

Set AND Achieve Your Goals

The foundation of your success in any endeavor is setting effective, realistic goals that are important to you. This is true not only in school but throughout your life. High efficiency companies use goals as the foundation for their quality improvement efforts, hospitals use goals as the foundation for achieving improved patient satisfaction, and the list goes on. Becoming adept at using goals now will not only help you be successful now but also prepare you for success when you move into your chosen career.

**If you don't know where
you are going, any path
will get you there.**

Lewis Carroll

Goals can be long-term or short-term and can include anything from “getting to class on-time tomorrow” to “becoming a physician with a practice in neurosurgery”. While it is important to have your long term goal in mind, you want to use discrete or short-term goals to help you achieve that long term goal.

You will find that the first step in the *My Learning Plan* strategy developed to help students be successful is setting a goal. When you consider the value of goal-setting, it is important to become effective in developing your goals. The following steps will help you be better at setting goals and improving your outcomes, as a result.

1 SELECT A GOAL THAT IS MEASURABLE

While “I want to do well in this class”, is a goal, it does not identify the specific outcome you want to achieve. With this goal, you don't know what “well” means. “Well” could be a C but wouldn't prepare you for your long-term goal of becoming a chemical engineer. Remember, your goal is the foundation for your planning. If your foundation isn't strong, your planning and you, are likely to fail.

2 BE SURE THE GOAL IS ACHIEVABLE

Consider these questions as you develop your goal:

- ? Do I have enough time to achieve this goal (consider work schedule, class schedule, family obligations, point of time in the semester when you make this goal)?
- ? Do I have the necessary skills and resources to achieve the goal? If not, is there a preliminary goal I need to pursue to get these skills and resources.

3 BE SURE YOU GENUINELY WANT TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL

Do not set a goal only because you believe someone else important to you thinks you should do this. Be sure the goal is consistent with your beliefs and values and will not negatively affect you or others.



4 KNOW WHY THE GOAL MATTERS TO YOU

Be sure you understand why this goal is important to you. If you are serious about being successful in achieving this goal you will spend a lot of time and energy working on it. If it isn't important to you, you would be better served by not committing to it and establishing a goal which is important to you.

5 IDENTIFY ANY OBSTACLES YOU MAY ENCOUNTER

Use *My Learning Plan* to help you identify and overcome any possible difficulties you may encounter in achieving your goal.

6 DEVELOP A TIMELINE FOR ACHIEVING YOUR GOAL

Identify the steps you need to take in achieving your goal and create a timeline that will help you through those steps. Use a semester calendar and be specific as to when you need to accomplish each step.



7 MONITOR YOUR PROGRESS

Not everything always goes to plan! So, be sure to periodically check your progress and see if your plan is working. If it isn't, modify it. Remember, a plan is only as good as the results it achieves. If your plan isn't working, modify it before it is too late.