

Time management



Supporting you
to be your best

 **Education
Support**
Partnership

Whether it is preparing students, organising logistics or tackling the exam paperwork, this time of year can be extremely stressful for academic and non-academic staff in FE and HE. So what can tutors, lecturers and admin staff do to prepare themselves for the exam period?

We asked the APDO-UK (the Association of Professional Declutterers and Organisers www.apdo-uk.co.uk) for their advice on how to stay organised.



Tip 1: Manage your time

“Successful teachers learn to say “no” in a positive way and limit their commitments (...) so that they deliver on their priorities,”

says Jenny Berry of Sort Your Space
www.sortyourspace.co.uk

“If home/work life balance is a problem, you must discuss this with your line manager or another colleague. It is in your organisation’s interest to be aware and find ways to help you manage your workload rather than letting this (and you) get out of control.”

Jenny Berry recommends following the same advice you give your students:

“Find a quiet place away from colleagues. Put a sign up in front of you saying ‘Do not disturb. I have to get this done by 6pm!’”

Jo Cooke of Tapioca
www.tapiocatidy.co.uk agrees:

“Be realistic. Plan your time (even your breaks, so you don’t drift into the depths of Google)”.

For Ingrid Jansen of **Organise Your House**

“Preparation is key, so start well in advance with whatever project you are planning. It will pay off immediately.”



Meanwhile Samantha Bickerton of Organised Spaces
www.organisedspaces.co.uk advocates setting clear time limits and objectives:

“Set a time limit according to the time you have available, and allocate tasks a proportion of that time based on their priority. Use a timer or alarms on your phone to stick to this.”

Samantha also advises having your own objective which reflects a personal goal to improve your work-life balance, such as ‘good enough in the shortest time’ rather than ‘ideal’ or perfect’. Then she suggests:

“Stick your objective where you can see it while you work.”

Tip 2: organise your admin paperwork

Samantha Bickerton of **Organised Spaces** used to be a teacher in FE and HE, and still tutors today. She says that:

“Despite my love of organising, it is really challenging to keep on top of everything”.

Samantha recommends organising paperwork both off and online:

“Colour code your storage to find things more quickly e.g. by subject, by theme, by year group or level, for admin, for resources, for marking etc. Consider colour range when you’re choosing storage or retrospectively use large coloured stickers to colour code existing storage.”

If colour coding does not work for you, Samantha suggests using symbols or pictures as a shortcut.

“You can also use different shaped storage to differentiate resource types e.g. Lever arch files for filing resources and box files for exam papers or marking. Also consider using shelving with adjustable shelves to accommodate different storage types. If your shelving is fixed, measure it before you shop for storage,” she adds.

Once organised into folders, the folders themselves should be organised:

“It is quicker to find paperwork organised in smaller clearly-labelled sections than to rummage through large boxes. Organise resources into A4 lever arch files labelled alphabetically. Label folders A-C, D-F etc to start with, and add folders when a category fills up, re-labelling as required. Inside folders, use coloured dividers or coloured paper to divide by letter of the alphabet, and within an alphabet section use stamped poly pockets to hold resources with a sticker naming the resource theme”.

Samantha does warn about distraction, however:

“Don’t get distracted by the idea that storage needs to be attractive. Functional is a good starting point and can change your life regardless of how it looks.”

Samantha recommends filing paperwork on a day-to-day basis or weekly.

"If this isn't feasible, then use an A-Z expander file as a holding 'to file' folder to keep paperwork together & tidy and add to it daily. Pick a time once a week – write it in your diary - to clear the 'to file' folder, moving paperwork from it into your A-Z library and admin filing system. If weekly isn't feasible, do it half-termly but you must write the time in your diary and store papers in the 'to file' folder as you go."

To organise your files on the computer Samantha Bickerton says:

"Use folders to organise your work by year group, subject, theme etc. Name your documents using the American date system so they list by date to make retrieval easy and reuse existing templates where possible to cut down."



Tip 3: Separate home and work

“In terms of organising, time planning and routines are key, as trying to separate home and work physically”,

explains Jenny Berry from **Sort Your Space**, a teacher, who counts teachers and lecturers among her clients.

“Keep confidential papers / exam marking etc [in work], if at all possible – just don’t take them home. If you must take it home define how long you will spend on it, where you will work and when you will stop and wind down for bed. Encourage your family not to disturb you during this time.”

Rachel Papworth of Green and Tidy www.mygreenandtidylife.co.uk believes home and work need to be distinct too:

“if you use a personal laptop for work, set up a user profile exclusively for work. This reduces the risk that you’ll inadvertently show something personal to colleagues or students.”

Rachel also adds:

“Check your social media settings. You can be sure your students will check you out online.”





Tip 4: Sleep

Jenny Berry of **Sort Your Space** suggests sleep is key to managing stress.

“Try and get enough sleep – everyone copes better with a stressful life if they get more sleep! Make your bedroom a nice place to retreat and never have any paperwork or digital devices in there.”

Jo Cooke writes a list the night before.

“Plan every day in advance and tick things off your list – you will be able to sleep much better by having written them down.”

Tip 5: Take a break

“Make a sandwich and cup of tea every day at lunchtime,” advises Jenny Berry.

“Prioritise this and tell students they can only speak to you after this time.”

Rachel Papworth warns about overfilling the holidays though:

“Because you are so busy in [work], it’s tempting to think “I’ll do that in the holidays” about everything you have not got time for. Plan your holidays in the same way you plan your work schedule: be realistic about how much you can fit in.”

Tip 6: time savers

If you are still having issues, the **APDO-UK** experts suggest the following general tips.

“Invest in a cleaner and a slow cooker,”

says Jenny Berry, while Samantha Bickerton says:

“Recycle. Recycle what you don’t need as you find it. It’s easy with a box next to your desk.”

Zareena Ali of Declutter and Style www.declutterandstyle.com says: “

a quick tidy-up before you sleep will save precious time in the morning.”

“Keep all relevant resources on a USB encrypted pen. This saves paperwork space and is portable,”

explains Elaine McKinlay of Clear Mountain www.apdo-uk.co.uk/declutterers.php/scotland/clear-mountain

Do you have a time saving tip that you want to share?

Email us at:
info@edsupport.org.uk

For more information on Apdo-UK and the contributors, go to www.apdo-uk.com

Get Support

08000 562 561

Education Support Partnership
40A Drayton Park
London N5 1EW



Education Support
Partnership

Supporting you
to be your best

