

It's very easy for students to focus on the details of their everyday lives and lose sight of their larger, long-term goals. But the process of setting goals allows you to take charge of your life as a student, to recognize your accomplishments, and to appreciate your achievements.

## Why Set Goals?

Studies have shown that people who set goals for themselves are more likely to:

- Experience less stress and anxiety.
- concentrate and remember more effectively.
- demonstrate greater self-confidence.
- perform better and achieve more.
- be happier and more satisfied.

## What are SMART goals?

**SMART** stands for the five components of a goal:  
**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ction-Oriented, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-Bound.

The act of thinking carefully about what you want to achieve and determining a clear course of action will give you a better understanding of what your goals are and how you can achieve them.

**SPECIFIC.** Do you need to finish a particular assignment? Can you break a larger task down into smaller items? Specific goals are goals that state exactly **what** you want to achieve.

**MEASURABLE.** How many pages? Questions? Laps? Establish clear definitions to help you know if you're reaching (or have reached) your goal. If you're confused about how to measure your goal, you'll be less likely to achieve it.

**ACTION-ORIENTED.** How many verbs are associated: reading, typing, writing, making? This is the **how** part of goal setting. Describe your goals using action verbs, and outline the exact steps you will take to accomplish your goal.

**REALISTIC.** Can you do this in the time given? Give yourself the opportunity to succeed by setting goals you'll be able to accomplish. Strive to reach a good middle-ground: goals set too high could discourage you, but goals set too low will fail to challenge and motivate you.

**TIME-BOUND.** When will you know that you're finished? Decide exactly **when** you'll start and finish your goal. Knowing exactly how long you have to reach your goal is an excellent way to stay motivated and focused.

Retrieved from: [www.utexas.edu/student/utlc](http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc)