Planning your Studies 1 [Fact sheet]

University life can be one of the most rewarding experiences of our lives, but it can also be a time with many challenges. It is therefore vital to manage our work and our time effectively so that we can balance studies against our personal commitments. This will help us focus on enjoying university and doing well rather than becoming overwhelmed by stressful peaks in our workloads. So, in order to make a success of your studies you need to establish what work is involved and plan ahead, which will be the focus here.

Establishing the Work Involved

When you receive an assignment brief from your tutors it is best to start planning your studies as soon as possible. *Ask yourself* some useful questions before you begin, such as

- ‘What is the topic?’
- ‘What do they want me to do?’
- ‘When is the deadline?’
- ‘How many weeks do I have before the deadline?’
- ‘Where can I find the information I need?’

This will give you an idea of expectations and the answers will usually be in your *handbooks* or given to you by *your tutor*. However, there are also further questions that are vital to start planning. Students tend to think of assignments as simply research and writing, or research and presenting, but if you consider all of the different things you need to do to finish an assignment you will see that the process is much more complex. You need to plan for this.

So, also *ask yourself*:

- ‘What are all the things I need to do?’ and
- ‘When do I need to do them to make sure everything is done on time?’

... Unlike the earlier questions, the answers need to come from you, rather than handbooks or tutors. *Brainstorm*, what you need to do, and *use a calendar planner* to *set yourself mini-deadlines*. This is where you need to be *pro-active* and *independent*. 