Using SMART Objectives

Performance Review and Development Program (PRDP)

1. Introduction

The purpose of this PRDP Resource is to provide guidance on developing objectives using the SMART methodology. It also provides guidance on how to complete a Performance Plan and Professional Development Plan.

2. What is an objective?

An objective is a clearly defined outcome that an employee has agreed upon with their PRDP Supervisor. It is not a list of activities, but rather focuses on outcomes that allow you to measure your own performance and professional development success.

An objective can aim to:

achieve more;

improve effectiveness and efficiencies;

reduce/eliminate errors.
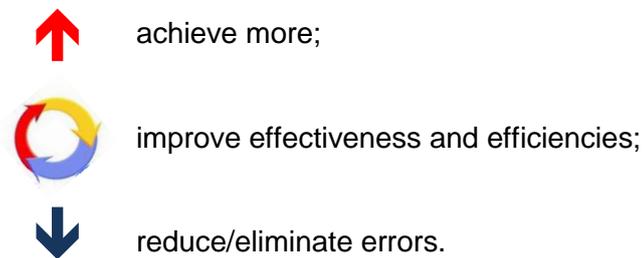
An objective can be a performance objective or a professional development/training objective.

3. What is a SMART objective?

SMART is an acronym that stands for:

S	Specific	The objective clearly defines what needs to be achieved.
M	Measurable	The qualitative and/or quantitative measures to ensure that the objective is achieved.
A	Achievable	The objective is realistic given the workload and classification level of the employee.
R	Relevant	The objective is aligned to the strategic objectives and priorities of the University and relevant School/Directorate/Section and the employee's position description.
T	Timed	The defined timeframe for the achievement of the objective.

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Employees are encouraged to use SMART when defining performance and professional development/training objectives during their PRDP. Using SMART objectives ensure that employees and PRDP Supervisors have the same understanding of objectives that need to be achieved by the employee and how the achievement of these objectives will be measured.

Below are examples of **non-SMART** and **SMART** performance objectives to illustrate the differences:

Non-SMART Objective	SMART Objective
Increase student enrolments in Psychology.	Increase student enrolments in Psychology by 10 % for 2017.
Increase research funding.	Submit grant application to research council.
Circulate minutes of Committee Meeting.	Circulate minutes of Committee Meeting within five working days of meeting.
Update content of website on a regular basis.	Maintain website by reviewing and updating content once a month.

When writing SMART objectives, start with an action verb followed by a noun. For example:

Verb	Noun
Conduct	a **student survey** to establish their utilisation of the e-learning technologies …
Develop	a **program** in Mining Engineering …
Respond	to all **service requests** within 24 hours …

Below are some verbs that may assist you:

Achieve	Administer	Conduct	Construct	Coordinate
Create	Generate	Implement	Negotiate	Organise
Plan	Prepare	Reduce	Solve	Streamline

At FedUni, we refer to the measurement of performance objectives as performance indicators. A performance indicator is defined as the measurement/s that determines whether the performance objective has been achieved. It also guides the employee during the execution of the performance objective in terms of the quantity and quality standards expected. A performance indicator can thus be quantitative or qualitative.

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Here are some questions to ask yourself after drafting your objectives that may assist you in ensuring they are SMART:

Specific	What needs to be achieved and how it will be achieved?
	Is the objective clear?
	Would any employee with a basic understanding in the work area understand the objective?
Measurable	Is the expected standard clearly defined?
	Is the quantity clearly defined?
	Is the quality clearly defined?
Achievable	Is the objective realistic?
	Are the necessary resources available to the employee?
	Does the employee have the knowledge to achieve the objective?
	Has sufficient time been allocated to the objective?
Relevant	Does the objective align to the FedUni Charter?
	Does the objective align to the School/Directorate/Section's objectives?
	Does the objective align to the employee's position description?
	Does the objective add value to the University?
Timed	Has a target date been set?
	Is the target date realistic?

Draft, review, redefine and redraft your objectives until they are SMART objectives!
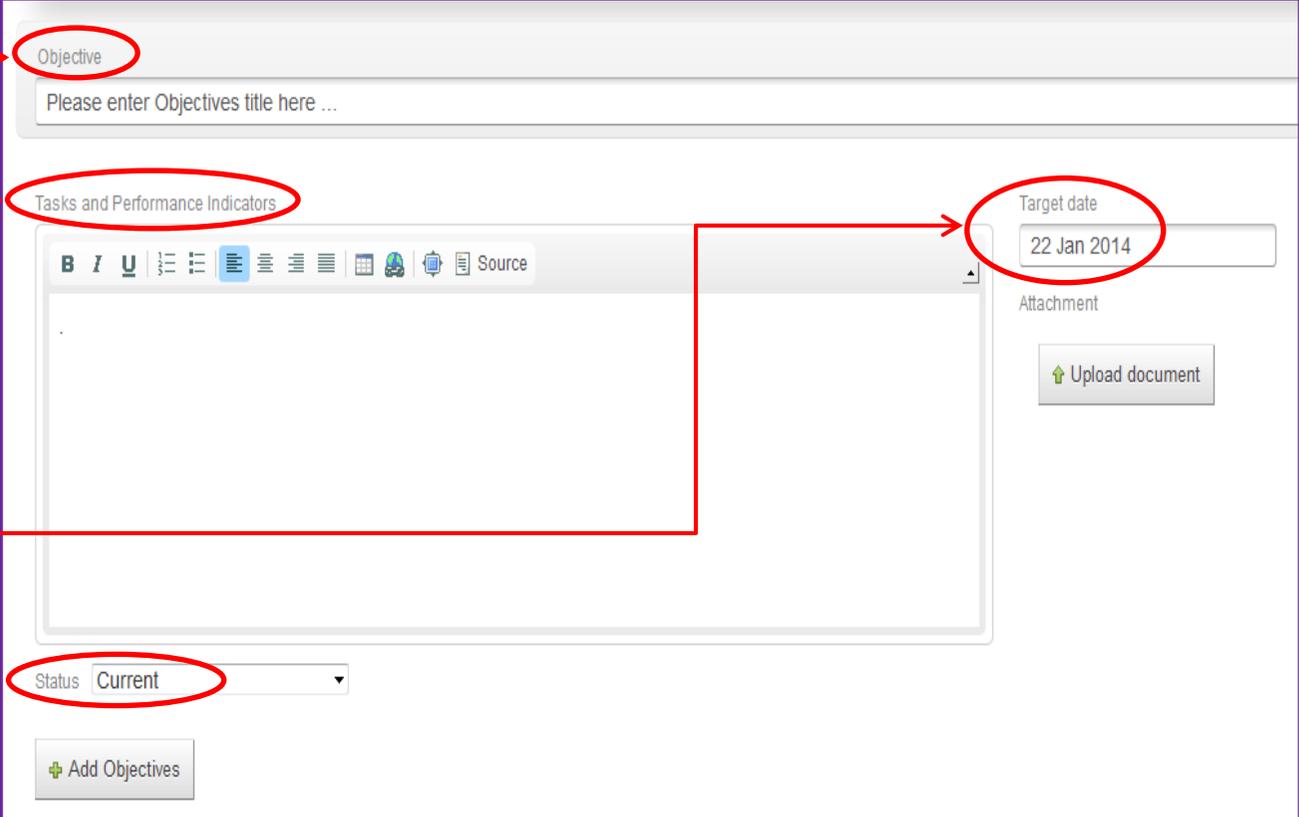
4. How to complete your Performance Plan

4.1. Define your performance objective in the section labelled "Objective".

Objective

Please enter Objectives title here ...

4.2. In the "Tasks and Performance Indicators" section, specify the:

- tasks that need to be undertaken to achieve the objective; and

- performance indicators, i.e. the measurements to determine whether the objective has been achieved.

Tasks and Performance Indicators

Target date

22 Jan 2014

Attachment

⬆ Upload document

4.3. Specify the "Target date", i.e. the completion date for the objective.

4.4. At this stage, the "Status" of the objective must be "Current".

Status Current

➕ Add Objectives

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Examples of SMART performance objectives using the Performance Plan template:

Example 1

Performance objective

Organise and provide administrative support to the School Committee.

Tasks and Performance Indicators

Tasks	Performance Indicators
- Liaise with the Dean to prepare the annual calendar for and confirm members of the School Committee. - Schedule School Committees in advance for the year. - Confirm attendees at least three weeks prior to each scheduled Committee date. - Prepare and distribute agenda at least two weeks prior to Committee date. - Prepare and distribute minutes no later than two weeks after Committee has taken place. - Follow up on action items.	- Annual School Committee calendar developed and communicated to Committee members. - Each Committee date confirmed three weeks prior to date. - Accurate agendas distributed at least two weeks prior to Committee date. - Accurate minutes distributed two weeks after Committee date.

Target date

30 November 2017

Is the performance objective a SMART objective?

Specific?	It clearly defines what needs to be achieved, i.e. organising and providing administrative support to the School Committee. The "tasks" elaborate on the meaning of "organising" and "providing administrative support."
Measurable?	The performance indicators specify what the deliverables are and how these will be measured: - Annual School Committee calendar. - Accurate agendas and minutes. - Specific timeframes for preparing and distributing agendas and minutes (two weeks).
Achievable?	The objective is realistic given the employee's workload and classification level.
Relevant?	The objective is aligned to the School's objectives to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of administrative support to students, staff and committees.
Timed?	Although specific timeframes have been set for the confirmation of Committee dates and the preparation and distribution of agendas and minutes, the target date for this performance objective is 30 November 2017. This target date aligns with the end of the PRDP cycle for this employee.

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Example 2

Performance objective

Establish two new scholarships worth $4,000 each for postgraduate students in Biomedical Science to be awarded in 2017.

Tasks and Performance Indicators

Tasks	Performance Indicators
• Identify the criteria for the scholarships by liaising with the Program Coordinator for Biomedical Science and Dean of School. • Confirm funding for scholarships. • Develop application forms for scholarships based on identified criteria. • Communicate scholarships to students and other stakeholders.	• Two new Biomedical Science scholarships for postgraduate students worth $4,000 each established and ready for applications in 2017.

Target date
30 September 2016

Is the performance objective a SMART objective?

Specific?	It clearly defines what needs to be achieved, i.e. two new scholarships worth $4,000 each for postgraduate students in Biomedical Science. The "tasks" also provide guidance on what to do to achieve the objective.
Measurable?	The performance indicators specify how the objectives will be measured: • Two new established Biomedical Science scholarships for postgraduate students. • Each scholarship worth $4,000. • Ready for applications in 2017.
Achievable?	The objective is realistic given the employee's workload and classification level.
Relevant?	The objective is aligned to the School and Biomedical Science discipline's objectives to increase postgraduate student attraction and retention.
Timed?	A target date of 30 September 2016 has been set to ensure the scholarships are established and communicated in order for the scholarships to be awarded to students for 2017.

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Example 3

Performance objective

Publish three research papers in refereed journals in accordance with the University's research criteria.

Tasks and Performance Indicators

Tasks	Performance Indicators
• Conduct research. • Write research articles and submit to journals.	• Research papers produced. • Research papers accepted by relevant journal by target date.

Target date

31 December 2017

Is the performance objective a SMART objective?

Specific?	It clearly defines what needs to be achieved, i.e. publish three research papers in refereed journals.
Measurable?	The performance indicators specify how the objectives will be measured: • Three published journal articles. • Refereed journal articles. • Accepted by relevant journals.
Achievable?	The objective is realistic given the employee's workload and classification level.
Relevant?	The objective is aligned to the School's objectives to increase quality research output.
Timed?	A target date of 31 December has been set.

Some more examples of Performance Objectives:

- Provide receptions services to staff, students and the community by responding to queries timely and providing accurate advice and referrals.

- Reduce the average time for resolving customer queries from X to Y by 31 December.

- Provide information technology support for applications within established service level agreement for the period 1 January until 31 December.

- Demonstrate eVALUate scores of at least 4 during the period 1 January until 31 December.

5. How to complete your Professional Development Plan

Your professional development/training and industry knowledge/vocational development objectives must be aligned to your position within the ambit of the classification level, and must also be aligned to the priorities of the University and School/Directorate/Section. Where appropriate, these objectives may be aligned to your performance objectives.

You are encouraged to use the SMART methodology when developing your professional development/training and industry knowledge/vocational development objectives.

Below are some examples of **non-SMART** and **SMART** development objectives:

Non-SMART Objective	SMART Objective
Learn how to deal with irate clients.	Research four different strategies for dealing with irate clients. Role-play these strategies with my manager and a colleague by 30 June. Implement the strategies with real clients and debrief with my manager afterwards.
Improve the effectiveness of my written communication.	Reduce the number of editing and rewriting of my written reports to two reviews only with my manager (draft report and final report) by the end of this year. Undertake formal and informal learning by: • attending a report writing course; • reading the reports of highly regarded researchers; and • receiving coaching from my manager.
Learn Excel.	Learn and apply Excel skills to set up advanced spreadsheets. Source an Excel training course and attend the course by March. Develop an advanced spreadsheet to monitor budget expenditure after attending training.

You will define your professional development/training objectives and industry knowledge/vocational development objective in the relevant sections in the Professional Development Plan.

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Professional Development Plan

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Professional Development / Training Objective

Include strategies (e.g. formal learning, on-the-job training, mentoring, coaching and shadowing), resources required (e.g. time release and budget approval) and the timeframe for achieving this objective.

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Industry Knowledge / Vocational Development Objectives

Include strategies (e.g. participation in relevant industry associations, working parties, committees and/or projects), resources required (e.g. time release and budget approval) and the timeframe for achieving these objectives.

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The following questions may assist you in identifying your professional development/training and industry knowledge/vocational development objectives:

- Are there any areas in my work that I need to improve? If yes, what are those areas?

- What knowledge and/or skills do I need to ensure that I remain competent and/or effective in my job?

After you have identified your professional development/training and/or industry knowledge/vocational development objective, you should establish a clear action plan for achieving your objective:

- Include the strategies you will implement to achieve your objective. These strategies can include formal training, on-the-job training, coaching/mentoring, shadowing, self-directed learning, reading, networking, participating in committees/projects, etc.

- Define the resources you require, e.g. time release and budget approval.

- Set a target date for achieving your objective.

- Define how you and your PRDP Supervisor will measure the effectiveness of your development.