

In Focus
Week 3 Materials

Personal Goal Setting: Setting Lifetime Goals

The first step in setting personal goals is to consider what you want to achieve in your lifetime (or at least, by a significant and distant age in the future). Setting long-term goals gives you an overall perspective that shapes all other aspects of your decision-making, including the short-term goals you are setting for yourself in the present.

To give a broad, balanced coverage of all important areas in your life, try to set goals in some of the following categories (or in other categories of your own, where these are important to you):

- **Career** – What level do you want to reach in your career, or what do you want to achieve?
- **Financial** – How much do you want to earn, by what stage? How is this related to your career goals?
- **Education** – Is there any knowledge you want to acquire in particular? What information and skills will you need to have in order to achieve other goals?
- **Family** – Do you want to be a parent? If so, how are you going to be a good parent? How do you want to be seen by a partner or by members of your extended family?
- **Artistic** – Do you want to achieve any artistic goals?
- **Attitude** – Is any part of your mindset holding you back? Is there any part of the way that you behave that upsets you? (If so, set a goal to improve your behavior or find a solution to the problem.)
- **Physical** – Are there any athletic goals that you want to achieve, or do you want good health deep into old age? What steps are you going to take to achieve this?
- **Pleasure** – How do you want to enjoy yourself? (You should ensure that some of your life is for you!)
- **Public Service** – Do you want to make the world a better place? If so, how?

Spend some time brainstorming as well! Think about all of these areas, and then select one or more goals in each category that best reflect what you want to do. Consider trimming again so that you have a small number of really significant goals that you can focus on.

As you do this, make sure that the goals that you have set are ones that you genuinely want to achieve, not ones that your parents, family, or employers might want. (If you have a partner, you probably want to consider what they want – however, make sure that you also remain true to yourself!)

Resources

Books:

- *This Year I will...A 52-week guided journal to achieve your goals* by Tiffany Louise, LCSW
- *Get Out of Your Own Way: Overcoming Self-Defeating Behavior* by Mark Goulston
- *The Magic Lamp: Goal Setting for People Who Hate Setting Goals* by Keith Ellis
- *SMART Goal Setting Made Simple* by S.J.Scott
- *The Positive Shift* by Catherine Sanderson

Websites:

- Goalscape
- LifeTick
- GoalsOnTrack

Apps:

- ClickUp
- Strides
- Weekdone
- Way of Life
- ThinkUp (Positive Affirmations)
- Forest: Stay Focused

YouTube Videos:

- How a student changed her study habits by setting goals and managing time | Yana Savitsky | TEDxLFHS
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7e7gtU3PHY>
- The Art of Goal Setting | Keiana Cave | TEDxUofM
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LYG5Tx-aWs>
- The Locus Rule
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZhoeSaPF-k>
- The Psychology of Self-Motivation | Scott Geller | TEDxVirginiaTech
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sxpKhIbr0E>

Counseling Center Resources:

- Perfectionism workshop
- Tuesday @ 7 workshops
- Test Anxiety workshop

Problem-Solving Contract

1. Long-term goal: _____

2. Date to accomplish goal: _____

3. Steps to reaching my goal: _____

4. Short-term goals and dates to complete them by:

By _____, I will _____

5. When I complete each short-term goal, I will reward myself by _____

6. When I complete my long-term goal, I will reward myself by _____

Goal reflection work sheet

What are your values in life?	
What are your goals for the next 3-5 years?	
What are your goals for this year?	
What can you do to accomplish this year's goals?	
What can you do <u>this week</u> to accomplish this year's goals?	

Goal reflection work sheet

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Motivation

One of the keys to working consistently on a project is understanding how motivation and productivity are related to each other. Many students assume that motivation is necessary to work on academic projects, but it is possible to work productively with little or no motivation. In fact, motivation is often the **outcome** of productive work rather than the cause of it.

There are several factors that contribute to motivation for most students:

- The desire to meet or exceed personal standards and expectations
- The opportunity to make a unique contribution within a field
- The work is experienced as interesting, challenging or inspiring
- There are strong incentives (e.g., financial) to work on the project
- There are positive feelings (e.g., pride) associated with the work
- There are negative feelings (e.g., anxiety) associated with not meeting a deadline
- There is a desire for the recognition and approval from colleagues

There are also unique challenges associated with motivation while working on large projects, like the dissertation or capstone:

- There are likely to be periods of boredom or disinterest while working on large projects
- The amount of motivation you have may fluctuate depending on the task or the particular day
- There will be times when it is necessary to work when you have little or no motivation
- There are relatively few deadlines associated so it will not be possible to rely on them for motivation
- There may be limited opportunities for collaboration which may affect motivation

There are also opportunities to develop new time management and organizational skills that will be applied to future projects, including the following:

- The ability to establish a work schedule that does not rely on motivation
- The ability to work productively whenever there are no imminent deadlines
- The ability to identify aspects of the work that are potential sources of motivation
- The ability to collaborate with others in ways that increase motivation

Motivation and Productivity Strategies

It is inevitable that your motivation will fluctuate as you work. Despite this variability in motivation, it will be important that you develop a plan that allows you to work consistently on the projects to meet your long-term goals. Therefore, it will be necessary to have strategies for working that are not entirely dependent on motivation.

You are in charge of your motivation. Therefore, you need a variety of strategies for managing motivation over the course of a long-term project.

Be creative. Be persistent. Try new things.

- Move your workspace to a coffee shop or library if it has become difficult to work alone
- Spend time with colleagues, family and friends who provide support and encouragement
- Find a balance between work and personal life
- Prioritize activities that increase your energy and enthusiasm, including sleep
- Be aware of how self-doubt and uncertainty affect your motivation and challenge yourself to work through these issues rather than avoid them
- Identify something that will motivate you to work on the project even on days when you aren't feeling inspired by the project
- Establish a routine that allows you to work consistently irrespective of how motivated you feel on a particular day
- Reflect on ways that your motivation will increase as you make progress
- Shift your work to less challenging parts of the project whenever you are struggling with motivation
- Establish specific, realistic goals and reward yourself (e.g., take the weekend off) whenever you accomplish them
- Allow yourself to feel a sense of accomplishment as you make progress
- Create links between the work and future professional goals
- Focus on ways that your research will make a meaningful contribution to your field
- Anticipate future opportunities to pursue other professional goals

Persistence

The single most important factor that determines whether someone will complete their goals may be **persistence**, which means the ability to continue working despite obstacles or challenges along the way. There is emerging research literature on persistence that has found that ability or talent are not the most important factors in determining success. Instead, it is something researchers have termed “grit” or the ability to persist despite setbacks.

There are important distinctions between persistence and procrastination, although both affect completion of long-term goals.

Procrastination is characterized by the following:

- The avoidance of daily tasks
- Difficulty starting tasks
- Inability to remain on tasks once work has started
- Relying on deadlines to prompt work
- Easily distracted by unimportant tasks

Persistence is characterized by the following:

- The ability to work over extended periods of time despite challenges
- The resiliency to overcome challenges and obstacles
- The self-control necessary to resist distractions
- Experiencing the long-term goal as meaningful, important, and “worth it”
- A commitment to keep working whenever despite self-doubts
- Perceiving yourself as “in charge” of the work irrespective of challenges

The ability to be persistent is a skill that can be developed with practice. You will want to identify challenges you may have experienced with persistence in the past and consider ways to strengthen these skills.

Productivity

The concept of productivity is relatively straightforward – at its core, it is a measurement of the quantity of work completed during a specific period of time. Many individuals pay a lot of attention to productivity because it is so closely associated with success, self-esteem, confidence, and stress reduction. Additionally, small declines in productivity can cause individuals to question themselves and their levels of competency.

Think of yourself as an advisor or manager of your work. In doing so, you will want to pay close attention to your productivity. While you may not be able to quantify your productivity precisely, it should be possible to make reasonable estimates that will help you make the adjustments to your plans that may be necessary in order to meet your long-term goals.

All students have a limited amount of time available to work on academics and projects, and we often hear that work-life balance can be a concern. We must consider that it is frequently not possible to increase the amount of time allocated to certain tasks. In many cases, the only way to complete a project more quickly is to increase your productivity.

Small improvements in productivity can have a substantial impact on the timeframe for completing work because these small increases are multiplied across a large time period. A 20% or 25% increase in productivity sustained over the course of a project, for example, may allow you to complete the project one month earlier than you would have otherwise.

Strategies for increasing productivity:

- Schedule regular work hours
- Begin working promptly at designated times
- Allocate your sufficient time for high priority tasks
- Minimize time allocated to low priority tasks
- Identify ways to sustain motivation
- Work systematically utilizing tasks lists
- Minimize distractions in your workplace
- Obtain a sufficient amount of sleep every night
- Engage in wellness activities
- Hold yourself accountable to a work plan
- Review your work consistently and evaluate factors affecting productivity

Writing S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Developing sound goals is critical to managing your own and your employees' performance. Each year you will ask your employees to set goals for the upcoming year/evaluation period. When you ask your employees to write their goals, teach them to create S.M.A.R.T. goals that support your own goals for the same period.

A S.M.A.R.T. goal is defined as one that is specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused, and time-bound. Below is a definition of each of the S.M.A.R.T. goal criteria.

Specific: Goals should be simplistically written and clearly define what you are going to do.

Specific is the What, Why, and How of the S.M.A.R.T. model.

Example: By August 1, 2009, implement a new performance management system for Classified Staff, A& P Faculty, and University Staff using clearly defined processes and guidelines so employees and managers can more competently evaluate performance and develop their careers.

Explanation of Example:

“Implement a new performance management system for Classified Staff, A& P Faculty, and University Staff” = what

“using clearly defined processes and guidelines” = how

“so employees and managers can competently evaluate performance and develop their careers = why

Measurable: Goals should be measurable so that you have tangible evidence that you have accomplished the goal. Usually, the entire goal statement is a measure for the project, but there are usually several short-term or smaller measurements built into the goal.

Example: By August 1, 2009, implement a new performance management system for Classified Staff, A& P Faculty, and University Staff using clearly defined processes and guidelines so employees and managers can more competently evaluate performance and develop their careers.

Explanation of Example:

The essential metric is whether or not the system is operational by August 1st.

Achievable: Goals should be achievable; they should stretch you slightly so you feel challenged, but defined well enough so that you can achieve them. You must possess the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to achieve the goal.

You can meet most any goal when you plan your steps wisely and establish a timeframe that allows you to carry out those steps. As you carry out the steps, you can achieve goals that may have seemed impossible when you started. On the other hand, if a goal is impossible to achieve, you may not even try to accomplish it. Achievable goals motivate employees. Impossible goals demotivate them.

Example: By August 1, 2009, implement a new performance management system for Classified Staff, A& P Faculty, and University Staff using clearly defined

processes and guidelines so employees and managers can more competently evaluate performance and develop their careers.

Explanation of Example:

In order for you to reach this goal, you must have a skill set, in this case in the area of performance management, that allows you to understand the nature of the goal, and the goal must present a large enough challenge for you to remain interested in and committed to accomplishing it.

Results-focused: Goals should measure outcomes, not activities.

Example: By August 1, 2009, implement a new performance management system for Classified Staff, A& P Faculty, and University Staff using clearly defined processes and guidelines so employees and managers can more competently evaluate performance and develop their careers.

Explanation of Example:

The result of this goal is a process that allows employees and managers to more competently evaluate performance and develop their careers, not the individual activities and actions that occur in order to make the goal a reality.

Time-bound: Goals should be linked to a timeframe that creates a practical sense of urgency, or results in tension between the current reality and the vision of the goal. Without such tension, the goal is unlikely to produce a relevant outcome.

Example: By August 1, 2009, implement a new performance management system for Classified Staff, A& P Faculty, and University Staff using clearly defined processes and guidelines so employees and managers can more competently evaluate performance and develop their careers.

Explanation of Example:

August 1, 2009 provides you with a time-bound deadline.

The concept of writing S.M.A.R.T. goals is very important for accomplishing individual goals, which in turn are linked to department, division, and University goals. It is also critical for ensuring good communication between employees and supervisors so there are no surprises during annual performance evaluations.

The following questionnaire will assist you in creating S.M.A.R.T. goals. Begin by writing your goal as clearly and concisely as possible. Then answer the related questions. Conclude by revising your goal, in the space allotted.

Should you have any questions or require assistance, please contact UHR, Employee Development.

S.M.A.R.T. Goal Questionnaire

Goal:

1. **Specific.** What will the goal accomplish? How and why will it be accomplished?

2. **Measurable.** How will you measure whether or not the goal has been reached (list at least two indicators)?

3. **Achievable.** Is it possible? Have others done it successfully? Do you have the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities, and resources to accomplish the goal? Will meeting the goal challenge you without defeating you?

4. **Results-focused.** What is the reason, purpose, or benefit of accomplishing the goal? What is the result (not activities leading up to the result) of the goal?

5. **Time-bound.** What is the established completion date and does that completion date create a practical sense of urgency?

Revised Goal:

SMART Goals

SPECIFIC

Be very clear in what you want to achieve. Consider breaking the goal down into smaller steps.

MEASURABLE

How will you know when you have achieved your goal? What will you be doing at that time? What will others notice you doing? What will be different? What will you have started or be doing regularly? What will you have stopped or be doing less of?

ACHIEVABLE

Ensure your goals are not too high. Don't set yourself up to fail! Consider setting smaller goals on your way to the big one. Celebrate your successes. If you don't achieve what you set out to, then ask what you could do differently, what would make it more likely to succeed next time?

REALISTIC & RESOURCED

Is this achievable with the resources I have? Are there any other resources you need before you can, or to help you, achieve your goal? How can you access these resources? What problems might you have? What can you do to minimise those problems?

TIME LIMITED

Set a reasonable time limit to achieve your goal. 1 week, 1 month, 6 months, 1 year, 5 years? Consider different (smaller) time limits for smaller steps.

setting goals

MY PRIORITIES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

When I feel like giving up, I will tell myself...

GOAL: _____

Action Steps-

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

DEADLINE: _____

GOAL: _____

Action Steps-

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

DEADLINE: _____

GOAL: _____

Action Steps-

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

DEADLINE: _____

GOAL: _____

Action Steps-

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

DEADLINE: _____

GOAL: _____

Action Steps-

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

DEADLINE: _____

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experiences of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired and success achieved”

Helen Keller



7 AREAS OF LIFE - GOAL WORKSHEET

	SHORT TERM	MEDIUM TERM	LONG TERM
SOCIAL			
FAMILY			
HEALTH			
CAREER			
FINANCIAL			
LEARNING			
CHARACTER			

Further Tips for Setting Your Goals

The following broad guidelines will help you to set effective, achievable goals:

- **State each goal as a positive statement:** Express your goals positively!
 - "Execute this technique well" is much kinder self-talk than "Don't make this stupid mistake."
- **Be precise:** Set precise goals, putting in dates, times and amounts so that you can measure achievement.
 - If you do this, you'll know exactly when you have achieved the goal, and can take complete satisfaction from having achieved it.
- **Set priorities:** When you have several goals, give each a priority.
 - This helps you to avoid feeling overwhelmed by having too many goals and helps to direct your attention to the most important ones.
- **Write goals down:** This crystallizes them and gives them more force.
- **Keep operational goals small:** Keep the low-level goals that you're working towards small and achievable.
 - If a goal is too large, then it can seem that you are not making progress towards it.
 - Keeping goals small and incremental gives more opportunities for reward.
- **Set performance goals, not outcome goals:** Take care to set goals over which you have as much control as possible. It can be quite dispiriting to fail to achieve a personal goal for reasons beyond your control!
- **Set realistic goals:**
 - It's important to set goals that you can achieve. All sorts of people (for example, employers, parents, media, or society) can set unrealistic goals for you. They will often do this in ignorance of your own desires and ambitions.
 - It's also possible to set goals that are too difficult because you might not understand either the obstacles in the way or understand quite how much skill you need to develop to achieve a particular level of performance.