

Goal setting your way to academic success

Without goals, and plans to reach them, you are like a ship that has set sail with no destination. Fitzhugh Dodson

Goals are powerful, precise statements about your intentions. They are motivated by plans, dreams and desires, powered by discipline and maintained through commitment.

When it comes to university studies we know that successful students routinely set achievable academic goals. Goal setting focuses the mind, forces you to be specific, and requires that you learn to prioritise, manage your time and make a commitment to completing tasks.

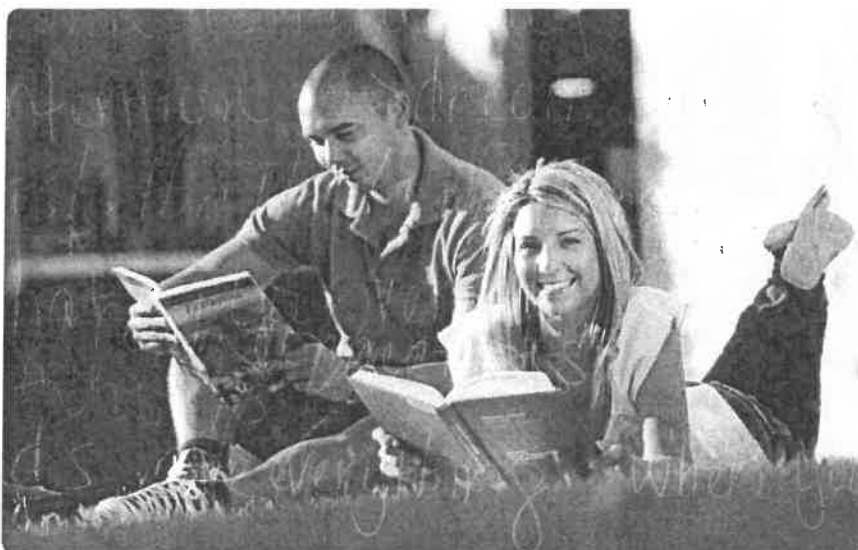
During the course of your studies you may encounter procrastination, low motivation, ill health, personal problems, anxiety, depression and self-doubt. In fact, many issues can get in the way of your personal and academic progress. However, applying the basic strategies of establishing realistic goals, prioritising tasks, and setting achievable timeframes can be very useful in getting you back on track.

Successfully achieving your goals will contribute positively to your sense of effectiveness as a student, boost your confidence and encourage you to keep achieving.



Blueprint for weekly goal setting

- STEP 1** **Commit** a set time each week to relax in a quiet setting and consider the study goals you would like to achieve over the coming week.
- STEP 2** **Write goals down** as they come to you. Once completed, rewrite them in order of priority eg a) must do, b) important, and c) less important. Make sure that your goals are specific, achievable, measurable and time limited.
- STEP 3** **Break down** large goals into smaller, more manageable tasks that can be achieved in short time frames. Creating daily 'To Do' lists is a great way of doing this.
- STEP 4** **Time manage** your goals by setting achievable deadlines. This focuses your attention, concentration and creative energies. Make sure that you only work on one goal at a time and cross off each goal from your list as you complete it. Use a diary to help organize your time.
- STEP 5** **Evaluate** your progress towards your goals regularly and positively. Adopt a positive, optimistic attitude and consider your progress in terms of what you **have** achieved, rather than how much is left to do. Use positive self-talk and words of encouragement to keep achieving.
- STEP 6** **Commitment, persistence and self discipline** are the values upon which the achievement of your goals rest. Resolve to never, never, never give up—even when you hit setbacks. Remember, quitters never win and winners never quit.
- STEP 7** **Reward yourself** regularly to celebrate your successful achievements along the way. This will allow you to have breaks and enjoy periods of positivity while you work.



Quotable quotes

Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment. Jim Rohn

You can't hit a six if you don't step up to bat, you can't paint a canvas if you don't pick up a brush and you can't achieve your goals if you don't try. Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act.

There is no other route to success. Stephen A. Brennan

The most important thing about motivation is goal setting. You should always have a goal. Francie Larriue Smith

Make SMART Goals

- What do you want?
- Break it down from a long term goal into smaller chunks
- Make a list of things to do to achieve the goal

Is your goal Specific?

Is it Measurable?

Is it Achievable?

Is it Realistic?

Is it Timely?

Goal:

Sub Goal:

Sub Goal:

To Do List:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

S → SPECIFIC

What specific strategies are you going to use to achieve the goal? What is it, how much/how often...

Ex. I will get an A in my history class by completing all reading before class, meeting with the professor weekly to review my notes, using the library resources to help with research on my papers, completing papers at least 1 week ahead of time in order to leave myself time to have my paper reviewed in the Writing Center.

M → MEASURABLE

How will you know your progress to completing your goal? What will you do/use to know your progress? The more vague your goal, the less you'll envision them

HINT Consider using midterm grades or making a smaller goal of what you will earn on each individual assignment if your goal is in regards to your grade.

A → ATTAINABLE

How are you going to achieve the goal? What resources are you using to make this goal achievable? Goals should push you, but they also must be achievable. Challenge yourself, but not so much that you become overwhelmed. Challenge =growth, growth=change, strategic

This ties in to how specific it is, but relies more on you. If you have struggled with biology before, is it attainable for you to say that you're going to get an A in your biology class by studying a lot and doing your reading? What makes it attainable is using other resources

R → REALISTIC

Are your goals realistic and relevant to you? Does the goal challenge you, yet allow you to succeed based on your skills? Is the goal realistic in the timeframe, or as a starting goal (your goal is not good to say I will run a marathon next week. However if the goal is to do it in 6 months, and you set up smaller goals to reach that goal- then it is realistic. And do you have the skills? what are you willing to work toward, has this worked in the past?

Ex. If you are a junior with a 2.5 cumulative GPA, it is not realistic to set a goal of having a cumulative 3.0 GPA at the end of the current semester. Mathematically it's not possible.

T → TIMELY

Does your goal state the exact time of when accomplished? Too much time can lead to boredom and abandonment of goals.

If you don't set a time frame, it allows you an escape hatch; "I will have a cumulative 3.0 GPA" 3 months later ... "I still have a 2.7 cumulative GPA, it's okay, I'll reach my goal another semester". Deadlines motivate.