



WOMEN IN BUSINESS STUDENT ORGANISATION

SUCCESSING IN UNIVERSITY

THE GUIDE



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY

Curtin Women in Business would like to pay our respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of our community by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which the Bentley Campus is located, the Whadjuk people of the Nyungar Nation.

About Women in Business

Curtin University Women in Business is a women-run student organisation established to be a strong platform for women empowerment in all areas of both social and professional development. Our vision is to empower the women of our time by providing a community that aims to inspire and encourage personal prosperity within each desired career.

Curtin Women In Business strongly advocates for providing women with a seat at the table through hosting corporate level opportunities designed to educate and inform members on the industry and how they can thrive.

We aspire to move for change in women's advancement and build a community that supports and connects women to opportunities.

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Disclaimer

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INTRODUCTION

For both new and returning students, the new year brings many new challenges to both their academic and personal lives. This can be overwhelming and stress-inducing without adequate preparation and guidance. As such, this publication will provide essential tips and tricks on numerous topics from our guest writers in order to help students achieve academic success during the new school year.

The topics in question include workload organisation, work-life balance, the post-COVID university experience, and an introduction to extracurriculars and their many benefits. With special thanks to our guest writers, who provide insightful and useful information from their own experiences and fields, the team here at Curtin Women in Business hopes to ensure you're ready for an exciting and rewarding school year.

O1

GETTING ORGANISED

HOW TO STAY ON TOP OF YOUR WORKLOAD

As a university student, it is crucial to stay on top of your workload in order to succeed academically and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Otherwise can result in increased stress levels, decreased productivity, and ultimately, poor academic performance.

One of the key reasons why staying on top of your workload is important is because it allows you to effectively manage your time. It's no secret that University students juggle a variety of responsibilities. This publication provides you with resources on how you can stay organized and prioritize your tasks to ensure that you are using your time effectively and efficiently.

We asked recently graduated students to share their tips and tricks on how they stayed organised during their time at university. While also balancing work and extracurriculars, these two students have displayed exemplary work across all their University degree.

ABOUT THE WRITERS

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Over the years, I've tried various methods of time management and scheduling, including Google Calendar, iPhone Calendar, and online apps. While these tools can be helpful, I ultimately found that the best method for me was a classic paper diary. There's something about being able to physically see your schedule laid out in front of you that can be very satisfying and motivating. I also found it helpful to color-coordinate my entries to keep everything organized and visually appealing.

When it comes to actually planning out your week, I found it helpful to break things down into smaller, more manageable tasks. I would start by identifying what was due that week and when, and then work backwards from there to figure out when I needed to start working on each task. I also made sure to take note of any non-moveable commitments, such as class times or extracurricular activities, so that I could work around them.

Of course, it's important to make time for yourself as well. I always made sure to schedule in free time each week for relaxation, exercise, or just doing something I enjoyed. It can be easy to get caught up in the never-ending cycle of work and forget about the importance of self-care, but taking a break can actually help you be more productive in the long run.

In order to address this, I tried to make an effort to do the least enjoyable subject first or in advance so that it didn't get pushed to the side. I also tried to minimise additional commitments in stressful periods so that the primary focus was assignments and rest.



An advice I wish I could give my first year uni self is - Don't rush. I think it's so easy in university life to get swept up and study become your entire life. I know I definitely experienced times like these. Trust yourself and your own ability to get the work done. Essentially there is more to life than just your university studies so take breaks, find moments of self care, hang out with friends, put yourself out there and join clubs and extracurricular, and most importantly enjoy your time at university!

One of the biggest challenges I faced during my university studies was feeling like I had to do everything at once. It's easy to push less important tasks to the bottom of the list, but this can lead to problems down the road. I often found that I had a "weaker" subject that I would ignore until the last minute because it wasn't as enjoyable or didn't seem as important. To combat this, I tried to tackle my least favorite tasks first or in advance, so that they wouldn't get pushed aside.

Another helpful strategy for managing your workload is to be mindful of your commitments during particularly stressful times. For example, if you have several major assignments due in the same week, it might be a good idea to minimize any additional commitments and focus on completing your work and getting rest. It can be tempting to take on too much, but ultimately, it's better to prioritize your well-being and success over everything else.

Looking back on my university experience, there's one piece of advice I wish I could give my first-year self: don't rush. It's easy to get swept up in the pressure to succeed and let your studies take over your life, but it's important to remember that there's more to university than just your academic work. Take breaks, hang out with friends, join clubs and extracurriculars, and most importantly, enjoy your time at university. Trust yourself and your ability to get the work done, and remember that being organized and efficient with your time can go a long way towards reducing stress and helping you achieve your goals.

Claire Henthorn

Marketing & Events Coordinator at VentureX HQ | Recent International Business
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Harley Gardiner

I started my university journey in 2018, studying both Law and Arts, but later focused solely on the Law. In my third year, I moved to the city campus, where I encountered a trimester system that posed a different challenge from the semester system. Nonetheless, I adapted by studying three units at a time and dropping a unit, making it easier for me to balance my responsibilities.

During my university days, I was an active member of the Curtin Law Student Society (CSLS), where I started as a first-year representative and eventually became the club president. I believe that students should choose extracurricular activities that they enjoy, rather than merely adding it to their resume. My passion for CSLS was the driving force that enabled me to balance my heavy workload, as I had people around me who were on the same boat.



A strategy I used to manage my time was setting specific days for different activities. I worked three days a week and coordinated my workdays around my university classes. I attended her classes for two days at most and took online classes when necessary to accommodate my work schedule. I also had a designated day to complete my assignments and tutorials, catch up on course content, and do other university-related activities. I then completed most of my CSLS work on the weekends, which helped me manage my time better.

"Although, balancing work-life is NOT always easy."

I acknowledge that balancing a part-time job and extracurricular activities was not always easy, especially with different faculties and firms requiring meetings at different times. I tried out different techniques before settling on working on CSLS duties during the weekends. Initially, I prioritized meeting with firms and accommodating the law school's schedules.

"I think I had a bit of imposter syndrome, where I was like, I shouldn't be having these meetings with these people anyway. So I shouldn't ask them to change their plans and work around my schedule."

But then I kind of thought about it and realised it was probably easier for them to work around their schedule than it is to work around my schedule. It took time to work up the courage but worth it as it helped my schedule run smoother.



So obviously you were part of a different extracurriculars, especially the Curtin Law Student Society. How did you balance doing that and your studies at the same time? And I assume you were working as well?

I worked an average of about three days a week. And then I was on the Curtin Law Student Society - I was on the CSLS from my first year. I was a first year rep and then kind of moved up and then eventually became club president for my last two years of uni. Pick things that you enjoy doing as your extracurriculars. I think is really important. I think especially in my degree in law, people tend to grab onto things because they want to put it on their resume. And I mean that's always a factor of everything you do. Like if you're going to go and do some volunteering, you know that you can put that on your resume. If you're going to go and do an extracurricular, you can put that on there too. But I think actually enjoying it was super important. I wouldn't have been able to balance anything if I was doing things just for the sake of it that I didn't love doing. So I really enjoyed being on the CSLS.

I think the main thing that I kind of did in terms of balancing the two was having set days where I would kind of work on different things. So I would work about three days a week and I would pick my work days around my uni classes.

So uni time I would come out, find the classes where I'd try and keep it to about two days at a maximum. Once two days, if it meant I had to take one class online, I would sometimes do that. So yeah, if I had to do, like, I worked by working days around when my timetable was, sometimes I would do nights online class so that I could work that day and then come back and do it. But I made sure that every week I had at least one day that was purely, I didn't have any classes, I didn't have work, I just sat and did my assignments, whether it was tutorials, doing assignments, catching up on content.

That was just one day that I had every week to do that. And then most of my CSLS stuff was done on the weekends. That sometimes got a bit tricky, though, because, and I'm sure you guys all know as well, people think this is your full-time job. When you're, they do. And you're like, it should be, and it feels like a full-time job. But you're, obviously the people that you're dealing with, they're working in business hours. But in business hours, I've got a job, and we've got uni as well to do it. And this is not my full-time job, and they're like, I need this now, I need that. Especially working with different faculties and things when you're representative of students. They kind of want to know things at different times. They want to have meetings like during working hours and things obviously for them because that's part of their role. But that got a bit tricky trying to navigate that just because everybody thought that I could just be on call all the time which wasn't the case. So I tried to do most of my CSLS work on the weekends and it meant that when emails and things were going out people had like a week to respond and then I'd get back to them. Sometimes if things were a bit more urgent, it would be a few late nights trying to get things done, but most of the time I'd try and keep it to the weekend. Sometimes people didn't enjoy that though, that I was working with, but that's what had to be done.

Did you have a few different techniques that you tried out first before you stick to doing CSLS on the weekends?

Yeah, I think that initially, because there was lots of meetings I had to have with the law school and things, and when I first became president in particular, the first few years, the CSLS workload was a bit lower. It was kind of just helping here and there when required around different events. When I was careers director, organising all of our, like, facilitating our workshops, and also as president my last three years, that's when things started to ramp up a bit. And there was constant meetings and lots of different events I had to go to, not just with the law school, but with firms and different people as well. So initially I kind of tried to just mold everything around that. I thought it was super important that I would go to these firms, that I had to have meetings with these firms, and I would put everything else on the side so I could go and talk to them. Or if the law school called, I would go and speak to them quickly. But in the end, it was not working.

It was causing a bit of burnout because I was prioritizing that over everything else. And I think once I kind of got boundaries set and said to people, like, this is my full-time role. I can only respond when I can respond. Can we please change this meeting to a time that I'm available, instead of trying to work around so many other people at the same time? So that's what I initially did, and it was quite tricky. But eventually, I just got a bit more confident.

I think I had a bit of imposter syndrome, where I was like, I shouldn't be having these meetings with these people anyway. So I shouldn't ask them to change their plans and work around my schedule. But then I kind of thought about it and was like it was probably easier for them to work around their schedule than it is to work around my schedule than it is to work around theirs because they, I mean this is their job, they're sat here all the time, whereas I had all these other different things going on and once I got the confidence to actually ask and be like can we maybe change that, then everything was fine.

How do you handle stress and manage your time effectively during exams and high-pressure periods?

Hm. OK. How do I handle stress? I'm a bit of a worrywart, so I'm probably not the best person in general to ask how do I handle stress, because I think at times I definitely could have handled it better. But I do think that, kind of just having that balance, I worked in one of the tactics that I used throughout my degree was kind of, I would make timelines. So I'd be like, 9 till 12, I'm going to work on this. 12 till 2, I'm going to work on this. Then I'm going to have lunch. And I'd make timelines, but I'd make them quite lenient. So if I knew I only needed maybe an hour or two hours to do something, I'd maybe give myself three on my list so that it didn't feel like I was falling behind, or I would feel a sense of accomplishment when I finished it a bit earlier.

So I always did that, and I would always do those lists in order of reverse importance. So instead of doing the most important thing first, I'd do maybe the least important thing first because I knew that I needed to get the last thing done and I had to do all of those things first to get the last thing done. And yeah, because I knew that if I didn't get that last thing done then I would stress even more.

So I definitely did at times get a bit stressed around exam time, but I was quite lucky. I would take time off work when I needed to. I felt like I, in my arts degree in particular, I felt like I was quite smart around when I needed to be present and when I didn't. And I think that goes for everything, even like, I think it's super, super important, like, do your readings, do everything that's given to you, but do it in a smart way. Going through a reading with six different colors of highlighters and analyzing every single word isn't going to be a good use of your time. But maybe having a quick read over that before you go into tutorial is going to make that tutorial more beneficial for you but you haven't spent ages kind of slaving over this one piece of text that might only be relevant to a few things in there.

It definitely still helps your experience that you have in that tutorial and being able to like put all of the information in but I don't think you need to like spend so much time, especially in law because we had like cases that were like 500 pages sometimes, so they were like, you must read this before you come in. But just doing a bit of a skim, highlighting some important parts was all you really needed to do. You didn't need to go in there and highlight six different colors of highlighters and things. At least, according to me.

02

WORK-LIFE-BALANCE

AMY TANG

To me, work-life balance is about being able to meet your needs and wants by prioritising your values. Whether that be uni, work, hobbies, relationships and passions. It is a hard juggling act to find balance while navigating life and I'd be lying if I said I'm a pro. Over my time at Curtin, I've learnt to say no and set boundaries. My ideal work-life balance is being able to do the things I love and want to do and leave work at the door when I get home!

It can be really challenging to have boundaries and set them. I'm someone who is a big people pleaser and I care about what other people think of me, which can be both good and bad. Something I struggled with early on was perception. In my mind, saying yes made me seem reliable and willing, but now I've realised I would much rather say no to others than agree to only fall short and not be able to follow through. Today, it's really hard with 'grind' and 'hustle' culture to have boundaries especially when everything is linked through our phones! I try to control what I can, like using 'focus' mode on my phone, stopping Slack notifications outside working times and communicating my workload level to respective managers. Planning ahead and getting an overview for the month is also handy to see when I'm busier in certain areas like uni assessments or work.

For those just starting university, and might be worried about balancing their work and school commitments - don't be too hard on yourself! No one has it perfect. Everyone at uni struggles with the same thing - so you're not alone. Everyone is different, try and find what works for you. Take time to plan and experiment with different methods and systems. Reach out and speak to your friends/peers and learn from each other. Remember that it's okay to prioritise yourself and say no, because if you don't then who will?

At times, it feels impossible to balance my uni work, personal life, work and personal mindfulness downtime. I've learnt to make plans with intention and block out time for myself too. Everyone is busy, and putting yourself first at times and saying no is okay! Making plans with intention means to also spend quality time with that person and enjoy the moment rather than thinking about what's coming up. I've found it feels much more meaningful and I enjoy it so much more!



POST-COVID
UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT

Kelly Kendall Jones

I started here at Curtin at the end of August 2020. So I was never here on campus pre-COVID to really know and see how much things changed. When I interviewed for the Career Development Consultant job here on campus, I had to give a 10 minute presentation on what I thought were the impacts of COVID on university career services, and what were some of the challenges and opportunities that brought from a career services perspective.



So my perspective coming in and what I delivered in that 10 minute presentation was really about us being able to pivot quickly into online offerings. How do we still support students so that they feel like they can reach out, so that they're not feeling isolated? We realised it was through things like offering virtual appointments, but it might be over the phone or through a Teams meeting. That we are, through all of our social media platforms, still communicating with students. We're still running events, but we're moving them from in-person to online.

"I think the biggest challenge post-COVID is that engagement has dropped down."

So it was a really interesting space to come into in August 2020, because the existing CDCs were telling me, "Look, we've never used Blackboard before to deliver workshops." So it was all quite recently new for them as well. And certainly for me, it was all a learning experience as well. I think the biggest challenge post-COVID is that engagement has dropped down.

I think while COVID was happening, we all became a little bit too comfortable in our own personal spaces. So suddenly we didn't have to make the effort anymore to put ourselves together and think about what outfit we're wearing that day or get in the car or on the bus and train to get ourselves to campus, to pay for parking or, you know, walk from the bus depot in the rain with your umbrella. That was the start of the disengagement. I think part of the university experience is building those interpersonal skills, it's building your communication skills, even your cultural awareness, and working with others from diverse backgrounds. So once people become pretty comfortable in their own spaces - when everything was moved online - I almost feel like there was less accountability and less responsibility to have to show up, if you know what I mean. So you have to make the effort. If you're in tutorials where you're working in groups, you have to make the effort to be open and talking and sharing and collaborating. But suddenly, even if lecturers were trying to do that remotely, there's still that disconnect of doing that in person.

The biggest question right now is how do we increase engagement. I guess from the perspective of the Student Success Team and particularly the Careers Team, we're trying to start offering more workshops and those kinds of things in person to try and encourage students to come to campus.

I think it's a matter of education with students, too. I haven't read the stats recently, but research shows that students who are engaged and coming to or living on campus tend to do better in their university studies in general. They have higher outcomes across their course weighted average, greatly increasing their graduation employability.

But it has to be a whole university approach. There should be an expectation from lecturers that it's not just an online thing. I get that there are positives about online learning - flexibility, if people are working, and that kind of thing. But also I think we need to balance that with the expectation that you're on campus, you're collaborating with other students. That's part of what university is about.

Again, from a careers perspective, when we're running workshops, whether they be in person or online, or feeding that information from an employability and skill sets and career development point of view, these are all of the boxes you're ticking being on campus.

These are all the things that are going to help you build up your capabilities around working with others, understanding diversity and being able to work with people across all facets of life. It doesn't matter who you are, how you identify, and I think more workplaces are coming on board with diversity and inclusion. And I think this is a great space for, you know, emerging career people, early career people to learn about that.

My advice for students trying to navigate the post-COVID environment is simple - **don't be afraid to.**

You're surrounded by like-minded people who are, especially new to Curtin students, probably feeling that bit of anxiety about the unknown and stepping out of their comfort zone.

So try putting a hand up for things like student-run clubs, and really seeing university as not just "I'm here to get a degree for my career," but seeing university as the next step in a journey.

And it's such an exciting time. This is your community, so however you can, whatever you need to do to make yourself feel like you're part of that community, and engage in all the co-curricular offerings. Not all, but you know, pick and choose. And understanding what services are available and how you access those services is really important.

So again, one of the things is how can we get the word out there more broadly so that the message reaches more students. And maybe it starts back in high school when future student teams go out to the universities to talk about the fact that university isn't just a degree. University is an experience that can help build who you are as a person. It can help with your employability skills, your confidence, and making lifelong friends. I don't know about you guys, but when I went to uni, some of the people from my undergrad are still lifelong friends.

It's not for everyone. It's not everyone's cup of tea. But you can really spread your wings if you have the courage, I guess, to step out of your comfort zone and just embrace the experience of being here and everything that it has to offer.

04

GOING BEYOND YOUR DEGREE

INTRODUCTION TO EXTRACURRICULARS AND ITS BENEFITS

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Amy Tang

Amy is the 2023 General Manager and Coordinator at Ignite Mentoring, and current Secretary at Curtin Women in Business.

In semester 2 of 2020, I joined my first student club Ignite Mentoring, who work with low socio-economic high school students to build confidence through soft-skill programs, and it immediately sparked a passion for educational equity I didn't even know I had! I fell in love with the program, and I've worked my way up within Ignite, now serving as the Vice President (General Manager) of Ignite 2023.

"These extracurriculars have provided me with purpose, a community, sense of belonging and translated into further career and professional opportunities."

Since then, I've been active in seeking opportunities from every angle. From a student club point of view, I've joined AIESEC, the largest youth-run organisation focused on UNSDGs, and of course, currently, I am part of Curtin WIB as Secretary 2023. I've also been part of Curtin's New to Curtin Mentoring (N2CM) program as a Mentor, Mentor Leader, and now I'm lucky enough to be one of four Mentor Orientation Leaders in a paid managerial role. Academically and professionally, I've been part of Curtin's pioneering Student as Partners program and FBLs High Achievers Program.

As I've progressed through my degree, I've come to realise Curtin's focus on the student experience is truly unmatched by other WA universities. These extracurriculars have provided me with purpose, a community, sense of belonging and translated into further career and professional opportunities.



Going beyond your degree is so important. In every single job interview I've referenced extracurricular examples! I could write an endless list of the benefits - they are amazing ways to meet and network with new diverse people, be faced with problems/issues you would not otherwise be exposed to, be creative, and learn from others. All the skills I've learnt and developed from my extracurriculars have translated seamlessly into every job I've had.

More than that, I've grown so much as a person too. Personally, I'd be pretty disappointed to leave university and be the exact same person I was when I entered. Taking a step outside your comfort zone and your faculty truly does open up a wealth of opportunities.

Extracurriculars have enriched my university experience beyond words could even describe. My time at Curtin has been so much more than just my degree but a curated list of experiences, friendships, opportunities and networks for life.

I've grown and been able to develop my hard skills and knowledge in the classroom and my soft skills through extracurriculars. It's made the university an incredible experience, and I now understand why people describe university as your 'best years'. I know full-time work is on the horizon after I graduate but I'm looking forward to making the most out of my time at university before the real 9-5 grind hits.



New to Curtin Mentoring Program, via LinkedIn

Jasmyne Tweed

I'll be completely honest, balancing time between academics and my extracurriculars is hard. Up until very recently for this semester I studied full-time and I worked outside of university. Then when I got a second job at Guild and having to balance that - it was very hard.

"Am I getting burnt out?"

"Is this too much?"

The main thing was trying not to worry about how busy you are, and the classic "stay organised." But recognising that it is okay to prioritise the things that you want to prioritise is so important. You have to hold yourself accountable and prioritise the things that are important to you and make sure you are communicating openly and checking in with yourself.

That's one thing - you have to hold yourself a little bit accountable which can be hard, but there are so many support systems that will help you, especially in business and law.



The student engagement team are always happy to help out. The guild is always happy to help out. And it's okay to drop a unit if you want to drop a unit. That would honestly be my biggest piece of advice. It's okay to study two or three units. You don't need to study four units. It's not a race. You don't have to graduate with the people you started with. At the end of the day, you're spending a lot of money to come to university and it's a lot of time and it's a lot of hard work. You should enjoy it. And if that means studying two units at a time, do it.

Honestly, I think the best time to get involved in extra-curriculars is day one of your first year. I'm a strong believer in getting involved in your first year. And I don't necessarily mean applying to be a president of a club or starting your own club or something. That can seem very daunting. But in your first year, getting involved in extracurriculars could be as easy as attending a faculty-run pizza party to talk about units. You can just show up to that. Or the guild has the first year representatives where you just have to have an expression of interest.

Be like, "Hey, I'm kind of keen to get involved in this." Fill out a Google form and then you can get a say on first year events or things like that. It doesn't have to be as full on.

I think one of the best ways universities could support students in participating in extra-curriculars would be to have greater wellbeing and support services for students. And having faculties or university staff being able to speak one-on-one with students and help them plan out their degree on that level - normalizing the idea that it's okay to drop units, or if you want to prioritize your work, and maybe get involved in these areas.

If you are from a rural region or an international student, there's some clubs you can get involved with. That's something that you could really focus on, but if the university normalized sending students to those services, it would be good. I think another way that students would be supported would be financially. We are still in a cost of living crisis and it can be really hard - how am I meant to get involved with a club or things like that when I need to work. Especially students in health sciences and humanities when they go on their practices.

Jasmyne Tweed

Curtin Student Guild Secretary | Bachelor of Laws & Commerce,
Human Resource Management

Steph Tory

Extracurricular activities have provided me with opportunities to develop my employability skills, positively impacting my future career prospects. From teamwork to effective communication, to analytical and critical thinking, to cultural awareness, to resilience, to flexibility and adaptability, all these skills I have developed through extracurricular activities.

They've also positively impacted my overall university experience. WIB enabled me to make friends within my faculty and build personal skills whilst working on the committee.

Both Curtin Economics Society and AIBA encouraged professional networking and helped me grasp what the business industry was looking for; Curtin Volunteers provided me with an outlet to give back to the community; WAUC offered me a real world example to apply my consulting skills and apply what I had learnt in my degree; Camp 2030 developed my worldview and problem solving skills whilst also providing me with a global network of like-minded people who are motivated to make a positive impact on the world.



In terms of exercise and further developing my leadership and teamwork skills, playing and coaching hockey were great outlets for me. I also involved myself in The West Australian Youth Orchestra Flute Choir, the TLG rural programs, and the Mannkal Economic Education Foundation. By partaking in all these extracurricular programs, I invariably learnt time management skills as I held myself to a high academic standard. Through extracurricular activities I was able to make lifelong friends and develop skills which resulted in me getting my dream graduate job and enjoying my university experience.

Would you say that getting into extra curricular activities has helped you build your self-awareness?

By getting into all of these extra-curricular activities, it definitely helped build my self-awareness. Sometimes within your degree you can get caught in a bubble with people from similar backgrounds. By participating in extra-curricular programs, you are exposing yourself to a range of new people and experiences, ultimately building your self-awareness and worldview.



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