

Get ready for the challenge of combining work and study

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Finding the time (and budget) to study is a challenge for most working people and busy entrepreneurs. It often means that reaching your full personal and business potential have to take a back seat. We offer some pointers on how to tackle this challenge.



Manage your time

Learning to manage your time effectively is an important life skill and is especially important when starting part-time studies. Everyone has different aspects of life to balance: work, family, personal life and studies.

Ineffective time management doesn't only mean that you get less done – it can also lead to stress and anxiety, common problems when trying to juggle the demands of a busy life. Improving your time management skills can alleviate many of the triggers for negative stress and can help you to achieve a healthier work-life balance.

Effective time management will enable you to work your way systematically through your studies.

Time management is not just about managing the quantity of your study time – it's also about being aware of your personal limitations, knowing when to work and when to stop. This can be very helpful to ensure that you stay motivated and committed to your study.

Work-life balance

Of course, study doesn't happen in isolation: it needs to be organised around your other commitments, like your work and/or family and friends. It may help to involve your colleagues, family and friends in the planning process to ensure their understanding, cooperation and support. For example, creating a study timetable that you can share with others will help them to feel included and will help them to remember that there'll be times when you shouldn't be disturbed.

Achieve your goals

Setting goals is crucial in successful time management skills: When used in conjunction with your personal study timetable, your goals will help to guide you through your studies in a focused way. Goals will give direction to your personal learning and development and will enable you to track your progress while boosting your confidence and morale.

Make sure that your goals follow the S.M.A.R.T. principle:

- Specific: Make your goals clear and precise. What, exactly, do you want to accomplish?
- Measurable: How will you progress with your goal and how will you know when you have achieved it?
- Attainable: Your goals need to be realistic and obtainable; you set yourself up for failure if you set unrealistic goals that you cannot achieve.
- Relevant: Make sure that your goals are relevant – avoid spending time trying to achieve something that you don't need.
- Time-scaled: Set timeframes or deadlines for achieving your goals. Make allowances for the fact that timeframes may change as you progress. As you become more practised at setting goals, your timeframes will become more realistic.

Company details:

Wits Plus, the Centre for Part-Time Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, offers selected undergraduate degrees as well as a wide range of short certificate courses. Evening classes make all qualifications accessible to working people and busy entrepreneurs. Wits Plus also offers a range of online short courses in partnership with Digital Campus. Certificates of Competence are awarded to successful participants for both certificate and online short courses.

Tel: 011 717 9510

Websites:

Part-time: www.wits.ac.za/part-time

Online: <https://digitalcampus.co.za/>

Email: wits.plus.marketing@wits.ac.za

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