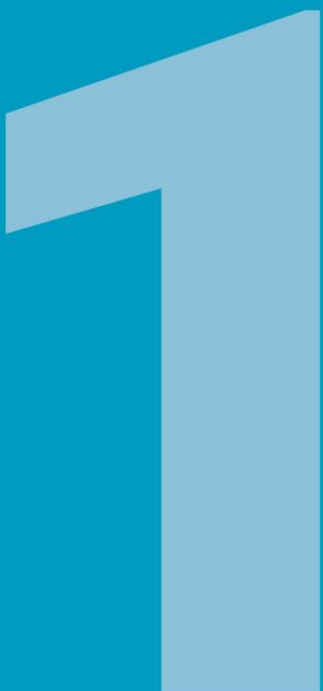
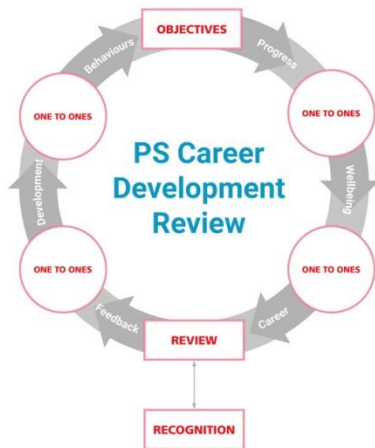


How to set objectives

Guidance for professional
services staff and managers





1. Introduction: why set objectives?

The idea of 'objectives' isn't a new one: after all, many of us often set ourselves objectives in our personal lives.

Within the School, objectives (or performance standards as they are sometimes called) are one of the key components of the Career Development Review scheme (CDR).

Objectives are a key part of making a role productive and meaningful, including for the individual in that role (the reviewee).

In particular:

- They help to clarify expectations and provide a basis for tracking progress
- They're really helpful for providing focus to a reviewee's learning and development, both personal and professional
- They're a useful tool for managers to identify what is being done, by whom, by when

2. How to set objectives

When setting objectives, you will want to consider:

- The reviewee's job description
- Your department's plans
- LSE 2030

Reviewees are encouraged to identify their own objectives and agree them with their manager as part of the CDR process. This means that, whilst the following guidance takes you through how you set objectives as a manager, you should always make sure that the final version of the objectives is discussed and agreed with the reviewee.



3. Set SMART objectives

SMART is a useful acronym which describes the different elements required for useful objectives. SMART stands for:

- S–Specific
- M–Measurable
- A–Achievable
- R–Relevant
- T–Time-bound

When setting SMART objectives, it's very important to be clear about what needs to be achieved. The following steps will take you through how to do this.

Step One

SMART objectives can be set in a number of different ways. One method is to start by identifying what needs to be done to achieve the objectives of the department *and* the team for the coming year. If you aren't sure what the department's objectives or priorities are, now is the time to find out!

For example: you may be a manager in a professional services area and you are looking at ways to improve the student experience as one of your objectives or priorities. What do you need the staff you manage to achieve? Is it the introduction of new processes/procedures in order to improve the service given to either students directly or academic departments? Is it maintaining a certain (high) level of service to students/staff over a period of time?

When setting SMART objectives, wherever you are within the organisation and whatever your role, you will need to have as much clarity as possible about what you want or need to achieve.

Using the space below, write down what your area/team objectives or priorities are for the coming year. If you don't know what they are then you will need to find out!

Step Two

Once you've identified what needs to be achieved and written this in the box above, you then apply the SMART criteria. You may find it helpful to do this on a separate sheet of paper. For example, SMART objectives for an administrator might look like this.

Specific

Reduce the amount of time it takes to respond to requests for information from academic departments.

What reduction are you aiming for?

What do you mean by 'respond to'?

Do you really mean all requests from academic departments for information or just a particular area?

Measurable

What measures are you going to use?

How will you know when the objective has been achieved?

In the example of an administrator given above, a measurable objective might be: "Ensure that all requests for information from academic departments are addressed within three working days by October 2021".

Achievable

This is where you need to consider the context in which you're setting the objective(s), especially the capacity of the reviewee – this is something that they will be able to do? In this context, 'capacity' means both the reviewee's abilities in the role and the resources available to them.

It may be that the reviewee will benefit from extra support (such additional training/development) in order to achieve the objective(s).

Relevant

Double check that what you are crafting reflects both what is needed for the department and fits with the expectations of the individual as described in their job summary / job description.

Time-bound

Is there a timeframe for the objective(s), i.e. by when does the work need to be completed? When will it be measured and will the information be available then?



Using a separate piece of paper, look at the statement(s) that you have written in step one and apply the SMART criteria to them.

The approach described in steps one and two means that you will go back to your original statement several times and will end up re-writing it possibly more than once. Only stop re-writing the objective once you and the reviewee are happy that you both understand what is written and what it means.

4. Hints and tips

- Focus on what you need to achieve – avoid writing objectives that describe what is going to be done.
- Keep objectives under review throughout the year – reflect as relevant at one-to-ones.
- Objectives should reflect the level and range of responsibilities that an individual has.
- Objectives can be challenging and aim to achieve positive outcomes.
- A useful objective is one which describes to everyone who might read the objective what is expected.

5. One Simple Thing

Alongside objectives, you can also help the individual to identify **"One simple thing"**. This is an action/activity that is easy to undertake and can be done regularly. You can agree to do **"One simple thing"** for a range of areas, including:

- Creating an inclusive environment for colleagues
- Supporting their own and colleagues' wellbeing
- Developing themselves and their career

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