

Motivation



University of
**Southern
Queensland**

Motivation is empowering and energising, pushing us to accomplish tasks. However, it doesn't always come easily, and everyone experiences challenging or low-energy periods when motivation feels out of reach. During these times, it can be hard to attend classes, work on assignments, or prepare for exams. Fortunately, there are many effective ways to increase and maintain motivation to achieve what we want from studying at university.

Strategies to set yourself up for success

1. Set Clear Goals

It's important to set daily, weekly, semester, and long-term goals, and write them down where you can easily see them. Use the SMART framework to make your goals **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound** (see table below for further details).

2. Develop routines/habits

It can take up to three months to establish a new habit, so maintaining momentum and sticking to a routine helps make it feel more automatic as time goes on. Begin by setting weekly goals, then gradually expand them to monthly goals, continually working towards success.

3. Help Yourself Focus

Eliminate distractions by removing apps from your phone, turning off the TV, and studying in a quiet place. Keep your phone out of reach during study time and create a dedicated study space in your home. Blocking distractions like Netflix or removing junk food can also help. If you know you struggle with certain distractions, make them harder to indulge in.

4. Pace Yourself

Break your study, work, and reading sessions into smaller chunks, such as 30-60 minutes, with breaks in between. Taking breaks is crucial for maintaining focus, health, and motivation. If you plan to study for longer periods, alternate between tasks or courses to keep your mind engaged.

5. Break down big tasks into tiny steps

Instead of telling yourself to 'write your essay', a tiny step could be that 'review one relevant journal article and note two or three points you want to cover in the first paragraph'. Taking one step at a time can help us focus and feel less overwhelmed.

6. Prioritise

Start your day by tackling the most challenging or unpleasant tasks first. Addressing tough tasks early in the day can improve your mood and productivity for the rest of the day. This strategy also helps prevent procrastination and eliminates the stress of leaving difficult tasks for later.

7. Choose the Right Location

Consider where you work best and where you are most motivated to focus. Some students benefit from creating a dedicated study area in their home to help keep them on track. Try working in public places like the library or a coffee shop, or in a quiet, isolated room on campus.

Self-care strategies

1. Get Enough Sleep

Aim for at least 7 hours of sleep each night. Sleep is essential for motivation. When you're sleep-deprived and running low on energy, staying focused, productive, and motivated becomes much harder. Sleep also converts working memory to long-term memory, improving your study.

2. Build a Routine and Healthy Habits

Incorporate healthy habits like regular meals, adequate sleep, exercise, and study sessions into your daily schedule, and stick to it. When you make these habits part of your routine, it becomes easier to stay motivated and accomplish tasks.

3. Eat and Drink Healthily

Stay hydrated by drinking enough water, as it helps your body function properly and boosts energy. Eat regularly and avoid skipping meals, focusing on nutritious foods. When you're properly nourished, it's easier to stay focused and energized, making it simpler to get started and stay on track with your work.

S	Specific	What do I want to accomplish? Why do I want to accomplish this? What do I need to do to accomplish this? What might stop me from doing this?	Finish 2 body paragraphs of my essay by Sunday (in 2 days) including a topic sentence and referenced evidence to support my writing.
M	Measurable	How will I measure or check my progress? How will I know I have met my goal?	Check if I have included all elements of an effective paragraph.
A	Achievable	Is this goal realistic and achievable? What is my plan to achieve it, what steps do I need to take?	Refer to the "Writing effective body paragraphs" pdf. Ask my education officer to print a copy of this pdf.
R	Relevant	Is this a worthwhile goal? Do I have all the resources to achieve this goal? Is this goal relevant to my overall goals or objective?	Will it help improve my writing and meet the task criteria. Ask my education officer to print a copy of the "Writing effective body paragraphs" pdf for my reference. Developing clear, logical writing and using evidence to support it will help me get better marks and move me closer to completing my course.
T	Time - bound	When is this goal due? How long will it take to achieve this goal? When will I work on this goal or task?	Do I have enough time to complete these paragraphs in 2 days? Revisit this if you find you are running out of time

Further support

Contact your student learning advisors via the Support for Learning team here supportforlearning@unisq.edu.au Ph: +07 4631 2372