

# Setting SMART goals

---

## Why set goals?

Goals are a great way to stay focused and work out what's important. Having long-term and short-term goals can help you get more out of your day and your time at university.

Goals help us grow and develop. Set goals in your stretch zone i.e. beyond your comfort zone, but not so far that you feel panicked and overwhelmed.

## Start with ideas

Some examples might include:

- Study overseas for a year.
- Learn another language.
- Become fitter.
- Get a part-time job.

Not sure what you want to achieve?

Below are some ideas for finding inspiration:

- Check out [Careers Development and Employability Services \(CDES\)](#).
- Talk to your peers, family and friends.
- Join a [club, society or association](#).
- Study abroad with [360° Auckland Abroad](#).
- Learn about [leadership and volunteering](#).

Once you know what you want to achieve, turn your idea into a SMART goal.

## What's a SMART goal?

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Specific</b>   | Add specific details so you know what you're aiming for.   |
| <b>Measurable</b> | Make sure you know if you have achieved your goal or not.  |
| <b>Achievable</b> | Use your goal to stretch yourself, but not so much that you feel overwhelmed and give up. Is the goal realistic? |
| <b>Relevant</b>   | Make your goal meaningful. Why is it worthwhile? What are the benefits of achieving it?                          |
| <b>Timely</b>     | Give yourself a deadline to complete the goal.   |

## Examples

**Mid to long-term goal:** Get into Law School at the end of this year.

Is it SMART?

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| I'm accepted into Law.   | Specific ✓   |
| I'm either accepted or rejected.   | Measurable ✓ |
| Pass LAW 121G and LAW 131. GPA of B+ to A- for all papers.                     | Achievable ✓ |
| I want to study law so I can influence policy and create change in the future. | Relevant ✓   |
| End of this year   | Timely ✓     |

**Short-term, modest goal: I will do all my readings every week.**

Is it SMART?

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Every Sunday I will make a list of readings and schedule time to complete them. | Specific ✓   |
| I know how much I have to read.   | Measurable ✓ |
| I can tick off each reading as I do it.   | Achievable ✓ |
| The assigned readings are based on a reasonable workload expectation.           | Relevant ✓   |
| Every week  | Timely ✓     |

**Build a plan**

Once you have some concrete goals you can start breaking them down into smaller, more achievable steps.

Life is unpredictable, so it's also a good idea to think about how you will stay motivated and deal with potential obstacles.

**Try it yourself**

Think of something you'd like to do or achieve. Turn that idea into a SMART goal.

Goals can be big or small, long-term or short-term. Pick one type of goal and use this worksheet to make it SMART and build a plan to achieve it.

- **Short-term** (Today, this week, this month) e.g. Finish essay, get a part-time job.
- **Mid-term** (This semester or year) e.g. Improve GPA, get an internship
- **Long-term** (1–5 years) e.g. Finish your degree, post-graduate study, graduate programme, travel.

**1. Write down a goal you have for your time at university or beyond:**

**2. Check: Is it SMART?**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Specific</b><br/>Adding specific details makes it easier to know what you are aiming for.</p>   |  |
| <p><b>Measurable</b><br/>How will you know if you have achieved your goal or not?</p>   |  |
| <p><b>Achievable</b><br/>Is the goal realistic? Ideally, you want to stretch yourself, but not so much that you feel overwhelmed and give up.</p> |  |
| <p><b>Relevant</b><br/>Make your goal meaningful. Why is it worthwhile?</p>   |  |
| <p><b>Timely</b><br/>Give yourself a deadline to complete the goal.</p>   |  |

### 3. Build a plan

Once you have some concrete goals you can start breaking them down into smaller, more achievable steps. Life is unpredictable – so it's also a good idea to think about how you will stay motivated and deal with potential obstacles.

a. How will I benefit from achieving my goal?

b. What steps can I take to achieve my goal?

c. How can I stay motivated?

d. What obstacles might get in the way? How can I mitigate these obstacles?

e. How will I celebrate achieving my goal?

### 4. Be flexible

Review your goals and make sure they are still relevant to what you want out of life.

Don't be afraid to change direction if things change!