



Study Skills Workshop: Goal Setting and Time Management

[Career Services/Academic Advising](#), Student Life

For more information/questions

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

SMART Goal Setting

Specific

Measurable

Attainable

Realistic

Timely

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**.

Measurable

If you can't measure it, you can't manage it. In the broadest sense, the whole goal statement is a measure for the project. There are usually several short-term or small measurements that can be built into the goal.

Choose a goal with measurable progress, so you can see the change occur. How will you see when you reach your goal? Be specific! "I want to increase my reading speed and retention by skimming 3 chapters or articles per week." "I want to be a good reader" is not as easily measured.

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.

Attainable and Realistic

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. A goal that requires you to stretch is desirable, yet a goal that is too far out of your reach may discourage you. Set the bar high enough for a satisfying achievement but make sure that the goal is "do-able."

Timely

Set a timeframe for the goal and review it regularly, monitoring the steps you have achieved along the way.

Other Tips

IDENTIFY 1) the obstacles you will need to overcome, 2) the help you will need to acquire, e.g. knowledge, people, organizations. In each case write them out in a clear list and analyze them.

CONSIDER the rewards of achieving your goal? Develop a desire to achieve the goal. The desire must be intense. How do you intensify desire? Sit down and write out all the benefits and advantages of achieving your goal. Once the list goes between 50 and 100 your goal becomes unstoppable.

VISUALIZE success. Get a clear mental picture of the goal already accomplished. Make the mental image crystal clear, vivid in the mind's eye. Play that picture over and over in your mind.

WRITE your goal down. A written goal becomes substantial and etches itself into your subconscious. As you reflect on your goal, the brain focuses more intently and you become aware of related matters and needed resources which are important in the realization of the goal. Setting personal goals creates heightened awareness.

Motivation and Goal Setting Worksheet

<http://www.coun.uvic.ca/learning/motivation/goals.html>

1. What are your lifetime goals?

2. What are your goals for the next three to five years?

3. What are your major goals for next year?

4. What are the things you need to do in order to accomplish this year's goals?

5. Now list the things you will do this week, and the things you will do today that relate to your goals for this year. These may be specific course assignments, talking to your professor, or opportunities for starting some volunteer work. Then add anything else to this list that you want to accomplish during the day or week. (laundry, shopping, letter writing, etc.) You now have a "to do" list!

To-Do List

6. Now ask yourself which of these activities you really enjoy doing. Which do you find a drag? Which do you avoid doing at all? How many of the things that are "a drag" relate to your lifetime goals? If you find that much of your course work at university is "a drag," check below for ways to make these subjects more interesting.

7. What are the consequences of achieving these goals? (e.g. How will I feel? What are the rewards? What will others think of me?) Some consequences will come from outside you (extrinsic) while others come from within (intrinsic). Go back and note the consequences for each goal. Are there ways to supplement the consequences to heighten your motivation?

While we are on consequences, keep in mind that some consequences are pleasurable and others are aversive. While aversive consequences can be very motivating for escape and avoidance, pleasurable ones are more helpful for building positive behaviors.

Consequences can be immediate or delayed. Consequences serve as more effective motivators if they are immediate.

Extrinsic

money
marks
praise
fame

Pleasurable

money
marks
praise

Immediate

coffee breaks
free to socialize
feel good

Intrinsic

mastery
self-actualization
joy from doing a good job

Aversive

escape from failure
avoiding criticism
stopping ridicule

Delayed

scholarship
acceptance into a co-op program
parents/spouse will be happy

Where Does Time Go?

There are 168 hours in the week. To assess where your time goes, complete the inventory below. Use the miscellaneous category for any activity that may not be included in the chart. Make sure you account for all your activity

Activity	Hours per week
SLEEP	
GROOMING	
MEALS (including preparation, eating, & clean-up)	
COMMUTING (to school and/or work)	
TIME IN CLASS	
TIME AT WORK	
ERRANDS	
TAKING CARE OF FAMILY MEMBERS	
HOUSEHOLD CHORES	
RECREATION	
MISCELLANEOUS	
TOTAL	

Subtract your total from 168. This balance is the number of hours that remains for studying.

My balance is _____ hours.

Making Your Schedule Work

Source: http://www.ucc.vt.edu/academic_support_students/study_skills_information/index.html

Here are some strategies that you may find helpful if your schedule is not working as efficiently or effectively as you would like. When trying any new strategy, it is important to practice it regularly and to practice it long enough so that you have a way of evaluating whether or not it is helping. Tests are good ways to evaluate new study strategies. If you take a test and don't perform as well as you would have liked to, try a new strategy until you receive the results of the next test you take to get an idea on whether the new strategy is working for you.

Identify your most productive time of the day	Studying at the time of day when you feel best (whether that is morning, afternoon, or early evening) will enable you to complete your assignments in less time. Research studies show that what we can accomplish in 60 minutes when we're less fatigued will take as much as 90 minutes to accomplish when we are more fatigued.
Study difficult or boring subjects first	Study subjects that are more of a challenge for you first when you are less fatigued. Save subjects you like to study for later, when you are feeling more tired, but need to continue to study to keep up with your work. It will be easier to find the motivation to study something you find enjoyable when you are tired than for a subject you dread.
Use the same place to study every time	Studying in the same place each day is like going to class in the same room. You begin to associate a particular activity with a particular location so when you are in that location, you are able to focus on the task at hand more quickly. Avoid studying in your bedroom because you probably associate it with sleeping, not studying.
Use the library	Libraries are good places to study and are relatively free of distractions.
Avoid distractions	Many things can provide a distraction to studying if we are looking for ways to procrastinate.
Use waiting time	If you use public transportation to commute to and from school or work, or at the doctor's/dentist's office there is probably some waiting time involved. This is a great time to study/read.
Treat school as a full-time job	Try to accomplish as many of your school tasks as possible within a concentrated period of time, such as 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you use these hours either for attending class or studying, you'll have much more free time in the evenings and on the weekends to spend time with family and friends. Your classes are likely to get the amount of attention they require as well. It doesn't mean that you won't need to study in the evenings or on the weekends during crunch times—however, treating school as a full-time job and adopting the hours of a full-time job will probably result in better, more efficient management of your time.

Procrastination

Procrastination can be defined as engaging in a task of lower importance in order to avoid doing a task of relatively higher importance.

Procrastination has little if anything to do with laziness. Rather, procrastinators busy themselves with unimportant tasks in the process of avoiding bigger, more challenging tasks.

Most procrastination occurs because of fear: fear of failure, fear of success, fear of detachment from those close to you.

The key to overcoming procrastination is understanding that it causes the very outcomes you are trying to avoid.

Tips for overcoming procrastination

- Reward yourself for completing work
- Set limits on work time
- Remind yourself of your goals
- Use the 5 minute threshold to get started
- Use a checklist system to track your progress
- Focus on what you can do (don't beat yourself up)
- Inform others of your goals
- Don't compare yourself to others

Learning Task

Make a list of the top five ways you waste your time and explain the strategies that you could use to overcome procrastination.

Want more tools and techniques on being the best student you can be? Go to [Study Guides and Strategies](#) - an independent, learner-centric educational public service.

Practical Advice for Students who are Parents

Fitting it all in: Going to school and having a life

- Be realistic. There are only 24 hours in a day.
- Get enough rest. Sleep deprivation will only make you ineffective as a parent AND as a student.
- Schedule time daily when you will put the books away and focus on your kids.
- Schedule time for YOU at least once a week.
- Enlist the aid of other family members for help with childcare.
- Talk to your kids:
 - Older children can assume more responsibility;
 - All children need reassurance that you will be there for them;
 - Involve them in the long-term goal;
 - Give them as much information as you can about what you are doing.
- Allow enough time to study and include study time in your childcare arrangements.
- Some kinds of studying can be done with kids underfoot, and some kinds of studying need complete concentration. Plan your time accordingly.
- If your children are old enough to have homework of their own, institute a family homework time when everyone is expected to work quietly.
- Set priorities but be willing to compromise.

What to do when the babysitter bails!

If the caregiver is sick or unreliable, or the child is too sick for daycare, or there are school/daycare holidays:

- Have an emergency backup system (grandparents, relatives, neighbours, friends).
- Bring the child to school (ask first):
 - Consider the age of the child;
 - Bring quiet activities for the child to do;
 - Tell your child ahead of time what to expect and how to behave;
 - Consider the safety aspects (Don't bring a child into a science lab);
 - Don't bring a child to an exam.
- Miss class – Have a plan in place for what to do when you have to miss.

Missing class

Murphy's Law: The more marks the test is worth, the more likely the rash will turn out to be chickenpox.

- At the start of a course, determine if your instructor has special expectations in the event of a missed class.
- Make sure you have the instructor's contact information at your home.
- Early in the course, find a note-taking "buddy"
- Reputation is everything. Be the kind of student that instructors are happy to accommodate.