

Alternative Format: Time Management Toolkit

Landing Page

Welcome and thank you for accessing this toolkit which has been designed to help support you with your academic skills development during your time at Edge Hill. Click 'Get Started' to start the toolkit from the beginning or alternatively select the most relevant heading(s), from the contents below. We recommend completing the sections in order, but you are welcome to work through this toolkit in the way that suits you best.

Accessibility

Our commitment to accessibility

As an Edge Hill student you are part of an incredibly diverse learning community. As part of our ongoing commitment to ensure an equitable and inclusive learning experience for all students, we have placed accessibility at the heart of UniSkills support, which enables all students to participate.

Alternative Formats

This is an alternative format for the time management toolkit.

Welcome from UniSkills

“Hello, we are the [Student Engagement team](#) – otherwise known as UniSkills! We are the people you’ll meet (in real life and online) through various support channels, as we help you develop your academic skills while studying at Edge Hill University. Later in the toolkit you will have the opportunity to explore our wider support, but this is your chance to [find out more about the team](#)”.

Access [this video from your friendly Student Advisor](#). Alternatively, you are welcome to access the video transcript as a [Word version](#) or [PDF version](#).

How this Toolkit can Help

Time management is an important skill at university and beyond. This toolkit encourages you to reflect on your current strengths, recognise areas for development, and explore practical strategies to enhance how you manage your time.

Access this [short video](#), featuring one of our friendly academic skills advisors, who will tell you more about why time management is important. Alternatively, you are welcome to access the transcript as a [Word version](#) or [PDF](#) version.

Toolkit objectives:

Upon completion of this toolkit, you will have developed the skills to:

- Understand why time management is critical for your success.
- Stay organised, set meaningful goals, and avoid distractions.
- Use effective tools to support time management.

Completing this toolkit supports the following [Graduate Attributes](#):

- Personal Skills
- Resilience
- Adaptability and Flexibility

Making Time Your Ally

It's easy to think of time as something that you are 'up against', or as something that you have to control. But that makes time sound like a wild thing you need to tame. Instead, this toolkit invites you to think about time differently: as something you can work with. The goal isn't really to 'manage' time, then, but to make the most of it and turn it into an ally.

Reflection

The first two sections of this toolkit ask you to pause and reflect on your time management - what's working well, and what could be better. To make meaningful improvements, it's important to pinpoint exactly what you want to change. But just as time management requires balance, so too does

reflection. It is not only about identifying gaps; it's also about recognising your strengths. So, let's begin by celebrating what you're already doing well.

Take a moment to explore the list below, and have a think about whether you already possess some of these skills.

- Discipline: are you strict with yourself when it comes to accomplishing your goals?
- Organisation: do you keep track of all tasks and know when they need to be completed by?
- Resilience: are you good at coping when you need to make changes to plans? Are you flexible with how you spend your time?
- Meeting Deadlines: do you have experience of meeting both tight and lengthy deadlines?
- Punctuality: do you have good timekeeping skills and always show up on time?

Reflection Table

Activity: Now explore the Reflection Table example below, then have a think about what your top two or three strengths are. You can add these to your own [Reflection Table](#).

Strength	Why I am Good at This	How I Became Good at This
Organisation	I always keep my space tidy and know where things are - whether it's digital files or handwritten notes.	I set aside regular time to declutter - often when I need a break from reading or writing.
Punctuality	I rarely feel rushed and often arrive early or on time.	I use online calendars and reminders to keep track of appointments and deadlines.

Time Traps

You've now made a great start by identifying your strengths. Be sure to remind yourself of these often. But let's also be realistic - time can still feel hard to handle. Lots of students say this is one of their biggest challenges, so let's explore why this may be:

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- Balance: concerns around balancing university work, time with friends and family, hobbies, employment, and other responsibilities.
- Distractions: being side-tracked by other (often more appealing!) activities and tasks.
- Confidence: doubting and second-guessing work. This can sometimes link with perfectionism.
- Space: having limited physical space to allot to 'work-mode'.
- Learning Illusions: becoming occupied with 'busy' work to feel a sense of accomplishment, for example highlighting and colour-coding.
- Procrastination: delaying completing or even attempting tasks. This often links with confidence.

If any of these feel familiar, please know that you are not alone. These are common struggles, not only for university students but for people in everyday life too!

Reflection

Activity: Let's investigate these challenges a little more. Work through the questions below to uncover what's really going on.

- Balance:
 - What boundaries do I have (or need) between study and time spent on other activities?
 - Do my friends and family respect my commitments to studying?
 - Do I socialise too much? Too little?
- Distractions:
 - What boundaries do I have (or need) between study and time spent on other activities?
 - Do my friends and family respect my commitments to studying?
 - Do I socialise too much? Too little?
- Confidence:
 - What usually pulls my attention away from studying?
 - How do these distractions affect my progress?
 - Am I actually seeking distractions? Why might this be?
- Space:
 - How does my environment influence how I use my time?
 - Do I have a dedicated space for focused work?
 - How do I prepare my space for study?
- Learning Illusions (*This is when you feel like you've learned something when you haven't fully mastered it*):

- Are the tasks I am doing actually helping me to develop my learning?
- Do I rely too much on passive learning (like highlighting) instead of active practice?
- Do I prioritise being busy over achieving goals?

- Procrastination:
 - What tasks do I tend to delay?
 - How do I feel when I put things off?
 - Do I actually understand what I need to do?

Reflection Table

Activity: Now let's add another section to your Reflection Table. Take a moment to explore the example below, then fill in the 'Challenges' section of [your own table](#).

Challenge	What This Looks Like	Why I Find This Difficult
Distractions	Struggling to focus on one task. I try to read and write, but my mind keeps wandering to unrelated thoughts or worries.	The intention is there but the focus isn't - I feel like my attention is being pulled elsewhere.
Space	I have to work on the dining table.	It's often busy, loud, and messy - this can make it difficult to concentrate and stay organised.

Reflecting with Support

As you reflect on your strengths and challenges, consider sharing these with your Personal Tutor. They can offer a fresh perspective, help you spot potential challenges, and support you in shaping a realistic and balanced approach. Sometimes, just talking things through can help clarify your thinking and boost your confidence.

To find out more about how your Personal Tutor can help - and to explore the wider Circle of Support - visit the [Personal Tutoring and You](#) page.

Goals and Habits

Now that you have identified your strengths and gained clarity on areas for growth, let's turn that insight into action. This section will help you to set achievable goals and build effective study habits - important building blocks for success.

Reflection Table

Activity: If you have been completing the [Reflection Table](#), you will notice that it has extra spaces for practical ideas. Use these to note any insights or ideas from the following sections.

Goals

Success means something different for everyone, so it's worth thinking about what it means to you. Remember, your idea of success might be different from your friends' or classmates' - and that's completely okay.

In order to achieve success (whatever this means to you!), it is important that you stay focussed on your goals.

One way to stay focused is by setting SMART goals. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. This model helps you break down what you want to achieve and when, so you can stay on track and feel more in control.

Specific

When you know exactly what you are setting out to achieve, you are more likely to reach your goal. Using prompts can help you to make your goal specific. For example, considering what you are wanting to achieve, deciding when you will start, and identifying why it is important to you to achieve it.

Example:

What?

- Aim for a grade 60 or above in exams.

When?

- I will start revising earlier to allow enough time to recap and understand concepts.

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Why?

- I get good marks in written assignments, but past exams have brought down my overall module mark.

Measurable

Making a goal measurable enables you to know when you have achieved it, and can help you to monitor your progress.

Recognising progression can also help you to stay motivated.

Example:

What?

- Aim for a grade 60 or above in exams.

How will I measure this?

- I can use a weekly planner to work out the times in my week that I can study/revise, and plan what to do in each slot.
- I can mark off (or colour in) each slot once I have finished studying and this will enable me to keep track of my progress.

Achievable

It is important to be realistic about what you can achieve. Larger goals can be more achievable if they are broken down into smaller steps.

Example:

If my average grades are in the 50s and I want to improve, it would be a big leap to aim straight for 70+ grades. However, it is much more achievable to work on building up to 60+ grades first.

What can you actively do to give you the best opportunity of achieving your goal?

- I need to read feedback from my previous assignments to identify areas where I can improve.

Relevant

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Think about how relevant your goals are. Goals should challenge and stretch you, but they should also be relevant to what you are aiming to achieve. This will help to keep you motivated to complete your goals.

Make sure you understand why you have set each goal and how you will recognise a successful outcome.

Why?

- Improving exam performance will boost my overall module grade.

What will success look like?

- Demonstrating my knowledge confidently under exam conditions.

Relevance?

- I have several assessments that are in the form of exams next semester, and I want to be able to do my best in them.

Time-Bound

Having a realistic timeframe for your goal will help to make it more achievable.

This may be a self-imposed plan to achieve your goal within a certain timescale, or it might be that there is a deadline associated with it.

Example:

What?

- Aim for a grade 60 or above in exams.

Timeframe:

I need to complete my revision plan and feel confident with the material before my exams begin in Semester 2.

Is it realistic?

- I have assignments due in Semester 1, so I'll need to balance my time carefully.

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- I can start building my revision plan now, before assignment deadlines intensify.
- I could use the break between Semester 1 and 2 to focus more deeply on revision and consolidate my understanding.
- I can access academic support (e.g. UniSkills or tutor feedback) to help guide my revision and fill any gaps.

Being realistic about any commitments you have and time you can allocate to your goal, will help you to create a manageable timeframe to achieve your goal.

This activity has helped you to understand how to set a clear, achievable goal to improve your exam grades using the SMART framework.

Now take a moment to think about a short-term academic goal that you would like to achieve.

Download the [Setting Goals](#) activity sheet to help make sure you meet this goal by making it SMART.

Habits

Strong study habits make learning easier and more effective. A clear routine and active strategies can boost your confidence and help you get more out of your time. So, let's explore some habits you might like to cultivate.

Prioritising Tasks

Effective study starts with knowing what to tackle first. Prioritising tasks helps you focus on what matters most - whether it's an upcoming deadline, a challenging topic, or a key revision goal.

Take a moment to be honest and think critically about how you prioritise your time. What tasks or activities do you currently give the most attention to, and why? Are these choices helping you move toward your goals, or are they based on old habits?

In order to prioritise your time more effectively, you might consider ranking tasks by importance and/or urgency. A [priority matrix](#) can help you decide what to tackle first.

By prioritising your tasks and managing your time intentionally, you can make the most of your day, stay focused on what matters, and reduce feelings of stress or overwhelm.

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Creating a Plan

Once you've identified what needs to be prioritised, the next step is figuring out how to plan and take action. This is where organisation becomes your best tool.

Breaking tasks into manageable steps, scheduling them realistically, and sticking to a routine can help you stay focused and reduce stress. You might find this [UniSkills Planning Template](#) helpful here.

Whatever method you choose, the key is to make your plan work for you - flexible enough to adapt, but structured enough to keep you on track.

Setting the Scene

Creating a space that supports focus and calm is one of the most effective ways to enhance your study experience. By choosing a quiet, tidy area and surrounding yourself with only the materials you need, you're setting yourself up for success.

Personal touches like natural light, a comfortable chair, or even a plant can make your study space feel inviting and motivating.

Alongside this, using technology mindfully can turn potential distractions into tools for productivity. We'll explore some useful apps in the next section, but for now, consider how small changes - like playing ambient sounds, nature recordings, or instrumental music - might help you stay focused and in control of your study time.

Experimenting with what works for you can turn your environment into a powerful tool for concentration.

Staying Healthy

In terms of being healthy, the advice is often to 'just get more sleep', but that can feel oversimplified and unrealistic - especially during busy academic periods. While sleep is important, it's not the only way to stay healthy.

What matters just as much is making time to rest and recharge in ways that work for you.

We'll explore this more later, but for now, it's enough to say that building healthy lifestyle habits (such as eating well, staying hydrated, and moving regularly) can be powerful elements of effective studying and time management.

Apps and Tools

Now that you've explored how to set goals and build habits, it's worth considering how digital tools can support this. Whether it's using a timer to structure your sessions or a website to help you focus, the right tools can make time management feel more intuitive and personalised. In this section, we will explore a range of options to help you find what works best for your study style and goals.

The Pomodoro Technique

Pomodoro comes from the Italian word for tomato, and involves breaking your tasks up into small chunks of time (or slices of tomato!). This is an excellent tool if you find yourself sitting for prolonged periods of time and getting little done, or if you struggle with even starting a task. It limits and focuses your time, and ensures that you factor in regular breaks.

It is worth bearing in mind Parkinson's Law here - the theory that the more time we allot to a task, the harder and more daunting it is to complete. Pomodoro focus tools can really help to make tasks feel manageable, and to alleviate feelings of being overwhelmed.

Activity: Choose a small goal you need to complete. Now have a go at using this [Pomodoro tool](#) to help you complete it.

The Forest App

[Forest](#) is a focus app that helps you stay off your phone while studying. You set a timer and 'plant' a virtual tree. If you stay present and focused, the tree grows; if you leave the app early, it wilts.

You can use Forest to track your study time, tag sessions by subject, and even earn rewards for staying focused.

However, this is not simply a cute graphic - Forest partners with tree-planting organisations, so your use of the app does actually contribute to reforestation.

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Trello

[Trello](#) is a visual planning app that helps you organise tasks using boards, lists, and cards. You can create a board for each subject or project, break tasks into steps, and add deadlines, checklists, or files to keep everything in one place.

It's great for solo study or group work, and you can customise it to suit your study style - whether you're planning essays, tracking homework, or managing revision.

Generative AI

Generative AI (GenAI) tools can be helpful for managing your time. Using prompts such as 'suggest some ways I could prioritise these tasks', or 'help me plan a to-do list' can give you some useful ideas for managing your time.

However, relying on GenAI too heavily might limit your own critical thinking and skill development. Be sure to refer here to the Edge Hill [position statement on the use of GenAI](#). The Students' Union has also helpfully summarised this in their article [A.I. The use of Artificial Intelligence \(A.I.\) at EHU](#).

Using AI responsibly means treating it as a support tool - not a shortcut. When used thoughtfully, it can help streamline your study process and free up time for deeper learning and reflection.

Time to Rest

In all of this, it is important to remember that rest is not a luxury - it is a strategy. Skipping breaks might feel productive, but it's a fast-track to burnout. Taking time to recharge helps you to come back sharper, more focussed, and ready to tackle your tasks. Note that this is not about making your downtime productive; rather it is about discovering what genuinely restores you.

Activity: Take a moment to reflect on how you currently spend your downtime. How does this make you feel? If you struggle to find time to rest, why might this be?

You might find it useful here to explore [The Self Care Workbook](#); an Arts Council England funded project from Thortify.

Now explore the list below to find some ways you might make your rest time more restorative:

ehu.ac.uk/uniskills

ehu.ac.uk/ls

- A quick 20-minute power nap is proven to work wonders.
- Zoning out with some music can help you to feel refreshed and motivated.
- Take a short walk or bike ride - especially if it's somewhere green!
- Move your body - stretch or do some light yoga.
- Watch a comfort show - something short, light, and familiar.
- Try a creative hobby - painting, journaling, photography, or playing an instrument.
- Playing with a pet can offer an instant mood boost.
- Read for pleasure - download Libby to find some great fiction texts.

Top Tip: If rest and self-care are things that you really struggle with, please remember that support is always available from Edge Hill's [Mental Health and Wellbeing Team](#).

Activity: Let's return to our Academic Skills Advisor to explore some [final reminders](#). Alternatively, you are welcome to access the video transcript as a [Word version](#) or [PDF version](#).

Related Resources

Useful Reading

To learn more about time management, you might find the following texts useful:

GUMBRELL, D. 2021. Spin: Time and Task Management in Teaching [eBook]. St Albans: Critical Publishing. Available from: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/edgehill/detail.action?docID=6532782> [Accessed 03 December 2025].

HARI, J., 2022. Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention [eBook]. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. Available from: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/edgehill/detail.action?docID=6825730> [Accessed 03 December 2025].

Useful Links

Check out our [Preparing to Study](#) webpage, which includes interactive opportunities to learn more about time management.

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UniSkills Blogs

UniSkills write regular [blogs](#), including a monthly focus on library resources and academic skills. In these quick reads you can learn about useful resources, how to access them and their benefits to your studies. You might even find us exploring new ways of thinking!

Other Resources

Check out [LinkedIn Learning](#) for access to free, unlimited access to thousands of high quality online courses and video tutorials written by industry experts.

UniSkills Support at Edge Hill University

As well as our toolkits, there are many ways you can access support for your academic skills development. No question or query is too big or too small. Whether you are new to studying or need to refresh or develop skills, we have a range of options for you to access at both graduate and postgraduate taught level.

Webpages

Reach your potential and visit our [UniSkills web pages](#). Find out more about the support designed to help you develop your academic skills and confidence at university and beyond. Whatever your subject or level of study, UniSkills has something to offer.

Workshops and Webinars

[UniSkills workshops and webinars](#) are an opportunity for a deeper dive into a specific skill that will support you on your academic journey. Facilitated by our friendly and knowledgeable Academic Skills Advisors, these sessions provide an informal safe space where you will be supported alongside other students in a small group setting.

Appointments

All students are able to book [a one-to-one appointment](#). Our experienced Academic Skills Advisors can help you develop your academic skills and strategies throughout your time at university. One-to-one support is available on a wide range of topics including academic reading, writing, and referencing, finding information, and preparing your assignment for submission.

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AskUs

For any questions across any of our library and learning services, you can [Ask Us](#) online.

Campaigns

Explore our year-round [UniSkills campaigns](#) to enhance your academic journey at Edge Hill. From pre-arrival prep to acing your exams, we've got something for everyone!

Keep in Touch

Library and Learning Services Instagram

Make sure you're following us over on [Instagram](#) for all the latest Library and Learning Services news, events and support.

You'll discover weekly 'what's on' stories; reminders about upcoming campaigns and events; fun, interactive polls and competitions; hidden treasures from our Archive; and reading for pleasure recommendations.

Library and Learning Services Blog

In the [Library and Learning Services Blog](#) you'll find lots of information, ideas and support curated by a wide range of staff and students from across the service.

Browse through all our useful blogs via the Home tab or visit individual areas of interest via the sub-blog headings along the menu bar.

Your Views Count

Thank you for engaging with this toolkit.

We'd love to know what you thought, and you can share your feedback in our short [UniSkills Toolkit Satisfaction Survey](#). The survey should take you no longer than five minutes to complete.

Your feedback helps us to continually improve our support - thank you!

You have now completed this UniSkills toolkit and can close the window. We hope you found it useful, and we look forward to continuing to support you with your academic skills development.