

A Guide to Setting Goals

Successful students must learn to be proactive. Identify what you want to accomplish and then do it! Understanding the importance of goal setting and how to set goals is vital for learning and growth in university and beyond. Use this fact sheet to review the principles of setting goals and create a SMART goal to initiate the goal setting process. Successful students must learn to be proactive. Identify what you want to accomplish and then do it! Understanding the importance of goal setting and how to set goals is vital for learning and growth in university and beyond. Use this fact sheet to review the principles of setting goals and create a SMART goal to initiate the goal setting process.



Why set goals?

Helps you to realize and prioritize what's important
Provides direction and purpose
Reminds you of what you need to accomplish

Gives you something to strive for and keeps you motivated
Makes you accountable for your learning
Builds self-confidence and helps you to believe in yourself

The process of goal setting

- 1. Reflect:** Analyze your strengths and weaknesses and determine what you want to accomplish. You may want to start by brainstorming all potential long-term and short term goals you hope to achieve.
- 2. Set "SMART" Goals:** A useful way of making powerful goals is to use the acronym SMART. The principles of SMART goals are as follows:
 - Specific:** Set goals that are well-defined and clear. Goals should state what you hope to accomplish, how you will achieve your goal, and why it is important to you.
 - Measurable:** Objectives that are quantifiable and have an end result that can be measured.
 - Attainable:** Objectives that can be accomplished with effort. It is important that you set goals that are realistic and achievable.
 - Relevant:** Objectives that have personal importance and are consistent with long-term goals.
 - Time-bound:** Objectives that are bound by a set time frame.

Different goals will require different amounts of time for completion. A short-term goal is something you'd like to achieve within days, weeks, or months. Long-term goals are goals you work to achieve over a longer period of time such as a semester, year, or many years.
- 3. Re-evaluate:** Examine the progress of your goals throughout your set timeframe and re-evaluate your goals at the deadline. If you have accomplished your goal, do something to reward yourself and celebrate your success! If results were not achieved, determine why and what you can do moving forward. Also set a new deadline for your goal.

Creating short and long-term goals

Goals are set at a number of different levels. First, you need to create your "big picture" of what large-scale goals you want to achieve, i.e. your long term goals. Next, identify the obstacles, resources and benefits of achieving your long term goals in order to determine short term goals.

Example

Long Term Goal:

I will achieve a GPA of 3.0 or above in the course Business Management I this semester.

Obstacles What will make it difficult for me to achieve this goal?	Resources What resources are available to help me achieve this goal?	Benefits What are the beneficial results of achieving this goal?
My dorm is too noisy to study	I have a friendly professor	I will be better prepared for Business Management II
I struggle with financial calculations	The Student Learning Centre has free tutors and workshops	It will help my overall GPA

Once you have identified your long term goal, you can break it down into smaller targets (short term goals).

Short Term Goal:

I will go to the library immediately after each Business Management I class to study for one hour.

I will meet my professor during her office hours bi-weekly to discuss difficult concepts and prepare for my exam.

I will review my lecture notes after each class to ensure completion and understanding.

Goal setting tips

Stay focused: Be attentive, flexible and adaptable with your goals. If you are feeling overwhelmed by a goal, break the goal down into smaller objectives, and set a goal to achieve each part.

Celebrate! Find a way to reward yourself when you accomplish a goal. It will encourage you to set more goals and work hard to achieve them.

Reflect, Set, and Re-Evaluate!

Student Learning Centre

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