

Project Management and Self-advocacy

1. Survey the project and gather details.

- Maximize the use of written guidance and ask questions if you're unsure.
- Carefully note details about parameters and tools.
- Pay attention to smaller details such as formatting.
- Is this a scaffolded/process-based project?
- Will you need to set your own internal deadlines?

2. Break down the project into steps or components.

- The smaller the step, the easier it is to complete it.
- After you have a pretty complete list, organize the steps in the order in which they will likely occur.

3. Estimate how long each step will take to complete.

- We tend to underestimate how long things take.
- Try to collect actual data that you can use for future planning.
- Calculate your task completion rate.
- Awareness of time can help give you control over your schedule.

4. Map a realistic plan onto your schedule.

- Put tasks, deadlines, and events in your calendar.
- Be realistic, not aspirational.
- Meet yourself where you are (not a tautology!).
- Take lead times into account.
- "Mapping" offers a useful visualization of time and tasks.
- Plan and prioritize with other projects and assignments.

5. Execute your plan with intention.

- A plan is useful only if you execute it.
- Seek clarity where it's lacking.
- Reconnect to goals and values.
- Consider your changing energy levels.

6. Embed accountability structures throughout the process.

- Make use of checklists, timers, other tools to stay on track.
- Minimize distractions.
- Form an accountability group.
- Schedule meetings for feedback and accountability.
- Call in your “team” : Identify those who can help you on your journey and check in with them regularly.
- Seek help early on.
- Regular check-ins lower the barrier to communication.
- Ask for what you need. Develop self-advocacy skills.

Key Takeaways

- Using written guidance and other communications, break the project down into discrete steps or components.
- Make a list of items you will need and estimate how long each step will take to complete. Use this information to map a realistic plan onto your schedule, aiming for balance with other commitments.
- Throughout the process, lean on your team of support with check-ins and appointments for feedback and accountability.