Guide to Writing S M A R T Goals

What is goal setting?

Goal setting is a process that helps you to define the steps necessary for achieving your goals. All goals should be SMART goals. SMARTgoals help you articulate how your work supports organization priorities by identifying:

- Operational goals, which should align with the priorities of your office/division, and
- Developmental goals, which are identified by self-assessment of the DOE competencies.

Through the goal-setting process, you are able to pinpoint specific professional growth opportunities that will help you to reach your goals for this school year.

What are SMART goals?

A SMART goal is defined as one that is **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound**. Below is a breakdown of each element:

SPECIFIC: Goals should be stated simply with a clear definition of what the goal is, and how and why it will be accomplished.

Example:
By November 30, I will refine the employee feedback cycle (EFC) process for my team by clarifying guidelines so that everyone can more competently engage in EFC conversationsand develop their careers this school year.

Explanation of Example:
- ✓ *"Refine the EFC process for DOE staff" = **what***
- ✓ *"Clarifying guidelines" = **how***
- ✓ *"So that everyone can more competently engage in employee feedback conversations and develop their careers this school year" = **why***

Quick Tips:
Here are some "action words" you might use:

Oversee	Update	Improve	Coordinate
Upgrade	Revamp	Supervise	Develop
Provide	Manage	Create	Maintain
Implement	Support	Evaluate	Produce

MEASURABLE: Goals should be measurable so that it is easy to gauge progress and mark their completion. Usually, the entire goal statement is a measure for the project, but there are usually several short-term or smaller measurements built into the overarching goal.

Example:
By January 30, I will develop and apply upgraded Excel skills that enable me to produce budget reconciliation reports during the first week of each month in a timely and accurate fashion.

Explanation of Example:
- ✓ *"Produce budget reconciliation reports each month" = **short-term measure***
- ✓ *"Develop and apply upgraded Excel skills" = **overarching goal***

Quick Tips:

Here are some typical data types and ways to collect data:

Date Types:	Data Collection Methods:
Quality/accuracy rates	Automated reports
Number or amounts produced	Surveys
Costs reduced	Observation
Time saved	Work products or samples
Customer satisfaction rates	Other documentation

ACHIEVABLE: Goals should be achievable yet challenging; they should stretch the employee slightly but be attainable and clearly defined. Employees must possess the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to achieve the goal.

Example:
By December 10, I will update our standard operating procedures to include more up-to-date details and steps and share it with the team on the Office 365 OneDrive so that everyone has an easy access.

Explanation of Example:
✓ *In order for an employee to reach this goal, they must have a skill set, in this case knowledge of their team's operating procedure. Yet even with this knowledge, this goal gives the employee opportunity for growth through gathering updated information from various team members and learning how to share the updated document on Office 365.*

RELEVANT: Goals should connect to the broader goals of the office/division.

Example:
My direct reports will attain of 85% of their goals due to feedback, coaching, and other support I provided them by the end of the school year.

Explanation of Example:
This goal aligns with the divisional goal of creating a culture of feedback and trust.

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

Example:
By March 30, I will reduce my email response times for parents and school staff members from 72 hours to 48 hours by improving inbox settings.

Explanation of Example:
March 30 provides the employee with a time-bound deadline.

More Examples

Examples of *good* SMART goals:	Examples of *bad* SMART goals:
"By March 30, I will learn new word processing skills such as techniques for formatting long documents and developing databases. To learn these new skills, I will take an advanced Word class and will immediately practice by working on the department instruction manual."	"I want to learn word processing skills"
"I will develop and improve skills and expertise in project management by attending a seminar before December and assuming a lead role in a key initiative or project starting in January."	"I want to improve my project management skills"
"I will read monthly articles distributed at staff meetings and identify three key concepts to be shared and discussed at the following month's staff meeting so that I can develop myself and colleagues while creating a collaborative and learning-oriented culture."	"I want to make our staff meetings more meaningful and productive"

SMART Goal Formula & Checklist

Use this quick SMART goal formula and checklist to make sure your goal is SMART!

SMART Goal Formula

Goal Statement	What Makes it SMART
"I will_____…"	Specific action taken
"In order to_____…"	Measurable, Relevant and Achievable result
"by_____"	Within certain time-bound deadline

SMART Goal Checklist

☐ **(S)** What will be accomplished and what action will you take?

☐ **(S)** Are you using an action verb?

☐ **(M)** Can progress be measured for the goal? Is the progress:

- Numeric or descriptive?
- Quantitative? Qualitative?
- Financial?
- Constrained by time?

☐ **(A)** Is the goal doable?

- Is the goal a "stretch", yet still within my control?
- Do you have the necessary skills and resources?

☐ **(R)** Is the goal aligned with the broader goals of the office/division?

☐ **(R)** What is the reason, purpose, or benefit of accomplishing the goal?

☐ **(T)** Has a reasonable timeframe been identified?

☐ **(T)** Is it necessary to identify interim steps or have place to monitor progress?

Resources

University of Virginia, Department of Human Resources' Goal Setting Resources
Indeed's SMART Goals: Definitions and Examples
Atlassian's How to Write SMART Goals

Contact Us

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