THE RIGHT STUDY LOAD FOR ME

What is my optimum study load? Help for domestic students.
It may be that a full time study load is perfect for you. However, everyone has different demands and commitments that they need to fit around their studies. As an adult learner at university you can choose the number of units you take each semester. Determining the study load that best suits your needs can be a difficult decision, and may change across semesters. You will need to think about the other commitments in your life. Here are some myths about reducing your load.

Myth 1: Reducing my load means I will take longer to complete my degree.
Taking the right load for you often means that you complete your degree sooner. This is because you are more likely to pass all units when you take your optimum load. If you are able to match your load to the time you have available, it is also likely that your weighted average mark (WAM) and Grade Point Average (GPA) will be higher. This may affect your eligibility for honours, postgraduate courses, and Study Abroad.

Myth 2: Reducing my load will cost more overall.
Taking the optimum number of units reduces your chances of failing and incurring a debt for units that don’t count towards the completion of your degree.

Myth 3: I might lose touch with people I have gotten to know.
At university, in most courses, students progress through the degree at their own rate, taking units from different year levels according to their interests. In most units you will find that many classmates are also looking to make new friends. You can also plan time to keep up with old friends outside of class.

Myth 4: Taking fewer units will adversely affect my study plan?
Most changes to study load can be accommodated in a new study plan. Talk to one of the Student Advisors at your Faculty Office or ask online via AskUWA.

Myth 5: Taking fewer units will mean I lose my Centrelink payment.
Although the rules do change, and you should always check this with Centrelink, three six credit point units per semester have long been considered a full time study load for the purposes of Centrelink student payments.

If you need to take fewer than three six point units to manage your health, talk to your doctor who may support an application to Centrelink to permit this.
Go to www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/enablers/study-loads-austudy-and-youth-allowance#a1

There are a number of factors that you should take into account when you consider how many units to enrol in each semester. Please read on...
Before deciding on your study load, ask yourself...

How many hours of paid or volunteer work will I be doing?
Most students are also working. Whether it’s a casual job in retail, or you have a professional role, it all takes time and energy! In addition to the actual hours you are paid for, consider travel time and the effect of shift work (and pressure to take extra shifts) on your study routines.

Is this my first year living away from my family home?
Fantastic! That first year on your own or with friends or at college can be amazing. Don’t forget to allocate the time you need to shop, clean, prepare food, pay bills and socialise.

How long does it take me to travel to UWA?
Unless you are living in one of the student residences, attending class will mean public transport time or driving and parking time. Factor in the time required for a whole journey, from your door to the door of your class.

Am I taking a unit that presumes some knowledge or skills that will take extra work?
It’s exciting learning about new things. Sure, every unit will have some challenging material. However, if, for example, you are taking that compulsory maths unit after years of avoiding maths, then plan for the additional time you may need to come to grips with it.

Do I have a medical or learning condition?
Many students with a medical or learning condition do really well at uni. Whether you have migraine, dyslexia, depression, ADHD, painful menstrual cycles or something else, it really helps to acknowledge the fact that managing this takes extra time.

Do I have family or carer responsibilities?
Most of us are a part of a family or care for someone. It might be that one of your relatives, friends or neighbours need regular attention from you. Perhaps you have children who depend on you. If so, plan for time to meet these important responsibilities.

Am I returning to study after a long break?
Lots of your life experiences will help you be successful as a uni student. You will be developing exciting new skills like essay writing, academic research and referencing. Take into account that this will take you some additional time in your first couple of semesters.

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Any suggestions?
We’d love to hear from you. Email us at study.smarter@uwa.edu.au

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