



## GOAL WRITING TIPS - INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

Goals are a critical component of your department's ability to realize its strategic direction and achieve success. Your *individual* goals ensure that you and your supervisor agree on the primary areas in which to focus your efforts each year, the results or outcomes you should achieve, and the criteria on which success is measured.

### What is a Goal?

A goal is a **result** that you are expected to accomplish/achieve in your job.

### Where do goals come from?

Each of us has areas of responsibility within our jobs that change little from year to year. The most effective way to determine our individual goals is to first identify these duties and responsibilities found within your job description. Some examples of duties and responsibilities may include the following.

- **Administrative Support:** correspondence, filing, customer service, phone coverage, scheduling, supply maintenance, report generation
- **Systems:** database administration, system analysis and repair, network management, system design, system enhancement, system testing, user support and coaching
- **Administrator:** interdepartmental relations, hiring/staffing, communications, budget, staff management, policy development, strategic planning, customer satisfaction

Other sources of for goals may be derived from:


- **Department Strategic Goals:** Individual goals should support and align with the department's strategic goals.
- **University Strategic Priorities and Drivers:** Individual goals should support and align with the strategic priorities and drivers of the University.

### Types of Goals

There are two types of goals:

- **Activity-based:** These goals focus on tasks or activities.
- **Outcome-based:** These goals focus on results to be achieved.

It is important that you focus on **results** of the goals. This will ensure that your work is measured on the **results** expected in your job. It's not always easy to write results-based goals. The best way to move from activity-based to results-based goals is to ask yourself what you are really trying to achieve. For example:

Activity-based Goal		Outcome-based Goal
Input data for annual report	<b>Why are you doing this?</b> <i>To make sure the annual report is accurate.</i> <b>What is important about your data entry - what do you need to accomplish?</b> <i>It has to be accurate and it has to be done by the end of May.</i>	Ensure accurate entry of data by end of May for annual report

### How to write a goal

Be sure that your goals are clear and achievable. To increase clarity and focus, goals should meet the following (SMART) criteria:

<b>Specific</b>	clearly articulates the desired <b>result</b> you are expected to achieve
<b>Measurable</b>	includes a means (quantity or quality parameters) by which you will know you have succeeded in achieving this goal
<b>Achievable</b>	there is a reasonable chance of completing the goal
<b>Relevant</b>	the goal is in the scope of the employee's job – within their area of influence
<b>Time-bound</b>	there is a clear deadline or schedule identified

The following format can be helpful in constructing a SMART goal:

Action Verb	Results in Measurable Terms	By When
Start with an action verb such as:	Include a measurement that answers questions such as:	Include a date by which by which your goal will be achieved or a time frame such as:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase</li> <li>▪ Decrease</li> <li>▪ Improve</li> <li>▪ Develop</li> <li>▪ Establish</li> <li>▪ Complete</li> <li>▪ Conduct</li> <li>▪ Attain</li> <li>▪ Achieve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How much?</li> <li>▪ How many?</li> <li>▪ How much better?</li> <li>▪ How much faster?</li> <li>▪ Costing how much</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Phase 1 by end of 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter</li> <li>▪ Daily</li> <li>▪ Weekly</li> <li>▪ As scheduled</li> </ul>

### What a goal is not!

Some will write 'goals' such as:

- Improve writing skills
- Attend a workshop in excel
- Achieve certification in . . .

These are not goals (remember: goals define the results you are expected to achieve). These are skills or knowledge that you would like to develop to more effectively achieve the results (goals) of your job. These are "activities" that should be included in the Development Plan section of your Performance Appraisal or actions listed in support of achieving a goal.

### How many goals should you have?

There is no definitive number of goals. Consider that you should have as many goals as necessary to represent at least 80% or more of the work for which you will be responsible to achieve. Most employees have 5-7 goals annually. Some goals may be short-term – achievable rather quickly – and some may be more complex and take the entire performance year to accomplish. Some jobs are more complex and may require more than 5-7 goals.

### Other points about goals to consider:

If you have been in your job for several years and you have demonstrated proficiency in achieving goals, it may be time to consider goals that will enable you to contribute and/or develop in new areas of responsibility. Discuss with your supervisor an opportunity to take on, or contribute to, a project or task for which you are not currently responsible. This would be a "stretch" goal – a way to develop and/or demonstrate new skills or current skills in a different way.

### Goal Definition and Measurement:

Goal Measurement is how you track the progress of the goal. Some items to consider include:

- Progress Tracking Methods – what you will use to track progress, i.e., reports, data
- Sources of Feedback -- from customers, stakeholders, etc.
- Goal/Action Plan -- key milestones that will demonstrate progress

At the start of the fiscal year, be sure to discuss with your supervisor how "success" is defined to avoid areas of potential misunderstanding.

- **More precise definition of terms.** Do you and your supervisor understand and agree to **what** the goal really means? For example, 'What does *completed* mean?' 'What does *accurately* mean?'
- **Tracking Methods.** How will the goal be tracked? When will the goal be formally revisited throughout the year?
- **Who will have input?** Will the goal be evaluated solely by the supervisor or will others have input? How will information be gathered - from formal feedback mechanisms, or via more informal channels? Will feedback be confidential or will the staff member know who gave it?
- **The levels of success.** What if the goal is partially achieved? Is the rating all or nothing? What would constitute a rating of unsatisfactory, development needed, successful, above expectations, or exceptional in a goal?