SMART Goals

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Goal Setting

- Setting goals is important for time management
  - Goals clearly define your objective → focused efforts
  - The process of setting goals helps to minimize unproductive efforts
- Setting *proper* goals is critical to success
  - Poorly defined goals
    - create frustration – “Why can’t I achieve that goal?”
    - mislead efforts – “Why did I do all of that work?”
    - hurt morale – “I can never achieve my goals!”
- How do you define an effective goal statement?
SMART Goals

Criteria for SMART Goals
- S = Specific
- M = Measurable
- A = Achievable
- R = Rewarding
- T = Timed

Effective goals should meet all of these criteria
Specific

- Goals should clearly define what you want to happen
- Specific goals help to focus efforts
- Answers questions: What, Why, How
  - WHAT are you going to do?
    - Use action words such as direct, organize, coordinate, lead, develop, plan, build etc.
  - WHY is this important to do at this time?
    - What do you want to ultimately accomplish?
  - HOW are you going to do it?

- Example
  - Don’t: set a goal to lose weight or be healthier
  - Do: set a goal to walk 5 miles 2x/week

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Measurable

- Goal statement is a metric for success
- You have to be able to measure it in order to manage it and know you have met your goal
- Identifying short-term measures help to see progress toward the ultimate goal
  - Seeing progress along the way toward your goal helps to keep you motivated
- Example
  - Unmeasurable: Learn more about biosensors
  - Measurable: Read 3 biosensors papers each week
Achievable

- Choose goals that you can achieve
  - Unachieved goals will hurt your motivation
- Do not set goals too far beyond your reach
  - A realistic goal should push you but not break you (emotionally, physically, etc.)
  - Realistic does not mean “easy”!
- Set goals that are challenging but can be attained with some effort
  - Aim for satisfying achievement
  - You can always set a “higher” goal later
- Example
  - “I want to become a world famous scientist.”
  - “I want to finish my PhD so I can do scientific research for a career.”

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Rewarding

- Your goals must be relevant to you and provide perceivable benefit to your life.
- The rewards for successful efforts must be clear to you to keep you motivated.
  - Sometimes rewards come indirectly, as in helping your team or your community.
- Reward yourself for achieving a goal in order to maintain your drive to finish other goals.
  - Proper motivation is vital to success.
- Rewards are often not described goal statements but should be clear to the goal setter.

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Timed

- Goals must have a timeframe (deadline) and be trackable over time
- An end point on your goal provides a clear target to complete your efforts
- Without a timeline, you may tend to keep putting off your work toward your goal
- Goal timeline must also be
  - measurable
  - attainable/realistic

- Example
  - “I will defend my PhD thesis.”
  - “I will complete one chapter of my dissertation each month.”

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