How to Set Objectives

Each individual is responsible for setting **at least three** work objectives and **at least one** development goal for the year. At the end of the year, all goals and objectives will form the basis of the individual's performance review.

Work Objectives

Work objectives (also referred to as Annual Goals) are *job-oriented*. It is important to ensure that work objectives are not simply day-to-day activities that are a "given" within your job description. Objectives should be:

- Incremental projects, responsibilities or actions that support key operational initiatives
- Linked to strategic goals
- Aligned with department/division objectives, KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) or project team objectives
- Provide a clear opportunity to recognize and reward
- Have high-impact, i.e., adds value
- Have specific outcomes/results that represent meaningful progress in improving processes, creating efficiencies, improving customer service

Development Goals

Development goals are *learning-oriented*. They capture the skills, knowledge and experiences that support the growth and development of the individual for success in their current role and to prepare them for future positions.

A development goal should not simply be to attend a workshop or take a course. It should be targeted to acquiring a new skill or competency (i.e., project management, HTML programming, conflict resolution) that is required to successfully meet the individual's work objectives. Keep in mind that the most effective development goals are clearly linked to work objectives and provide an opportunity to practically apply the new skill/ knowledge area(s).

Setting SMART Objectives

Objectives should follow the SMART criteria, which is a way to write goals so that they are clear and focused on what is important and achieve desired results. The acronym in SMART stands for:

- ➢ **Specific** - What do you want to accomplish? Be to the point and behavioral in nature.
- ➢ **Measurable** – How will you demonstrate and evaluate the extent to which the objective has been met? Provide characteristics that will define successful achievement.
- ➢ **Attainable –** Is it achievable and possible to attain? Should be a slight stretch to feel challenged but defined well enough so that it can be achieved. "Just out of reach, but not out of sight"
- ➢ **Relevant** – How does the objective tie into your key responsibilities? Is it truly worth taking on? Is it of value?
- ➢ **Time Bound** – By when should it be completed? Clearly identify the time elements.

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Questions to Ask- Is this objective "SMART"?

CRITERIA	QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOURSELF
S Specific	What are the specific details of what is to be achieved and how it will be achieved (action plan)? What is the desired result? What will the customer experience? Does the objective include an "object"? an "active verb"?
M Measurable	What are the quantifiable, concrete results that will evaluate whether or not the objective has been met? Have I clearly defined what the overall benefit will be?
A Attainable	Are the necessary tools, information, and other resources available to enable me to meet this objective? Are new skills/knowledge required?
R Relevant	What is the value-added impact to McMaster, customers, department, colleagues, or other key stakeholders in achieving this objective?
T Time Bound	Are the due dates clear to everyone involved? Does the time element allow/facilitate measurement of ongoing progress?

Be 'SMART' about Your SMART OBJECTIVES

- Monitor progress throughout the year. Will the objective be completed within allotted timeframe? (T – Time Bound criteria).

- Recognize if new/special efforts must be made or additional resources are needed.

- Address unexpected challenges when they occur i.e. resourcing issues, legislative changes, etc. (A – Attainable criteria).

- How important is it to maintain the measurable targets (i.e. budget, time) that were initially set if additional criteria, action items are now required? Will quality be compromised? (M – Measurable criteria)

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Process of Defining Objectives

Objective Description	Action Plan	Measures of Success	Actual Results
THE "WHAT" Clearly outline what you are trying to accomplish with your objective. Use action-oriented words. Describe what you are trying to achieve.	THE "HOW" Outline the key action steps, plan or strategy that you will need to undertake to reach your goal. Be specific, i.e., create a new process, solicit customer feedback, review new requirements. A detailed action plan helps you to manage progress.	"MEASURE/WHEN" The measure of success is what you and your Manager will use to track progress. What does success look like? When will the goal be accomplished? In this section you can also define Outstanding or Achieving performance.	What was actually achieved?

Types of Measurements:

- ➤ **Quality -** i.e., increased customer/student satisfaction, response time decreased by 20%
- ➤ **Quantity** - is represented by a number (i.e., process 50 more new hires per pay)
- ➤ **Cost** - represented by currency or percentage (i.e., reduces administrative costs by 10%)
- ➤ **Timeliness** - represented by a number, day, month, time of day (i.e., schedules, deadlines)

Example:

Objective Description	Action Plan	Measures of Success
Reduce Department printing costs by 10% by end of budget year 2015/16 so that funds can be re-allocated towards projects focused on improving the student experience	Review current users of printing services Review current paper supplier against alternate suppliers and determine cost savings Review copier service contracts and meet with service supplier to review alternatives Meet with departmental administrative staff to brainstorm ideas	Costs will be reduced through a number of strategies: • Areas of potential cost-recovery identified (e.g., faculty research photocopying, research centres, students) • Alternate paper suppliers are identified that provide a cost-saving • Trade-in older photocopiers for newer models that will provide greater efficiency overall

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