

## How to Study International Maritime Management Successfully

The aim of this guideline is to provide you as a (prospective) student of International Maritime Management (IMM) with some useful information and measures to integrate your studies into your specific personal situation (professional duties, family, friends...). Time constraints may turn your studies into a challenging issue. In order to assist you as best we can, we have explicitly chosen a flexible design for this guideline: you can read the whole document at once or you can read single chapters while skipping others. You can also put this information away and look up the relevant information at a later stage. Where appropriate, we suggest further reading material. Please direct your questions to us: [imm@jade-hs.de](mailto:imm@jade-hs.de)

Let's get started. The guideline has the following outline:

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### 1 Introduction IMM

#### 1.1 Preface

The post-graduate distance education degree course of International Maritime Management is a co-operative programme of work and study which takes two and a half years of part-time study. Some students may finish their studies during this time period. We realise, however, that there will be deviations from this standard! IMM particularly addresses two groups of (young) professionals: nautical officers on merchant ships, and junior managers in the logistics and maritime sectors. IMM is characterised by a high level of flexibility which enables you to ...

- study the whole degree course (nine learning units plus the master's thesis) or single learning modules in order to meet your individual demands in a continuous education process.
- choose the number of modules per semester or, if necessary, interrupt your studies when professional and/or personal duties prevail. Please also choose when you would like to join the on-campus attendance phases in Elsfleth (Germany).
- enhance your profile by choosing elective learning modules as well as integrating your professional experiences and/or your personal interests.

## **1.2 Educational Design**

The educational design of IMM is aligned towards students' needs (family duties as well as professional duties aboard and ashore) in consideration of organisational, content-related and didactical matters, and it is based on a blended learning concept. Its approach combines (blends) the two principles of distance learning and on-campus learning. The focal point is the distance learning arrangement which enables you to study whenever and wherever you like. This concept is complemented by attendance phases with face-to-face learning times. For this reason, students and lecturers meet in Elsfleth (Germany) one time for two days throughout your whole studies as a minimum. The degree course is characterised by a high level of flexibility which allows students to choose for themselves when they join the on-campus attendance phases. At the beginning, these meetings are basically used for getting to know each other, familiarising yourself with the degree course, and social networking. Later, the focus changes to preparing and sitting examinations. Moreover, you choose how many learning modules you will attend each semester or whether you would like to interrupt your studies because at a certain point, professional or family duties have a higher priority. In figure 1 you can see three of endless possibilities to combine IMM studies with different personal situations (professional life, family and friends):

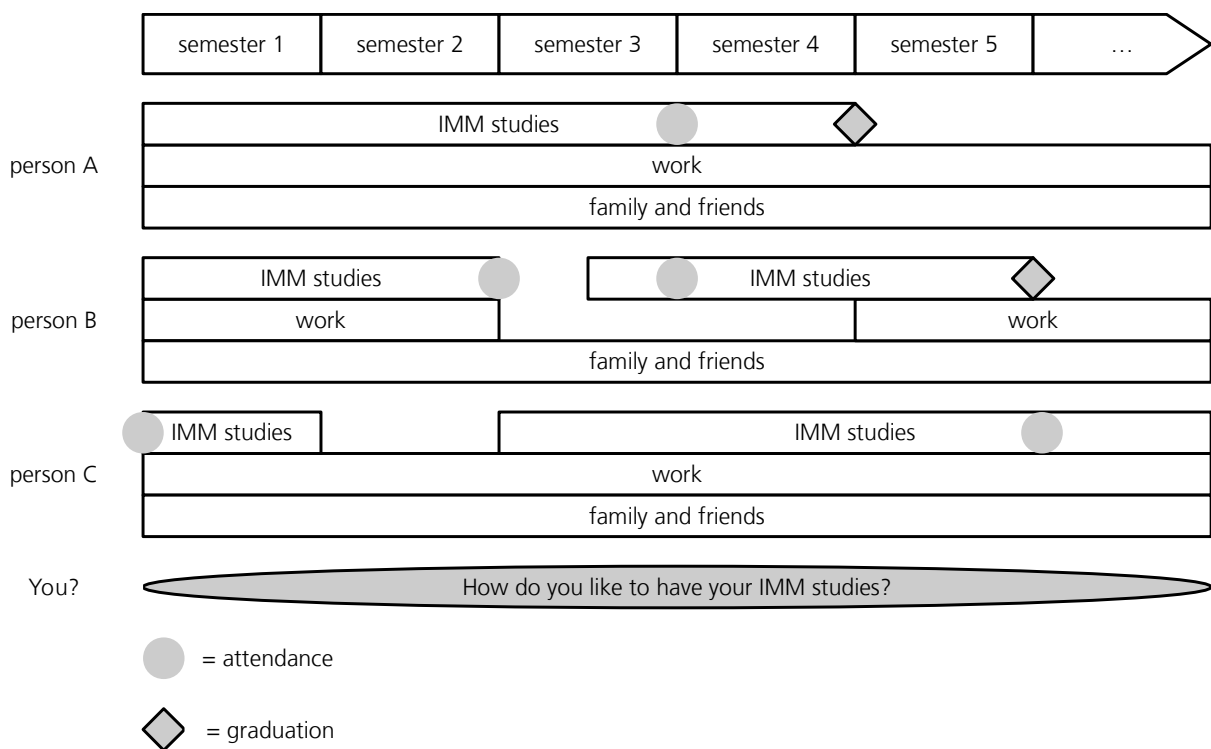


Figure 1: Three possibilities for studying IMM, source: Nause et al. 2018.

In line with the internationality of the maritime sector, the whole degree course is offered in English. The overall didactic approach of IMM emphasises the connection between academic theory and your individual professional experience. On the one hand, the theoretical content provided as part of your studies should be applied to your professional environments. On the other hand, the proficiency and experience acquired in your professional environment should be reflected on in a thoroughly academic manner. Theoretical analyses and examples of good practice should go hand in hand, thus enhancing their daily application. You should be ready to take on personal responsibility, to exercise self-management, and to test out possibilities and implement your own ideas.

The general approach of IMM leads us to the following three topics:

- Entrance requirements: a pre-requisite for being able to enrol into IMM is one year of professional experience as well as a first university degree (B.Sc., B.A. or similar). Although a first degree in a maritime or logistics setting is the most appropriate, we are also looking for alumni with first degrees in economics, engineering or legal study courses etc. (see [regulations for eligibility and admission](#)).
- Cross-crediting of prior learning: the enhancement of the mobility between education and training systems is one important topic of the so-called Bologna process of the European Union and accordingly the policy on tertiary education in Germany. In general, it is possible to cross-credit prior learning that you do not have to repeat. Therefore, we have developed processes for the acknowledgement of prior-learning and (work-based) competencies into IMM (see [guidelines for the Recognition of Competences Acquired at or Outside](#)

## [Universities on the Further Education Programme of International Maritime Management \(M.Sc.\)](#)

- Tuition fees: IMM is a post-graduate degree course of work and study and is therefore subject to tuition fees according to German regulations. If you study IMM for two and a half years part-time, your total fee will be €8,300. In order to align the study fees with our understanding of flexibility we will require payment of fees mainly on a per module basis (see [fee regulations](#)).

### **1.3 Learning Modules**

The educational design of the IMM learning modules builds on a uniform and learner-centred design. Following this uniform design, different didactic elements re-appear in all learning modules. These elements will assist you to follow the different modules more easily. Right from the start of the semester you gain access to all materials of the learning modules provided by Learning Management System (LMS): course books, further readings and information. Usually, you will also see the tasks for the final assessment, too. You start by working your way through the course books to comprehend the theoretical framework (theoretical part). The self-instructional course books play a key role as there is very little face-to-face contact. The course books are used for teaching-learning purposes and they are specially designed for distance learning students. For your convenience, the documents are available as printable PDF-files.<sup>1</sup> They feature the following didactic elements:

- At the very beginning and at the end of every learning module we ask you to self-assess your level of knowledge by means of a questionnaire. These questionnaires contain statements referring to the contents and intended learning outcomes of the respective units. You rate the statements on the basis of marks. This approach is very reliable and it serves two main purposes: it enables you to self-assess your own level of knowledge and shows you where you 'stand' within the learning module. On the other hand, it enables us to measure the effectiveness which is an indicator for the 'success' of the learning module.
- All chapters are prefaced with learning outcomes. They are used to give you an overview of what you should be able to do upon completion of the respective chapters. Furthermore, you are reminded of the learning outcomes from time to time.
- The texts focus on the subject (learner – you) instead of the object (content). The texts are written in a way that simulates a two way communication between you and the lecturer. The lecture text and included questions address you directly, and relate to your (previous) experience.
- The length of the different chapters is relatively short. This aspect should enable you to read single chapters after working days in the evenings, at the workplace, while travelling or

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<sup>1</sup> The Academic Research Methods module was chosen and developed as a good-practice example as it contains the fundamentals for anyone engaged in research. Moreover, the module ensures a common understanding of the general educational design adopted by students and participating lecturers and it introduces the integrative concept of combining theoretical knowledge with professional experiences. The [course book](#) is available for your information.

commuting, at weekends or, generally speaking, whenever your work and family duties permit you to study.

- All chapters conclude with reflection questions. These questions assist you in considering and reflecting on what you just have read. Moreover, these questions serve to initiate forum discussions between you and your peers and to tie the theory up with your professional experience.

In most cases, you will see from the very start the form the final assessment of the learning module you are studying will take. This is mainly a written assignment. Subsequently, you develop your individual research topic for yourself within a given discipline while taking your individual work environment into account (active part). It is very important for your motivation that you are genuinely interested in your topic. This approach combines (new) theoretical methods with questions related to your professional environment in order to enable you to reflect upon your own activities and decisions. In addition, your studies will include case examples, a written examination and a corporate strategic planning simulation. In each module, self-assessment tasks form an integral part of your learning process. These are an essential part of the LMS but are limited to reproducing information. By means of the self-assessment tasks, which you can do wherever and whenever it suits your individual learning schedule, you gain instant feedback. You thus achieve initial success while you work your way through the learning modules and this impacts your motivation positively.

Besides these autonomous learning processes, you can get in touch with both your peers and your lecturers (communicative part). For this purpose, you are provided with a discussion forum for every learning module included in the LMS. It enables you to discuss your questions and answers, experiences and views in an asynchronous manner. You can access the forums at your convenience. We refresh them from time to time by summarising important results as well as moving, deleting or adding posts. Hence, you will probably find previous discussions and comments from former peers.

#### **1.4 Communication and Contact**

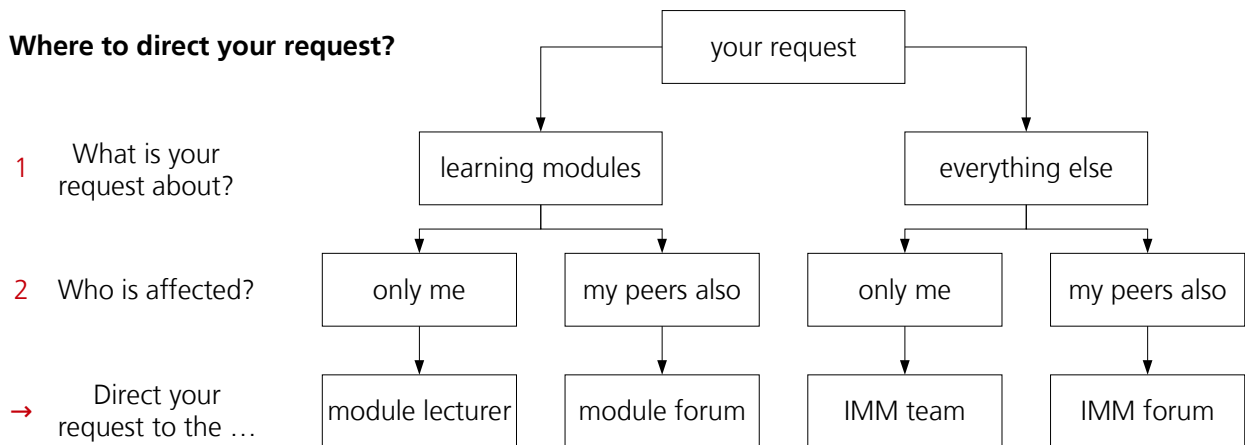
Our communication normally starts when you decide to visit our homepage in order to get in touch with us and with the IMM degree course. Later, you may contact us in order to receive answers to any open questions. This may refer to our degree course in general, to the enrolling process or to cross-crediting your prior learning experiences etc. Once you decide to enrol in IMM your studies will start with the first attendance phase in Elsfleth, Germany at a kick-off meeting. We have scheduled the first attendance phase at the very beginning in order to dissipate communication blockades by getting to know each other, to familiarise you with the didactic concept of IMM and to provide basic information and workshops to facilitate your IMM studies.

Merchant ships and their crews (namely you and/or your peers) travel around the world. Therefore, your peer students are located in different and frequently changing time zones. As a consequence, all communication with and between students is of necessity asynchronous. Hence, a virtual classroom (the LMS) has been set up with on-line forums which allow you to get in touch with your peers and with us in order to discuss all matters relating to your studies on the following levels (see figure 2):

- What is your request about?

1. Learning modules: On a module basis we invite you to discuss all queries referring to course books, examinations, reflection questions and general questions with regard to the module contents in the forum of the respective module. The same applies to your thoughts, opinions, inputs and professional experience. In this way, you assume responsibility by participating actively in the discussions and learning processes while the lecturer acts as support and takes a back seat. In the first instance discussions should be amongst students in order to learn from each other and your experience as experts in your individual professional disciplines. If discussions follow the wrong direction and/or if answers are incomplete, then the lecturer will lead discussions back onto the right track or will provide hints and/or correct answers.
  2. Everything else: We kindly ask you to discuss all matters not directly related to the learning modules within the IMM forum, e.g. your queries referring to attendance phases, library services, technical issues (LMS, VPN-client), networking activities, (virtual) learning groups, job postings, news, administration etc. We will make sure to come back to you with the answers as fast as possible. In general, we encourage you to share your experiences amongst each other.
- Who is affected? If you have individual or personal questions (e.g. referring to your examination) or you are reluctant to ask personal questions, then you can direct your enquiries directly to us (module lecturers or the IMM team). Do not be shy! We will answer your requests directly via private message services or anonymously in the forum as your problem may be of interest to your peers, too. Moreover, for any complex issues you can telephone or even visit us in Elsfleth.

**Where to direct your request?**



**We will come back to you with the answer or direct your request to the person responsible.**

Figure 2: How to contact us, own illustration.

How to contact us:

- Module lecturers (see learning modules in LMS).

- IMM team: we will answer your questions (normally within 48 hours at the latest) or forward your message to the person responsible: [imm@jade-hs.de](mailto:imm@jade-hs.de)

## 2 First Steps

Once you have received your Campus Card please generate your log in data by using the online account for students (in [English language](#) and in [German language](#)). The following are to be used for all organisational purposes and student affairs throughout your studies:

- your student e-mail address,
- the learning management system as well as
- the student management system.

### 2.1 Student E-Mail Address

Jade University provides you with an [e-mail address](#). We kindly ask you to use it for any correspondence concerning student affairs. Students' e-mail addresses look like this: `forename.surname@student.jade-hs.de`. We recommend adding this address to the e-mail client of your mobile device, e.g. your mobile phone or tablet, in order to always be up to date. Therefore, you need the following information:

- protocol: IMAP (*not* POP3!)
- ingoing mail server: `mail.jade-hs.de` (port: 143; encryption method: (START-) TLS)
- outgoing mail server: `mail.jade-hs.de` (port: 587; encryption method: (START-) TLS)
- user name: see above (e.g. `ab1234@hs-woe.de`)
- keyword: see above
- If you use Outlook, you will have to activate the checkbox that the server requires authentication in the advanced settings menu items.

### 2.2 Learning Management System

As stated above, all learning material, necessary information and communication will be provided to you via our learning management system. It is called 'Moodle' and you can log in [here](#). After your first log in, we will be able to assign you to the general IMM area as well as any learning modules you have booked, as stated below.

## 2.3 Student Management System

The student management system has been used for your application. Now it is used for administrative purposes and keeps you informed about your grades, forms and re-registration and semester contribution. It is called 'eCampus' and you can log in [here](#).

## 2.4 VPN

Jade University provides a virtual private network (VPN) connection. It enables you to send and receive data across public networks as if your computer was directly connected to the private network (of Jade University). So, you can therefore benefit from the functionality, e.g. accessing the digital library of the Jade University with online contents, e.g. databases, e-journals and e-books. To use the VPN access, please configure the VPN connection as explained [here](#).

## 2.5 Module Booking

The summer term starts on 1 March and ends on 31 August. The winter term starts on 1 September and ends on 28 (29) February. These dates are prescribed. Please book your modules by sending us an e-mail to [imm@jade-hs.de](mailto:imm@jade-hs.de). Please provide information on which module(s) (e.g. IMM01 Academic Research Methods) you would like to study and when you would like to study it/them (e.g. winter term 2021):

- You can book learning modules at any time. You can book one, two or more modules right at the beginning of a semester or, if you can not estimate how much time will be available for studying besides other (professional and/or personal) duties during the semester, you can also book one module after the other during the semester. For example: start with one learning module at the beginning of the semester (e.g. in March), finish it by handing in the home assignment three months later (e.g. in May) and further your IMM studies with another learning module until the semester end (e.g. in August). The same procedure applies for the winter term. Please bear in mind that it will take a maximum of ten working days starting from your inquiry up to your access to the learning module. As an exception, the two learning modules of 'Cost & Yield Management' and 'Case Studies' are completed as a group work. Therefore, you have to start them right at the beginning of the semester. We kindly ask you to take this into account.
- There is not a sequential order given in which you have to study the learning modules. Even so, we strongly recommend to start with the 'Academic Research Methods' learning module as it introduces the overall concept of the IMM degree course in terms of combining theoretical knowledge with professional experience. Most learning modules conclude by handing in home assignments. However, please bear in mind that your participation in Elsfleth, Germany is required in order to complete the following three learning modules: 'International Maritime Law' (written examination), 'Cost & Yield Management' (corporate strategic planning simulation) and 'Case Studies' (presentation including a discussion).



### 3 Lessons Learned (from Students for Students)

IMM has been developed within a research project involving a two-year period of validation. This validation started in September 2015 and lasted for two years. All learning modules were tested and validated once during the research and test phase. Test students were enrolled in order to study the learning modules and to give regular feedback on how to improve the individual learning modules and the complete degree course. Therefore, we developed a questionnaire which concentrated on your former peers' learning itineraries, impediments to studying IMM successfully as well as measures to improve students' success in studying IMM. Moreover, we asked them to fill in a report with their weekly hours at work as well as the hours per week they spent on their IMM studies. As a result, we have been able to summarise the data and publish it for you on the following pages with the aim of providing useful information which will help facilitate your studies.<sup>2</sup>

1. *Question: Do you study one learning unit (module) after another or multiple units simultaneously?*

73% of your peers study one unit after another while 27% study multiple units simultaneously.

2. *Question: Do you make use of (weekly) schedules to structure your studies?*

Only one third of your peers makes use of (weekly) schedules in order to structure their studies while the bigger part (two thirds) does not make use of (weekly) schedules.

3. *Question: Do you study at regular intervals or do you have specific study periods?*

58% of your peers have specific study periods while 42% study at regular intervals.

4. *Question: When do you study outside your professional and/or personal duties? (Results are based on 110 answers as multiple answers were possible.)*

Your peers mostly study during their leisure time/holidays (59%) or work time (15%), while studying while commuting ranks lower (10%). 15% answered 'other' which mostly includes a blend of leisure time and work time, or in individual circumstances which were mentioned only once.

- If your peers study mostly during their leisure time/holidays, they study in approximately equal shares before/after their work time (32%), at weekends (31%) and during their holidays (29%).
- If your peers study mostly during their work time, they study parallel to professional duties (50%) or during off-peak hours (32%).

5. *Question: Where do you study mostly? (Results are based on 125 answers as multiple answers were possible.)*

Your peers study mostly at home (57%) and/or at the workplace (30%; either onboard ship (19%) or ashore (11%)), while studying on the train (or other public transport) is ranked

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<sup>2</sup> The student sample analysed during the test and validation period was (n=90).

lower (7%). 6% answered 'other' which includes individual circumstances which were mentioned only once.

The survey shows that your peers distinguish between reading (theoretical part) and writing (active part) activities. The former can be achieved parallel to working times (to some extent) as studies can be interrupted or completed chapter by chapter. The latter requires more concentration as well as longer and uninterrupted periods of time. Therefore, it is rather accomplished outside of their work time.

6. *Question: Please sum up your experience of the previous semester.*

Your peers were asked to fill in a spreadsheet in order to report their weekly hours at work as well as the hours per week they spend on their studies (n=54). This part of the evaluation aimed at exploring students' learning itineraries in order to sum up the information and report them to you in order to facilitate your studies:

- Students reported an average of 9.8 study hours per week (with a standard deviation of 3.9 hours).
- Students reported an average of 38.3 working hours per week (with a standard deviation of 14.4 hours).

These values are very rough estimates only. However, they are affected by different influencing factors: upward and downward fluctuations of students' professional and personal duties along the semester, impact of seafarers' life in terms of long and irregular phases of work and holidays. Moreover, it is influenced by different expectations and approaches of how to study in terms of time, motivation and stress. This leads to an individual number of modules per semester and workload respectively.

## **4 Which Factors Hamper Distance-Education Studies?**

Let's get started with some empiricism to clarify the importance of the guideline in general and this chapter in particular: Multiple studies come to the conclusion that student drop-out is a demanding challenge in distance education, e.g. Willging and Johnson (2004, p. 106) refer to various studies and conclude "[...] that students enrolled in distance education are twice as likely to drop out than [sic!] on-campus students." Levy (2007, p. 185) reports "[...] that students attending e-learning courses dropout at substantially higher rates than their counterparts in on-campus courses." If students have to cope with professional and/or family duties besides their distance-education studies, then the drop-out risk will be more acute! In order to meet this challenge, we have asked your former peers what were the most demanding circumstances on their way to the successful completion of IMM.

*Question: In your opinion: which factors are the main impediments to studying IMM successfully? (Results are based on 214 answers as multiple answers were possible.)*

Your peers think that the main impediments (Top 3 – counts for one half of number of mentions made) are ...

- lack of time (24%),
- lack of time management (14%) and
- lack of experience with learning strategies/self-learning (12%).

The following impediments are expected to have a negative impact, too: lack of motivation (10%), insufficient flexibility of IMM (7%), isolation (7%), lack of interest (5%), low self-confidence in their ability to cope with a co-operative programme of work and studies (4%). 10% answered 'other' which usually means no Internet access (n=10): some of your peers complain about unreliable Internet access as they are active seafarers. We have discussed this topic several times and reflected on your comments. As a result, all learning modules are prefaced with a flow chart in order to highlight when access to the Internet is required so that you can align it with your sea time (and other duties). It is possible to send in exams via e-Mail. The time allowed for completion of the modules is (mostly) given as rough estimates. However, we would like to point out that this is a Master's degree course and therefore it is an inevitable requirement that each participant has to conduct his/her own searches for information sources (literature, further reading, research reports, etc.).

In order to help resolve the above mentioned challenges, we have ...

- prepared an exercise which will assist you to schedule your personal duties and to embed your studies in your daily routine: this is conducted during the first attendance phase in Elsfleth.
- pointed out further reading and methods which deal with time management and self-management (see chapter 6).
- edited some information which relates to the topic 'how to study' and 'how to reflect about learning processes and professional experience'.

## 5 Which Measures Improve the Students' Success in Distance Studies?

*Question: In your opinion: which factors can improve the success of students' IMM studies? (Results are based on 169 answers as multiple answers were possible.)*

Your peers think that the following measures can improve the success of students' IMM studies (the top 3 count for one half of number of mentions made):

- encourage students to meet face-to-face in regional networks (20%),
- give hints on time management (19%) and
- improve virtual learning communities (17%).

We expect a positive impact, too, from explanations of students' reasons for dropping out (14%), statements of IMM alumni who report on their learning itineraries and how they coped with studying in addition to professional and family duties (15%), and other suggestions along these lines:

- a newsletter with deadlines and a rough overview over topics discussed. We will follow up on this suggestion.
- uploading further reading. We are only allowed to offer lists for further reading as it is illegal to upload books, articles, etc. in terms of copyright reasons.
- enhancing the forward planning in terms of when the modules start and how they are structured.

You should bear the above mentioned findings in mind and draw conclusions by answering the following questions:

- How do you intend to organise your studies of International Maritime Management alongside professional and family obligations?
- Would you like to join a regional and/or virtual network with your peers?
- Do you make use of (weekly) schedules for time management purposes? If not, are you re-considering this in view of the above mentioned findings?

## 6 Hints on Time Management

As stated earlier in this document, among other problems, time management and lack of study time hamper distance studies dramatically. The consequences are diverse but they mostly cause students to drop out from the course, or at least to tend to put off problems, to have trouble getting started, to struggle with juggling many things at the same time, to avoid difficult tasks, to overlook their own abilities/capabilities, and to feel guilty (Stickel-Wolf & Wolf 2013, p. 335f.). The way out is to improve your ability to manage yourself and your available time. This leads us to the concept of time management. Hellsten (2012, p. 21) comes to the conclusion that there is a widespread use of the term 'time management' but there is no universally accepted definition of it. There are, however, numerous sources which deal with time management and its techniques. In a nutshell, according to Hellsten's review (ibid.), "[...] time management is most commonly defined by: (a) time analysis, (b) planning, (c) goal setting, (d) prioritizing, (e) scheduling, (f) organizing, and (g) establishing new and improved time habits."

This leads us to the following questions/measures:

- What does your (monthly, weekly, daily) routine look like so far? How do you plan to schedule and organise your time from now on (working hours, family/friends, studies

etc.)?

- What are your goals? Keep in mind that goals cannot easily be reached immediately. They must be broken down into several smaller but achievable aims.
- Which goal is the most important one, e.g. when do you want to obtain your MSc degree?

In the following, we list some articles and books which deal with time management in order to facilitate your studies. You should have a look at several resources and choose the one(s) you like best:

Edward Lowe Foundation (ed.) (2016): Time Management. URL: <http://edwardlowe.org/time-management/> (access date: 2016-10-21).

Forsyth, P. (2010): *Successful Time Management*. London: Kogan Page.

Jackson, V. P. (2009): Time Management: A Realistic Approach. *Journal of American College of Radiology*, 6(6), pp. 434–436.

Stoilov, T. (2012): *Time Management*. Rijeka: In Tech.

Taylor, R. B. (2006): *Academic Medicine: A Guide for Clinicians*. New York: Springer Science+Business Media. [Administrative Skills \(chapter 7, pp. 185–212\)](#).

Tracy, B. (2013): *Time Management*. New York et al.: American Management Association.

Zeller, D. (2009): *Successful Time Management For Dummies*. Indianapolis, Indiana: Wiley Publishing.

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Levy, Y. (2007): Comparing dropouts and persistence in e-learning courses. *Computers & Education*, 48(2), pp. 185–204.

Nause, N., Klimmek, E., John, P. & Wandelt, R. (2018): International Maritime Management – a post-graduate distance degree course for a unique student group. In: H. Oberbeck & S. Kundolf (ed.): „*Mobiles Lernen für Morgen*“ – *Berufsbegleitende, wissenschaftliche Aus- und Weiterbildung für die Ingenieurwissenschaften*. *Tagungsband*. Münster: Waxmann.

Stickel-Wolf, C. & Wolf, J. (2013): *Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten und Lerntechniken: Erfolgreich studieren – gewusst wie!* Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler.

Willging, P. A. & Johnson, S. D. (2004): Factors that Influence Students' Decision to Dropout of On-line Courses. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 8(4), pp. 105-118.