the other stuff if you have already DONE your assignment?

And here is a twist...you might find... that if you do your assignment without the time stress that you usually put yourself under, you may find it interesting! And it might not be as painful as you were expecting it to be.

“Sometimes I just don’t know where to start so I don’t do anything until its too late”

You might be putting things off because you really don’t know what to do, what the assignment question is asking or where to begin. Unfortunately this sort of information will not just come to you unless you go and find out.

You have lots of resources to use. If your classmates can help, then that is great. But it is possible that they may be confused as well. So please, don’t hesitate to see your tutor or lecturer. They are there to help and they love to see students being proactive and trying to solve their problems before it is too late.

You can also make an appointment at the Study and Learning Centre to see an advisor. They are not always experts in your particular field, but they are very good at interpreting and analysing the question with you and giving you some steps to help you get started.

“I’m scared to start because I want to do a good job”

Some high achievers can be terrible procrastinators. It sounds strange... but... some students who are aiming for perfection can put off starting their assignments until they are at crisis point. Writing something down on a blank page can be really scary because it will never be as good as they hope or plan it to be.

Now aiming high is great, but If this sounds like you and you are consistently ending up in a mess because of it, you might want to talk to a counsellor. It helps to realize that you are a student, you are here to learn, therefore your work is not expected to be perfect at this stage and everything you do can be considered a work in progress. You could potentially spend years improving something and never move on to the next thing!!

The fact is if you start early, you have a lot more time to improve your work before you have to hand it in. “I start things but end up rushing to finish them at the last minute”

It is great if you can get the largest part of something out of the way. However, that last paragraph or final conclusion can sometimes end up being more difficult than you had thought it would be. So it is not a good idea to relax too early.

The responsible thing to do is: Set deadlines for an assignment over a period of time. Things like your essay outline must be done by date X and first draft must be done by date Y. Plan every phase of the assignment right up until it is completed. Plan to finish before the hand in date so you have some flexibility for unexpected emergencies.