

MANCHESTER
1824

The University of Manchester

How to write **SMART** Goals

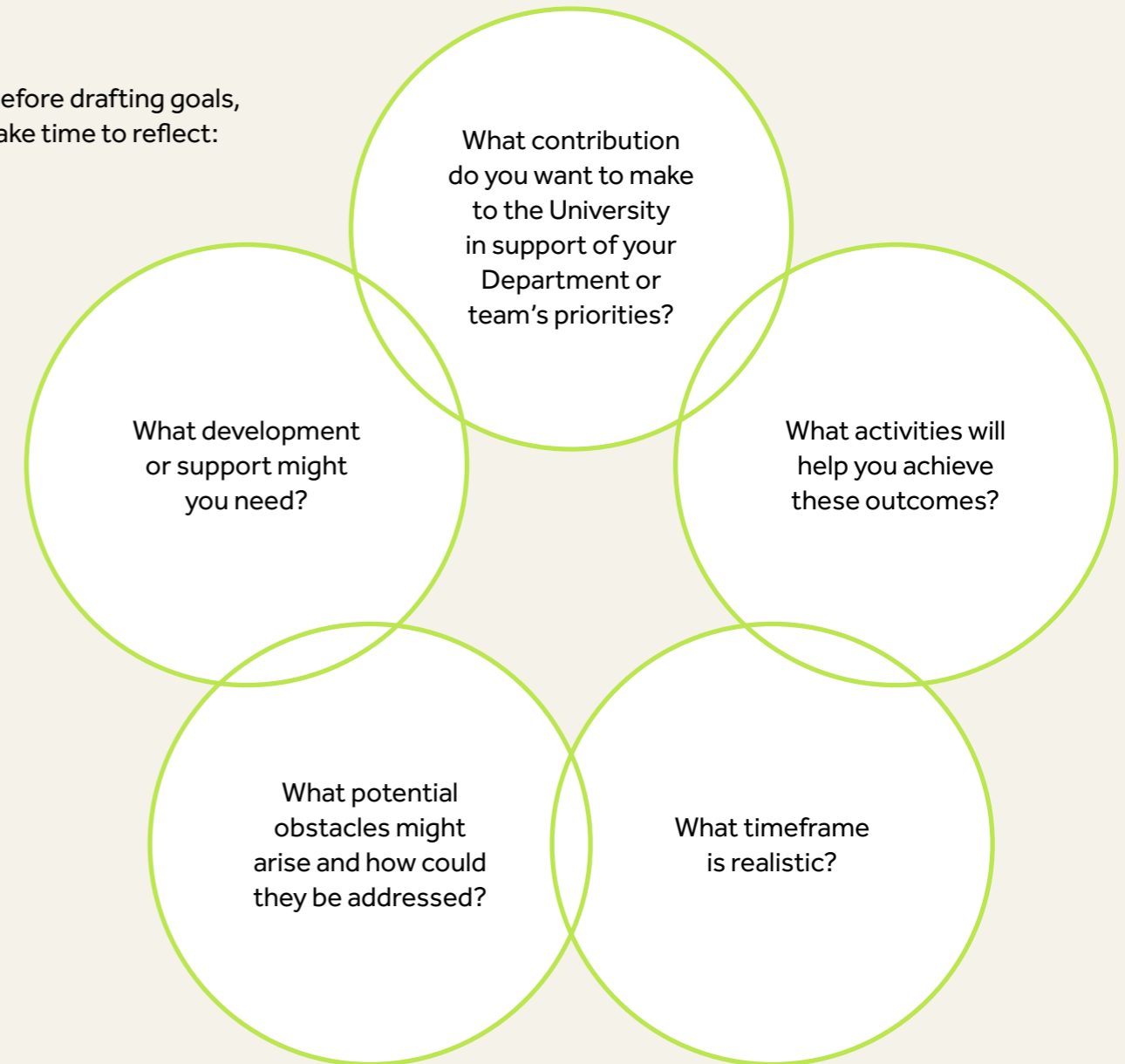


Clear goals link strategy, priorities and targets to measures of success. They outline what each individual needs to deliver within an agreed timeframe and they strengthen accountability.

When setting goals, focus on identifying meaningful outcomes supported by an appropriate development plan. Goals should be agreed formally, recorded and reviewed throughout the year as priorities or requirements evolve.

Preparing to set your goals

Before drafting goals, take time to reflect:



Drafting effective goals

Goals are statements describing what you want to achieve. Focus on the desired outcome rather than the process. Avoid unnecessary phrases such as 'ensure that' or 'as far as possible'. Your role, responsibilities and team priorities should guide your goals.

The SMART framework

Using the SMART framework can help ensure clarity and effectiveness.

S Specific and stretching

Goals should be clear and unambiguous.

Ask:

- Who is involved?
- What needs to be achieved?
- Where and when will it happen?
- Why is it important?

A strong goal clearly states what will be delivered, identifies who's involved, uses plain language and describes defined outcomes.

Use action verbs such as: increase, establish, create, reduce, design, implement, produce, perform, plan, investigate, complete.

M Measurable

You should be able to demonstrate evidence of achievement.

Consider:

- How will I know the objective has been achieved?
- What indicators will I use?
- Can the measurement realistically be obtained?

If progress cannot be measured in practice, it will be difficult to manage.

A Achievable and agreed

Goals must be realistic and formally agreed.

Consider:

- It is possible in principle?
- Do I have (or can I develop) the required skills?
- Are resources available?
- Have the risks been considered?
- Is it aligned with current priorities?

If something depends on earlier steps, consider staging it in phased objectives.

R Realistic and relevant

A goal may be achievable but still not relevant.

Check that it:

- Links to team and departmental objectives.
- Contributes to the University's strategy.

If it does not add clear value, reconsider whether it should be included.

T Time-scaled

Every goal must include a timeframe, milestones or deadlines which help to:

- Create focus.
- Support progress.
- Strengthen accountability.
- Remain realistic and achievable.

Without a timeframe, a goal cannot be properly assessed.

Examples of SMART goals

Performance objectives

Identify and present at least two work process improvements with quantifiable, operational or financial benefits by the end of Q2.

Submit a grant application every X months until successful and take on the role of a Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator for a major grant of £X by X date.

Update and coordinate new module content due to staff changes and student/Internal Peer Review feedback by X date, and deliver Faculty training on module organisation.

Take over line management of research staff, introduce revised working practices and identify training needs.

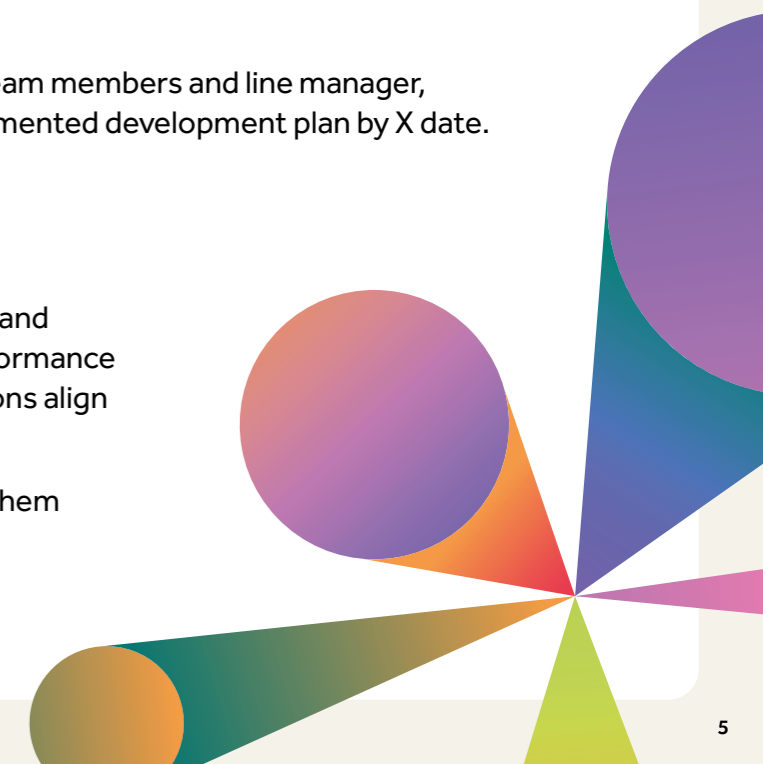
Development objective

Gather feedback on communication skills from all team members and line manager, identify areas for improvement and produce a documented development plan by X date.

Reviewing your goals

Well-written SMART goals make expectations clear and success measurable. They support meaningful performance conversations and help ensure individual contributions align with team and University priorities.

Take time to review your goals regularly and adjust them through ongoing discussion with your line manager.



From Manchester
for the world

