



RowanUniversity

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Creating a Writing Schedule

Steps to Creating a Schedule

1. Consider how you already structure your day/week, then what might need to change and what can't change.
2. Consider when you like to write, and when you do your best work.
3. Consider how long it takes you to do particular tasks.
4. Figure out what your deadlines are and mark them down on a calendar.
5. Figure out what other obligations you have (personal, familial, job-related, etc.) during the time period in which you have to finish your thesis and mark them down.
6. Figure out how much you have left working at minimum, and add in the amount of time that you will need for feedback turnaround, administrative processes, etc.
7. Write out a schedule that meets that minimum amount of time while also allowing for rest, fun, self-care and other responsibilities. Also be sure to build in time for unforeseen disasters.

Step 1: Consider How You Already Structure Your Day/Week, Then What Might Need To Change And What Can't Change.

Example:

I work 8-4 M-F. On Wednesday evenings I have dinner with friends, and on Thursday evenings I do therapy. I usually make plans with friends on Friday and Saturday nights, and do housework and prepare for the week on Sunday.

I definitely won't stop therapy, and I need to prioritize my friendships, but I can talk to them about not going to Wednesday dinners and make sure that we're all comfortable and happy with a new schedule until I'm finished with my project. I won't give up my weekends; that's a boundary that I have to set unless things get really dire.

Step 2: Consider When You Like To Write, And When You Do Your Best Work.

Example:

I hate mornings with a fiery passion, but I love staying up late and often get a second wind pretty late into the evening, so I tend to do my best work at night. I think 6-10pm is a good time for me.

Step 3: Consider How Long It Takes You To Do Particular Tasks.

Example:

If all of my research is done, it takes me about three days of committed writing time (about 4 hours each) to write a first draft of a chapter. It takes me two days to edit it into a readable draft. Then I have to submit it for feedback and wait for that, which could take a week or two to come back to me, while I'm working on my next chapter. After that, it takes me between a day and two days to incorporate feedback and do a new draft.

Step 4: Figure Out What Your Deadlines Are And Mark Them Down On A Calendar.

Example:

I'm graduating in Spring, so the university's deadline to be completely finished with everything about my thesis, including formatting, is June 30th. It needs to be finished enough to turn it in for format review by June 1st, but should be turned in earlier if I can. My defense is scheduled for May 15th. My advisor wants to see my final chapter for feedback by May 1st.

Step 5: Figure Out What Other Obligations You Have (Personal, Familial, Job-Related, Etc.) During The Time Period In Which You Have To Finish Your Thesis And Mark Them Down.

Example:

My birthday (and my sister's) is March 20th, my mom's birthday is April 4th, and my dad's birthday is May 15th. I have three friends with May birthdays whose tradition is to celebrate them on the same weekend in the same place, but I don't know which weekend or where yet. I'm going away to an event starting on April 1st and need a day of recovery on April 4th. March 30th to June 30th are the busiest days of my year at work and will probably require some longer hours.

Step 6: Figure Out How Much You Have Left Working at Minimum, And Add In The Amount Of Time That You Will Need For Feedback Turnaround, Administrative Processes, Etc.

Example:

I have two chapters to write (chapter 5 and chapter 6). All of my research is done, and my data is organized, so all that's left to do is write up my findings and then write out the discussion, conclusions, ideas for further research, etc. If a chapter takes me about 20 hours to create a readable draft, and I have two chapters left, I need 40 hours of writing at least to be finished. I also need to incorporate time for my advisor's feedback on both chapters, which is two weeks each, after which it will take 8 hours per chapter to incorporate feedback. Then I need to incorporate the time I'll need to make sure that my document is following the formatting guidelines.

Step 7: Write Out A Schedule That Meets That Minimum Amount Of Time While Also Allowing For Rest, Fun, Self-Care And Other Responsibilities. Also Be Sure To Build In Time For Unforeseen Disasters.

Example Schedule in following slides.

Key:

Hard Deadlines

Deadlines I Set To Keep On Track

Deadlines I Want to Keep Ideally For My Own Sanity

Personal/Work Obligations

THE SCHEDULE

March						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 B-Day	21 6-10pm Writing Time	22 6-10pm Writing Time	23 6-10pm Writing Time	24	25	26
27	28 6-10pm Writing Time	29	30 6-10pm Writing Time	31		

*Thursday evenings 6-7 unavailable,
weekends starting Friday night
unavailable*

Key:

Hard Deadlines

Deadlines I Set To Keep On
Track

Deadlines I Want to Keep
Ideally For My Own Sanity

Personal/Work

Obligations

April						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 Recovery Day Mom B-Day	5 6-10pm Writing Time Turn in fifth chapter	6 6-10pm Writing Time	7	8	9
10	11 6-10pm Writing Time	12 6-10pm Writing Time	13 6-10pm Writing Time Need to turn in fifth chapter	14	15	16
17	18 6-10pm Writing Time	19 6-10pm Writing Time	20 6-10pm Writing Time	21	22	23
24	25 6-10pm Writing Time	26 6-10pm Writing Time	27 6-10pm Writing Time Turn in sixth chapter	28	29	30 Need to be done edits on fifth chapter

Chapter 5 (March and April): 6 weekdays for first draft ideally, 10 at worst, 24-40 hours

Chapter 6 (April and May): 10 weekdays for first draft ideally, 6 at worst, 24-40 hours

Thursday evenings 6-7 unavailable, weekends starting Friday night unavailable

Key:

Hard Deadlines
 Deadlines I Set To Keep On Track
 Deadlines I Want to Keep Ideally For My Own Sanity
 Personal/Work Obligations

May						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sixth chapter due	2 6-10pm Revision Time	3	4 6-10pm Revision Time	5	6	7
8	9 6-10pm Revision Time	10 6-10pm Revision Time	11 6-10pm Revision Time	12	13	14
15 Dad B-Day	16 6-10pm Revision Time Need to be done edits on sixth chapter	17 6-10pm Formatting Time	18 6-10pm Formatting Time	19	20	21
22	23 Defense date	24 6-10pm Formatting Time	25 6-10pm Formatting Time	26	27	28
29	30 6-10pm Formatting Time	31 6-10pm Formatting Time				

Revision: 6 days to revise,
8 at worst, 24-36 hours

Formatting: 5 days ideally,
11 at worst, 20-44 hours

Thursday evenings 6-7
unavailable, weekends
starting Friday night
unavailable

Key:

- Hard Deadlines
- Deadlines I Set To
Keep On Track
- Deadlines I Want
to Keep Ideally
For My Own
Sanity
- Personal/Work
Obligations

June						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 6-10pm Turn in formatting to ProQuest	2	3	4
5	6 6-10pm Formatting/Feedback Time	7 6-10pm Formatting/Feedback Time	8 6-10pm Formatting/Feedback Time	9	10	11
12	13 6-10pm Formatting/Feedback Time	14 6-10pm Formatting/Feedback Time	15 6-10pm Formatting/Feedback Time	16	17	18
19	20 6-10pm Formatting Feedback Time	21 6-10pm Formatting Feedback Time	22 6-10pm Formatting Feedback Time	23	24	25
26	27 6-10pm Formatting Feedback Time	28 6-10pm Formatting Feedback Time	29 6-10pm Formatting Feedback Time	30 BE DONE		

Formatting Feedback Revisions: 12 days ideally, 6 at worst, 24-48 hours

Thursday evenings 6-7 unavailable, weekends starting Friday night unavailable

Key:

- Hard Deadlines
- Deadlines I Set To Keep On Track
- Deadlines I Want to Keep Ideally For My Own Sanity
- Personal/Work Obligations

Final Thoughts

- There might be errors in this schedule! You won't know every single thing that is going to come up, and you won't catch every issue as you create it. But having a working idea of when you are available and how much time you have is better than not having anything to base your time management off of.
- Building in enough time for things to go wrong will make sure that you are keeping yourself sane during what can be a very anxious, intimidating process.