

BACKWARDS PLANNING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS IN 7 STEPS

01



Your milestones

The most essential step to time management is knowing every task you are required to do. Ask your supervisor, committee members, program administrator, or program chair about what you are expected to do every term and make a list with the due dates.

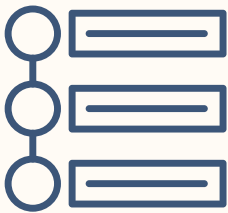
02



Calendar

Add to a calendar all the tasks of the milestones list. This will help you to visualize the weeks and months that are busier, and when you will have a down time to prepare for the tasks or even participate in other projects. Also add to the calendar any life events that you don't want to miss.

03



Step-by-step

Task by task, make a simple list of all the necessary steps for you to finish the work. For example, find and read articles, write introduction and discussion, create a table, data analysis, and conclusion. Make sure to add steps for document revision and edits.

04



Time estimate

After you have completed the step-by-step of every task, think and make a time estimate for the steps to be concluded. For example, to find and read articles, you might take 4 days; to write the introduction, 2 days. Add the time estimate beside every step on your list.

05



Calculating total time

For graduate students it is normal for milestones to take a couple of months to be done. Don't forget to add extra time in case of any eventuality happens. For example, task 1 will take you 1 month and 4 days to be completed 3 days before the due day.

06



Going backwards

This is where the magic is! Go back to the calendar and add a starting day. For example, the article is due on September 30th, and you calculated 1 month and 4 days of work, therefore, your starting day is August 26th. Mark the day in your calendar as well.

07



Keep track

You now have the due dates of every task in your calendar, a brief description of every step you will need to take, and the optimal starting day. Now keep an eye on your calendar so you don't miss any detail and track your work. You are off for a great start!

