

SKILLS

Managing multiple jobs as a UNIVERSITY STUDENT

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As someone who is currently in their final year of university and working multiple jobs, I like to think of my life right now as being like that of Peter Parker from *Spider-Man 2*. The start of the film shows Peter struggling with two different jobs (three, if you count his job as Spider-Man). Similarly, on an average weekday, I find myself running from work to university or vice-versa, and going home incredibly tired – knowing I have to study and also do my work assignments from my other freelance jobs. I may not be a superhero like Peter, but trying to manage all these without breaking down often seems like a superhuman feat.

Nevertheless, it is a feat that many university students have to achieve. For most people, including myself, the primary obstacle when working as a student is managing time. As a person who used to “go with the flow”, I had to learn to be more organised and plan out my days more carefully. Though I do not always get the desired results, it helps to varying extents.

Mariam Jannatul*, 23, who is currently pursuing her Masters of Arts at the University of Glasgow while working in retail and tutoring students, shared a similar account of how she manages her time, “I use a planner and schedule my tasks for the week. I schedule absolutely everything – even cleaning my house, calling my friends, meal prepping, and grocery shopping. I feel more in control of my schedule and feel reassured that I’ve made time to get important things done.”

Of course, not everyone can meticulously schedule their work and studies. Some people find doing things on a priority basis to be a more effective means to manage their workload.

Hamidul Huda Stevan, 23, a freelance photographer and

cinematographer who is majoring in Anthropology at the University of Dhaka, said, “I usually prioritise my tasks according to the opportunity. There are some clients I give my highest priority to. When I have an exam however, I don’t take any new clients. The ‘Process of Elimination’ always helps me organise my study or work schedule.”

Some people might find regularly finishing their

studies at university and not leaving anything for home to be a convenient way to distribute workload. Maruf Hossain*, 24, a recent graduate from Independent University of Bangladesh talked about how this worked for him, “I think the best approach is to create a network of friends who have similar work ethics. Try to make the most of your time at campus and get work done there so that when you get back home, you can spend time doing other things”

Despite trying your hardest to maintain a proper schedule or finish tasks based on priorities, there will inevitably be overlaps and you may be prone to burnout and stress. Personally, I find going out at least once a week or doing something I am passionate about to be great ways to relieve stress.

Luckily for me, I do enjoy the work I do. Despite studying Computer Science & Engineering, the jobs I do are mostly related to writing. From my own experience, when you enjoy the work you

do, you may feel stressed but you are less likely to feel discontented. Nevertheless, it is natural to go through burnout especially when you cannot find time for leisure. Having supportive people in your life could help you mitigate that stress.

“I talk to my friends when I’m feeling stressed out or insecure over a piece of work, and even if I only end up complaining and we don’t arrive at a solution to the problem, I find that complaining really helps – it frees up some of my headspace for other things,” added Mariam.

Setting boundaries and taking time for yourself is also incredibly crucial and can help you de-stress.

Nahian Jamal Joyeeta, 24, a Public Relations graduate from the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, said, “Maintaining clear boundaries between work and personal life is crucial for me. I have separate phone numbers for work and personal use, ensuring work calls don’t intrude on my downtime.”

Ultimately, motivation is key when it comes to managing multiple jobs besides studies. You might have to sacrifice a lot of things, but at the end of the day, you

have to make sure that you hold on to the things that give you hope.

“I won’t say everything is picture-perfect. Working while studying does make it difficult to maintain a healthy social life. When I see my friends hanging out after classes, I often have to rush back to the office. However,

at the start of the month, when I receive my salary, I find my inner peace and motivation,” shared Khawja Masham Fahim, a Content Writer and Economics major at East West University.

For me, knowing I can make my parents proud and become the person I was meant to be, makes all the hard work seem worthwhile. At the end of the day, we are all striving and working hard to make something out of our lives; to achieve our dreams and transform ourselves into something better. But it is okay to take a break once in a while and pace yourself if you need to. You will get where you need to be in due time.

*Names have been changed upon request

ILLUSTRATION: ABIR HOSSAIN

