

ACE Quick Guide to Time Management and Organisation

The ability to organise and manage your time effectively one of the **most important skills you will develop as an apprentice**.

As you will have to complete some learning and tasks independently, you will need to **plan your own schedule** and **complete work efficiently to meet deadlines** – taking into account any commitments at work and home.

Good time management and organisation is not about completing as many tasks as you can in a day; this will lead to burnout! It is about creating **sustainable habits for long-term success, working smarter rather than harder** to optimise your productivity and make steady progress.

(Adapted from University of Sheffield, 2025)

The Benefits of Effective Time Management and Organisation



Managing your schedule effectively will help you to **prioritise tasks in order of urgency and importance** – enabling you to complete tasks on time and **avoid procrastination**.



Allocating time effectively allows you to **accomplish more, without losing downtime**. As a result, your productivity levels will increase, and you will be able to **consistently deliver high-quality work**.



This will ultimately support you to maintain a healthy work-life balance, **reducing the likelihood of stress and burnout**.

Start with the 'Big Picture'

When you start a new module on your apprenticeship, it is a good idea to get a **'big picture overview'** of what is to come so you can start planning when you are going to complete different tasks.

1

Input into your calendar/ diary all upcoming deadlines for your activities on Bud. This should include all module activities (Discover, Practice and Apply Tasks) and any other additional tasks, such as Employer Reflections and Professional Skills activities.

2

Look ahead to the module Discover, Practice and Apply activities. You should review the requirements of each task and make a note of how long you think each task will take you to complete.

3

Once you have reviewed your activities, understand the requirements and have an idea of how long it may take you to complete, **input into your calendar/ diary when you will start and complete each of these activities.**

Create Weekly and Daily Work Plans

Once you have established the 'big picture' and it is time to make a start on one of your activities, you should:

- **Break down larger tasks** (such as completing an Apply activity) into **smaller, more manageable sub-tasks** to be completed on a weekly and daily basis, making these as **specific** as possible:

Poor Example	Start my apply task
Good Example	Review the requirements of my apply task on Bud and make a note of any actions I need to complete before starting the task, e.g. arrange meeting with manager to discuss appropriate project.

Poor Example	Write up my apply task
Good Example	Write the first 500 words of my apply task and add relevant screenshots.

- Establish soft **deadlines** to **complete** each '**sub-task**' – even if you do not finish on time, you will still be further along than you would have been without a clear plan!

You can then use the **ACE [Weekly and Daily Planner Templates](#)** to organise your schedule and/or block out time to complete each task in your calendar. You can also use a range of helpful online time management apps and tools outlined in the [ACE Quick Guide to Time Management Tools](#).

For additional information on creating specific, manageable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound objectives for your self-study time, see the [ACE Quick Guide to SMART Goals](#).

The Prioritisation Matrix

The Prioritisation Matrix – also known as ‘The Eisenhower Matrix’ – is a time management tool that can be used to classify and order tasks based on **urgency** and **importance**, helping you to **effectively manage your workload**.

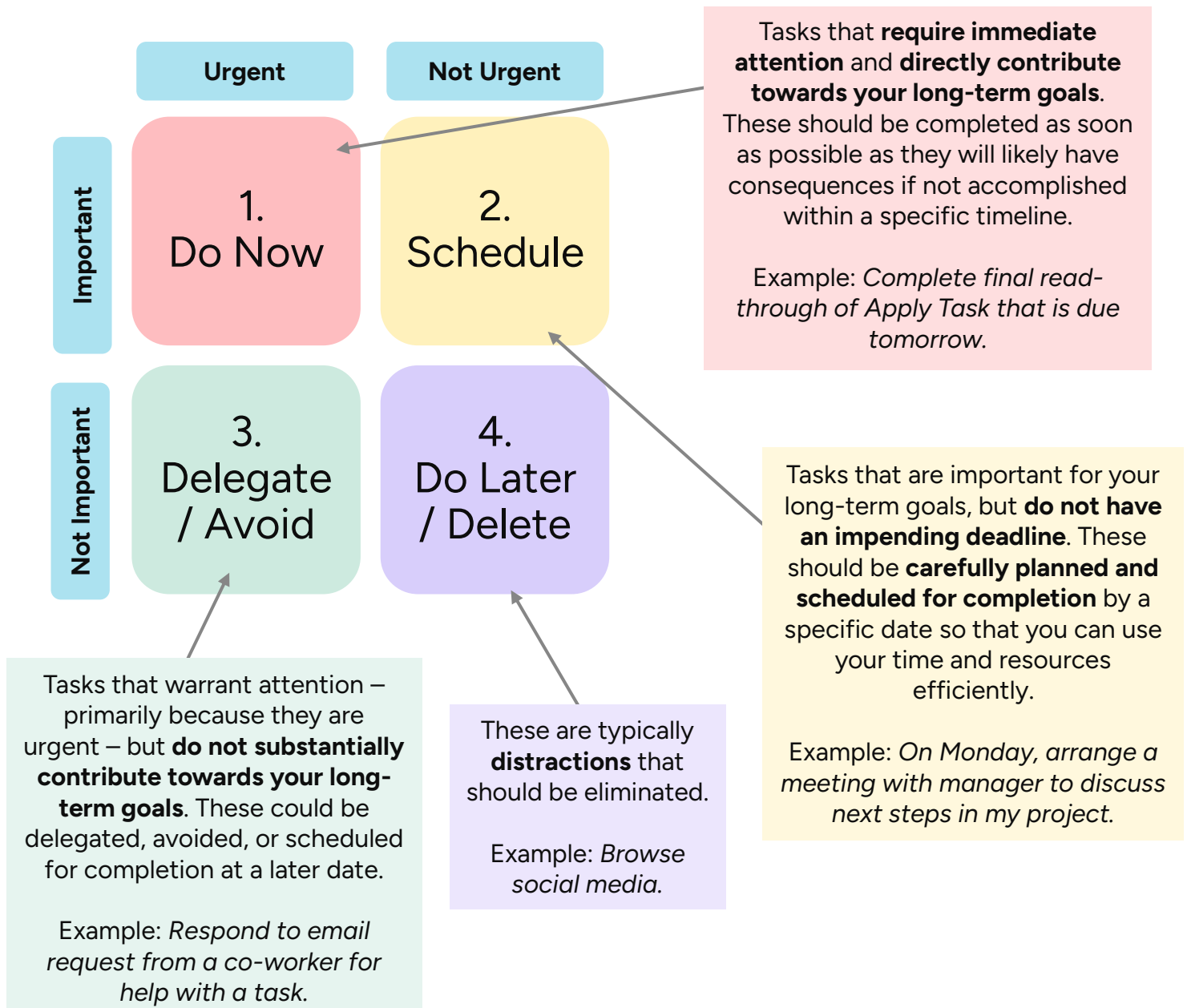
It consists of **four quadrants**:

1. Important and Urgent

2. Important but Not Urgent

3. Urgent but Not Important

4. Not Urgent and Not Important



Adopting the Prioritisation Matrix

1. Generate a task list

Write down **every task you need to complete**, including deadlines and personal commitments.

2. Categorise your tasks

Think about how urgent and important each task is and organise them **into the appropriate quadrant** of the matrix.

3. Prioritise your tasks

Rank the tasks **within each quadrant** based on how urgent or important they are.

4. Execute and review

Complete the most urgent tasks in your first quadrant, delegating or scheduling those that can be accomplished at a later date. You should review and update the matrix as necessary to track your progress and enhance your productivity.

(University of York, 2025)

Overcoming Procrastination

Procrastination is when we put off tasks until the last minute even when there might be negative consequences. This is likely to **increase your stress levels** and ultimately **lower the quality of your work**.

The following tips will help you to manage your time effectively and overcome procrastination:

1

Try to **reflect on when and why you procrastinate**. Are you a perfectionist? Do you lack motivation or understanding? It is important to be honest with yourself, identifying potential triggers as well as strategies to overcome them!

2	Adopt the Two-Minute Rule . If your task will take less than two minutes to complete, it should be completed immediately. This will prevent minor tasks from accumulating and encourage you to develop the habit of taking immediate action where possible (University of York, 2025).
3	Eat the frog! At times, an intimidating or problematic task will hinder your progress towards completing others. This task is your frog. Try 'eating' it first thing in the morning – you may find that the remainder of your day feels more manageable (University of Sheffield, 2025).
4	Employ the Pomodoro Technique to undertake 25-minutes of uninterrupted, purposeful work followed by a short break. This will enhance your focus and prevent fatigue! To learn more, see the ACE Quick Guide to the Pomodoro Technique .
5	Try to minimise distractions by closing unnecessary programmes and applications such as your email inbox or internet browser prior to studying. You may also find it helpful to use a blocker application such as Ascent or Flipd. These applications intervene when others are opened during focused study time. See the ACE Quick Guide to Time Management Tools for further advice.
6	For additional motivation, reward yourself when you successfully complete a task!

Reference List

University of Sheffield (2025) *How to Manage Your Time*. Available at: <https://sheffield.ac.uk/study-skills/university/independent/manage-time> (Accessed: 25 September 2026)

University of York (2025) *How to Prioritise Effectively*. Available at: <https://subjectguides.york.ac.uk/being-organised/prioritisation> (Accessed: 25 September 2026)



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