

MyContribution

MyReview MyDevelopment MyCareer

SETTING SMART PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

My Contribution gives you the opportunity to create and agree SMART objectives with your line manager to help you to perform at your best, develop and grow. You will capture these objectives on the online My Contribution forms.

WHY SET OBJECTIVES?

- To understand how our work contributes to the University's strategy and corporate plan
- To provide clarity of priorities and goals
- To provide a mechanism for providing ongoing and year end feedback on performance
- To provide opportunities to recognise achievements and successes

WHAT IS SMART?

SMART is a tool to help us set and agree objectives:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Agreed/ Achievable**
- **Relevant/Realistic**
- **Time Bound**

As individual objectives cascade from the University's strategic objectives, SMART objectives provide you with direction and ensure that you focus on the right things for the coming performance year.

They will help your manager provide you with specific feedback on how you are progressing towards achieving your objectives, and identify any additional support you may need throughout the performance year. SMART objectives will provide a firm basis for your manager to measure and rate your individual performance at your end of year review.



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SMART OBJECTIVES - AND HOW TO WRITE THEM

You will create your objectives with support and guidance from your line manager and, once agreed, you will record them on your online My Contribution My Review form.

When drafting and discussing your objectives, it may be helpful to consider (if the information is available):

- What are the School/Department strategic objectives in the context of your team/role and grade?
- What are the emerging key issues for the School/Department that may affect your work over the coming period?
- Are there programme or process changes that can help the School/Department meet its objectives?
- What improvements could be made to the quality of service or deliverables?

The aim is to set **SMART** objectives:

(S)PECIFIC –being clear and unambiguous about what result you want to see, and often what you want to be different to what is happening currently. **S** is about describing every detail of the change you want to see. It is about mapping out a vision of the future that is inspiring and that you want to achieve.

More importantly, if your objective is to motivate you, you need to understand **why** it is important (not just because it is on the plan!) and what difference your performance will make. If this is not obvious then discuss it with your manager.

In creating and discussing your objectives, consider:

- Replacing ambiguous/ general wording with specific language that creates a common understanding.
- Would someone else from the team have the same understanding of the objective?
- Is your role clear?
- What is expected?
- What is the expected result?
- Why is it important?
- Who is going to do what?
- Who else needs to be involved?

(M)EASURABLE – Is about knowing when you have achieved the goal. To be able to measure your performance and identify any support or development you need, you need a combination of **Input** and **Output** measures.

- **Outputs** - are hard measures i.e. results – were they achieved or not?

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However, if you want to develop performance you need to understand the...

- **Inputs** – they are the ingredients that make up outstanding performance. What do you need to do to get the results? This will help you have meaningful conversations throughout the year on how you are performing and any additional support you may need.

Each objective must have a measurable and verifiable outcome to show how well you have achieved the objective. This may be descriptive of quantity and /or quality. Detail this in a clear and specific way.

Results need to be measurable so that it can be decided, without argument, whether the desired result has been achieved. Sometimes measurement can be easy using:

- Quantity – for example numbers, completion rates, income, cost or
- Quality – for example by levels of accuracy or a defined measurable standard

In creating and discussing your objectives, consider:

- What will indicate that the objective has been achieved?
- What will it look like?
- What will / won't be happening?
- What will have changed?
- What evidence will be provided to show the objective has been met?
- What mechanisms are in place to measure results?

(A)CHIEVABLE/AGREED – If you want the objective to motivate you, then it is important that it is achievable but stretching. Most of us are motivated by achievement, so a goal needs to stretch you to be able to reach it. If a goal is too easy, the motivational impact will be nil or even negative. However, it shouldn't be too difficult so you can never achieve your goal. Achieving a stretching goal will help to build your confidence.

This will require an honest conversation with your manager to reach agreement on what is achievable and stretching for you.

Tip- To check agreement it is worth asking two questions

1. On a scale of 1-10 how motivated are you to achieve this objective?
2. On a scale of 1-10 how confident are you to achieve this objective?

If the answer to either of those questions is lower than 8, then you have to raise your concerns with your line manager and discuss what additional support you may need e.g. coaching.

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In creating and discussing your objectives, consider:

- Can it be achieved in the time set?
- What resources are available? Can it be achieved with the resources available?
- Is there support for this to be done?
- Is the objective a priority?
- Is it within your capabilities but also challenging?

(R)EALISTIC/RELEVANT – Realistic is closely linked to achievable. This is about honestly considering whether the objective is realistic and exploring things that make achieving the objective difficult or unrealistic (for example, if the resource requirement to achieve it outweighs the benefits etc.).

Relevant – is ensuring that the objective aligns to school or department plans which in turn form part of the strategic theme and/or the academic framework.

In creating and discussing your objectives, consider:

- How your performance in this area relates to what the School/ Department is trying to achieve?
- How does this objective fit within the context of your role?
- What would be the impact if this objective wasn't achieved?
- Is the objective challenging and relevant to your role and grade?
- Do you have the relevant skills?
- Can the objective be achieved with the resources available?

(T)IME BOUND – We all work best when we have a deadline. It motivates us and creates a sense of urgency around completion. Without a deadline, goals have a habit of slipping. Set review dates before actual required deadline as this gives you a chance to discuss possible alterations if required.

If objectives stretch more than an academic year, then make sure you capture what elements of the overall objective will be delivered in that year.

In creating and discussing objectives, consider:

- When will you accomplish this objective?
- Is another objective contingent on the completion of this objective?
- Is there a stated deadline?
- If the objective stretches further than 12 months, then make sure you capture what exactly you are going to achieve within the academic year to help with the success of the overall target.