



Career Counseling

Updated \\ April 2026

SMART Goals

Specific:

Aim for a specific, concrete area for your goal or steps. For example, "Reach out to five individuals for possible mentorship on LinkedIn" vs. "Make some networking connections."

Measurable:

To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as: how much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?

Attainable:

Goals are most attainable when steps are thought out clearly and allow enough time. How do you intend to accomplish your goal? Which actions follow other actions? Is the goal attainable given where you're starting from? It should be a challenge, but also achievable.



**Learning and
Talent Development**

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Relevant:

A relevant goal is one that really matters to you and to the end result. Is it worthwhile? Is this the right time? Does your goal relate to other efforts or timelines? Does it require resources that are currently available?

Timely:

A goal should be grounded within a defined time period, both for clarity and to give your action urgency. When do you want to begin? When do you want to complete each step?



Tips to achieve your goal

- **Write down the steps.** Write down your career goal and the steps to get there. This will help you remember and achieve each step. Post your list where you will see it often.
- **Set deadlines.** Give yourself a date to complete your goals by. Write the date when you actually finish each step.
- **Reward yourself.** Taking steps toward goals is hard work. Think of small rewards to give yourself when you complete any step, to help you stay motivated.
- **Have a goal partner.** Find someone to help you stick to your plan: a friend, co-worker, a job coach, or someone else. Discuss your goals, and check in with them when you complete steps. If possible, do the same for your partner!

Adapted from careeronestop.org