

SMART Goals Planning Worksheet

As leaders in your student organizations, you might sometimes feel overwhelmed by the abundance of plans, ideas, and tasks that you must balance to achieve your goals. In this worksheet, we offer a helpful tool for clarifying your ideas, focusing your efforts, and setting a concrete plan for success. This tool, **SMART Goals**, brings structure and trackability to your goal-setting and increases your chances of achieving your goals! In this worksheet, you will learn about the SMART Goals system, explore examples of effective SMART goals, and practice creating your own SMART Goals for your SUNY Orange student organization.

A **SMART Goal** is a carefully planned, clear, and trackable objective. SMART is an acronym, which stands for Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely.

In this section, we will outline each piece of the “SMART” acronym and pose questions that you can consider as you plan for your own SMART goals. Following each section, we will explore an example of a student organization goal that is “SMART” and two goals that miss the “SMART” mark.

S – Specific

Goals should be straightforward and emphasize what you want to happen. Specifics help us to *focus our efforts* and *clearly define what we are going to do*. Specific is the what, why, and how of the SMART model:

- WHAT are you going to do? Use action words such as plan, organize, coordinate, lead, develop, etc.
- WHY is this important to do at this time? What do you want to ultimately accomplish?
- HOW are you going to do it? (by...)

Ensure the goal you set is very *specific, clear, and simple*.

Example goal: Recruit more members.

More specific: Encourage first-year and second-year students to join our organization.

Most specific: **Add first-year and second-year students to our listserv/social media page to keep them up to date on our organization.**

Notice how the most specific goal indicates precisely how recruitment will take place: aim for that level of specificity in your goals by outlining the action that you need to take to accomplish a given task.

M – Measurable

If you can't measure it, you can't manage it. In the broadest sense, the whole goal statement should be a measure for the projects; if the goal is accomplished then it is a success. However, there are usually several short-term or small measurements that can be built into the goal.

Choose a goal with measurable progress, *so you see change occur & will know when you reach your goal.*

Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs you on to continued effort required to reach your goals.

- Ask yourself: What methods will I use to measure my progress? Consider using a digital calendar, monthly planner, or a bullet journal to keep track of your progress you have made on your goals.

Measurable goals also are characterized by a clear sense of the concepts that are being measured. For example, in the goal below to “Increase Marketing,” it might be worthwhile to ask yourself what is meant by “Marketing.” Does marketing involve sending a newsletter? Posting flyers? Social media?

As you clarify concepts that are being measured in your goal, also strive for clarity in the adjectives that you use within your goals. If your goal is to host a “productive” meeting, ask yourself “what does productivity look like? How can we measure our productivity? How do we define productive?”

Strive for clarity & measurability of concepts in your goal to ensure all org members are on the same page.

Example goal: Increase marketing.

More measurable: Reach out to other student organizations on social media.

Most measurable: Post at least once a week on Instagram and tag 10 student organizations.

Example goal: Host more productive meetings..

More measurable: Host a productive meeting every other week on Thursday during fall semester.

Most measurable: Host a meeting every other week on Thursday during fall semester during which we complete all of the items on our agenda.

Notice how the most measurable goals define their strategies and clarify what is meant by “marketing” and “productive.” Strive to define your own strategies and key concepts as you write measurable goals.

A – Attainable

When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked *opportunities* to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals.

It is important to remember that you probably won’t commit to goals that are too far out of your reach. Although you may start with the best intentions, the knowledge that it’s too much for you means your subconscious will keep reminding you of this fact and will stop you from giving it your best.

The feeling of success helps you remain motivated.

Example goal: Donate \$1,000 to our philanthropy.

More attainable: Determine a fundraising goal and plan five events to meet that goal.

Most attainable: **Talk with our philanthropic partners about what they need and work with them to coordinate 1 focused initiative that is mutually beneficial.**

Notice how the most attainable goal maintains the specificity & measurability discussed before, while also ensuring that the goal can be achieved through available avenues without taking on too much or too little.

R – Relevant

*We can think of relevant goals as goals that are worth doing. **Relevant goals** align with the goals, mission, and purpose of your organization & institution. Consider the context of SUNY Orange, your student organization, and the resources that are available to you as you begin to plan goals that are attainable & relevant.*

As you plan relevant goals, it is helpful to think about the state of your organization and what might be possible/impossible when considering your team structure, context, and mission.

For example, is it relevant to host 10 beach day events during the semester if your club is focused on professional development? If you feel that a goal is not as relevant to your organization as it should be, consider **brainstorming with your student organization** about how that goal can be made more relevant. How can your goal meet the needs of your members? What should your collective energy be dedicated to?

Adjust your goals to match the context & mission of your student organization so that you can dedicate your effort toward a shared purpose that aligns with your organization.

R – Relevant

In the following example, imagine that a student organization dedicated to hiking sets the goal below.

Example goal: Host an event on basic culinary skills to help members of our organization become more self-sufficient in the kitchen.

When creating SMART goals, this hiking student organization might want to re-evaluate this goal to ensure that it is relevant to their organization. To evaluate if a goal is relevant, ask yourself:

- How does this goal connect to the mission or purpose of my organization?
- What is my intention behind setting this goal/hosting this event?
- Do I have access to the resources/knowledge to achieve this goal?
- What do my members have to gain from our organization achieving this goal?
- Does this potential gain align with the values of my organization?
- Would my energy and effort be better spent focusing on a different goal?
- Can this goal be redirected to align with our mission with some adjustments?

In this example, the hiking club might realize that the event on basic culinary skills is not as relevant as they had originally thought. Perhaps in discussing this goal, the club members realize that their **actual intention behind the goal** was for hiking club members to know how to prepare nutritious food to fuel their hikes. After brainstorming to redirect this goal, the club proposes the following revised goal:

More realistic/relevant: Host student-led cooking classes every week to teach hiking club members how to prepare nutritious food to fuel their hikes.

However, reflecting on this goal, the club realizes that they do not know students who can teach cooking classes, and some members mention that they lack the energy to attend these weekly cooking classes.

The club revises their goal again to realistically reflect their club's mission & resources, effectively redirecting their efforts toward a thoughtful, realistic goal that meets the needs of their members.

Most realistic/relevant: Host a recipe-swap event twice a semester for hiking members to voluntarily share nutritious recipes and eat together before going on a hike at Bear Mountain.

T – Timely

Most importantly, you should set a timeframe for the goal: for next week, in three months, by your senior year. Putting an end point on your goal gives you a *clear target* to work towards. If you don't set a time, the commitment is too vague. Vague commitments tend not to happen because you feel you can start at any time. Without a time limit, there's no urgency to start taking action now, reducing your chance of success.

Remember that time-frames must also be measurable, attainable, and realistic. Too short or too long of a timeframe will make your goal less attainable and realistic.

Example goal: Connect current org members with alumni of the organization.

More timely: Contact alumni before the end of the semester.

Most timely: Create a list of alumni this month, send all alumni an invitational email next month, and schedule an alumni-student networking event for September of next semester.



SMART GOAL SETTING

SMART GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET

Now that you have become familiar with the SMART Goals system, in the following section, you can practice creating your own SMART Goals for your student organization. Refer to the examples in the section above to reflect on the specificity, measurability, achievability, relevance, and timeliness of your goals!

As you work through the following page, continue to ask yourself:

- Can this goal be framed more specifically?
- Do I have a measurement to track my progress?
- Why do I want to achieve these objectives? Are these objectives attainable?
- Is the timeline of my goal realistic and attainable?
- What resources might I need to accomplish this goal?
- Who in my organization might be able to help me achieve this goal?

Use this page as a template to plan your student organization's goals. Write your intended goal underneath the image below, and use the SMART acronym to make your goal more specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, relevant, and timely. At the bottom of page two, take the brainstorming and improvements from each section to re-write your goal as a SMART goal. You can use this page for short-term goals, semester long planning, yearly planning, or even as personal goal-setting worksheets for your org's members!



Student Club Goal:

Specific (add notes on specifics of this goal, what will be done, how it will be done, etc.)

Measurable (add notes on measurability: what do you mean by key concepts in your goal, how will you track your progress, what steps will need to be taken and by whom, etc.)

Attainable (add notes on attainability: what resources will you need to achieve this goal, is this goal possible in the context of your organization, why is this goal worth attaining, etc.)

Realistic/Relevant (add notes on realism/relevance: how is this goal relevant to your club's mission/the college mission, how "do-able" is this goal & is this goal worth doing, etc.)

Timely (add notes on timeframe: when do you plan to achieve this goal by, what steps will you take along the way to achieve this goal by your deadline, is the deadline realistic, etc.)

Using your notes above, revise your original goal and create a SMART Goal here:



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