



Writing Effective Goals

Setting goals is an important strategy for developing a plan of action. Think of goal-setting in terms of criteria such as those seen below. To remember the criteria, consider the acronym SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time framed).

1. Specific:

- A. Is easy to understand
- B. Specifies desired future results
- C. Identifies actions to be taken or results to be achieved that will contribute to the achievement of a larger objective within a time period
- D. Uses concrete action verbs

2. Measurable:

- A. Describes how each goal will be measured
- B. Answers the following questions:
 - I. How will I know when the result has been achieved?
 - II. How will I verify the achievement/performance of this goal?
 - III. To what level do I need to achieve this result?
- C. Identifies the quantitative factors involved and sets measures

3. Achievable:

- A. Is realistic
- B. Is within the individual's/unit's/team's control and influence

4. Relevant:

- A. Is in alignment with the mission of the department, unit, or work group/organization
- B. Relates to broader objectives that the department wishes to achieve

5. Time Framed:

- A. There is a specific time frame to achieve this goal (beginning and end date)
- B. May include interim steps and a plan to monitor progress
- C. May establish a time frame for short and long-term goals