Performance Review and Development

Guide to Writing SMART Objectives

DCU

Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

INTRODUCTION Writing SMART Objectives

Performance Review and Development Review (PRD) is part of the ongoing process of supporting excellence in employee and organisational performance. During your PRD, you will identify and agree individual goals and objectives for the coming year aligned with the strategic plan.

This presentation focuses on how to design objectives that are SMART, aligned to university strategy and that can be clearly understood by both the Reviewer and the Reviewee.

PRD and Objective Setting

To support the process of identifying and setting objectives, the PRD scheme focuses on the career development and progression pathways of
 (i) Academic,
(ii) Research and
(iii) Professional, Support and Technical Staff.

The PRD Scheme recognises that there must be strategic alignment between the activities of staff with the University's Strategic Plan. This is achieved by assessing each staff member's actual performance against previously established performance objectives and standards.

Academic Staff

In line with the DCU Academic Development & Promotion Framework the setting of objectives for academic staff is built around three broad domains with an added focus on Leadership and Learning & Development objectives.

- Teaching & Learning
- Research & Scholarship
- Service and Contribution to University and Society
- Leadership
- Learning & Development
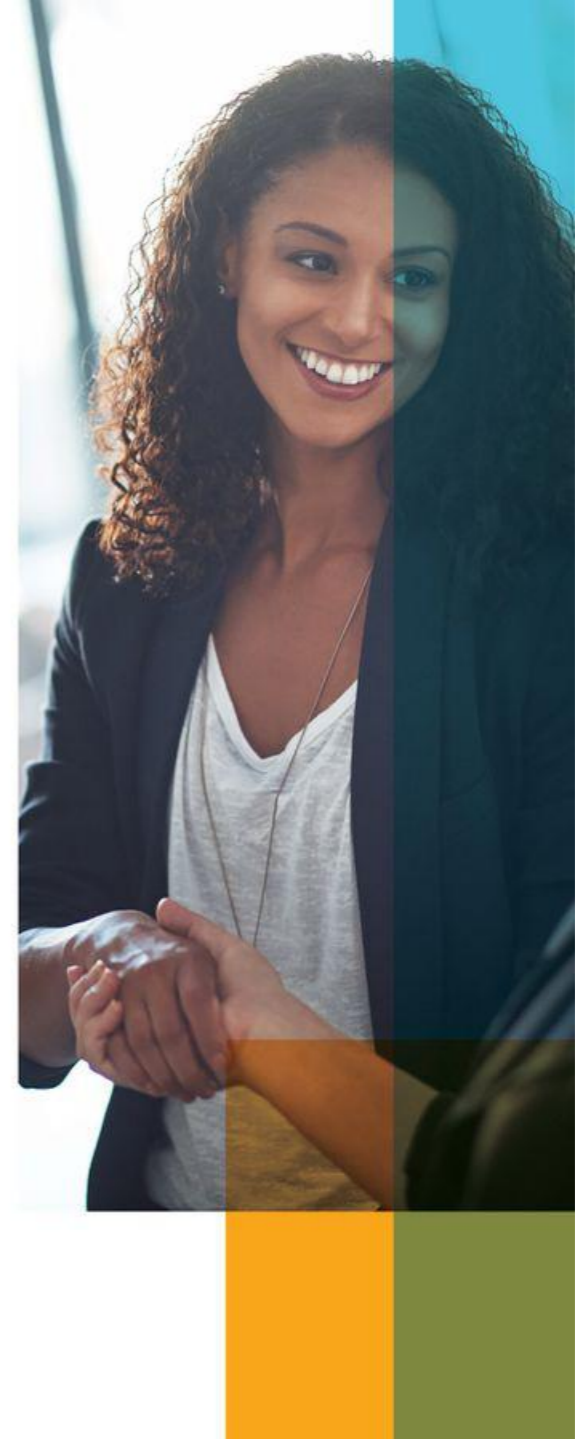
Research Staff

In line with the DCU Research Career Framework, the setting of objectives for research staff is built around the competencies outlined in the framework with an added focus on learning & development and career objectives:

- Discipline Specific Knowledge and Research Skills
- Communicating Research
- Managing and Leadership Skills
- Understanding the Research Environment
- Learning and Development
- Career Objectives
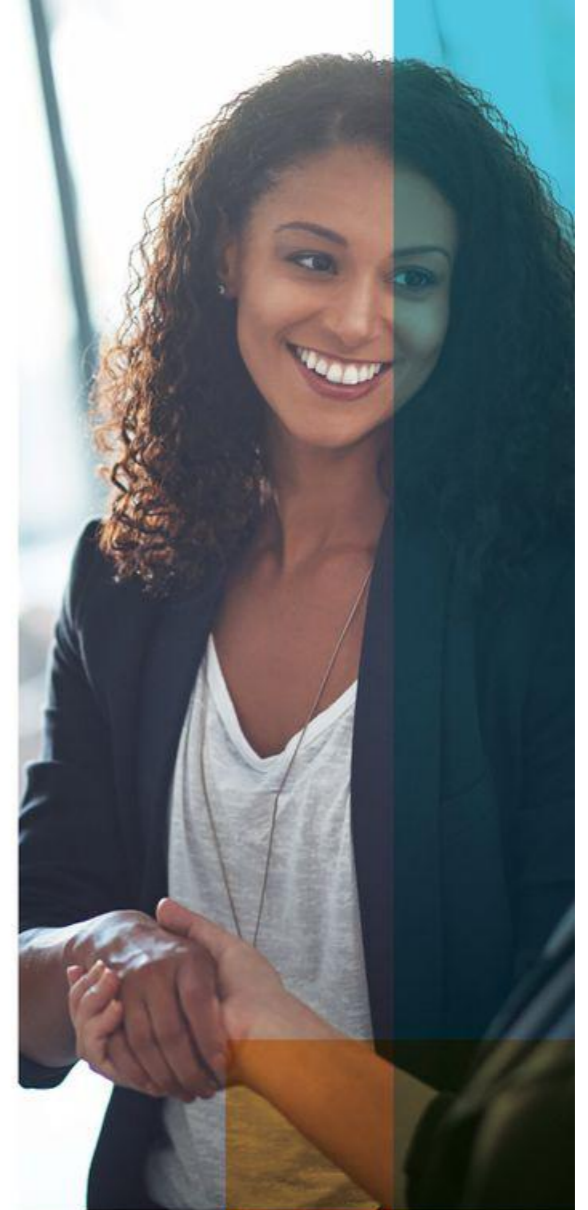
Professional, Support & Technical Staff

Pending the publication of the DCU Professional Development Framework, the setting of objectives for this category of staff will focus on

- Work Objectives. (Work objectives focus on key results areas rather than activities or tasks)
- Leadership/Management and/or Team Objectives (which focus on your contribution as a Leader/Manager to deliver departmental and/or University goals. Team objectives focus on your contribution as a team member to same)
- Career Objectives (Career objectives focus on your short-term and long-term ambitions/aspirations and what you need to do to get there)
- Learning and Development Objectives. (Learning and Development objectives focus on a course of action that was taken to improve knowledge, skills and/or competencies)
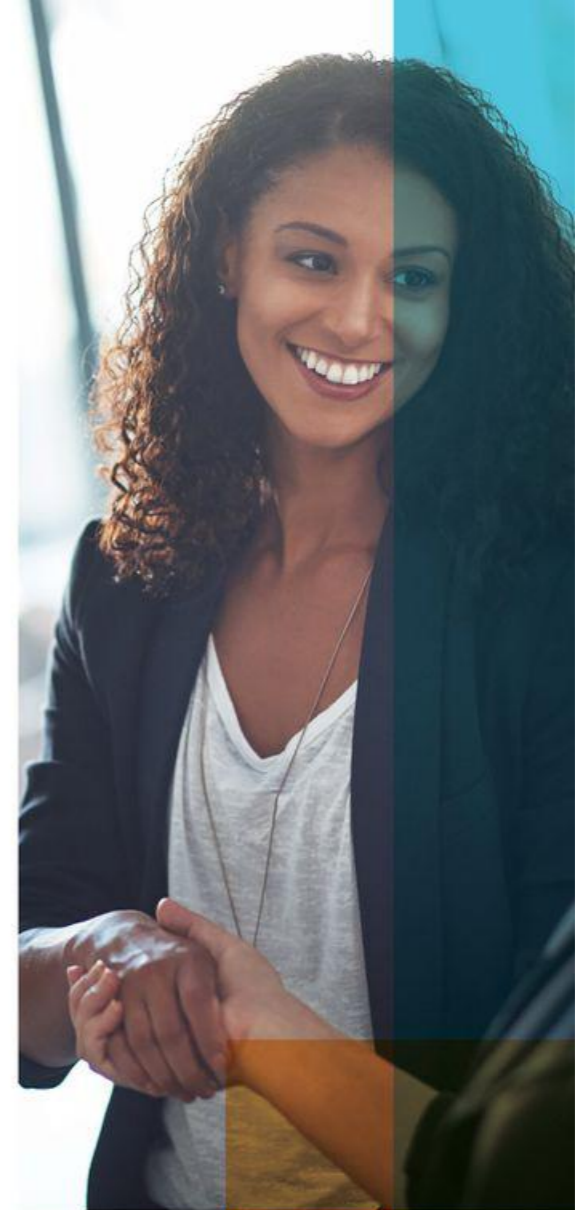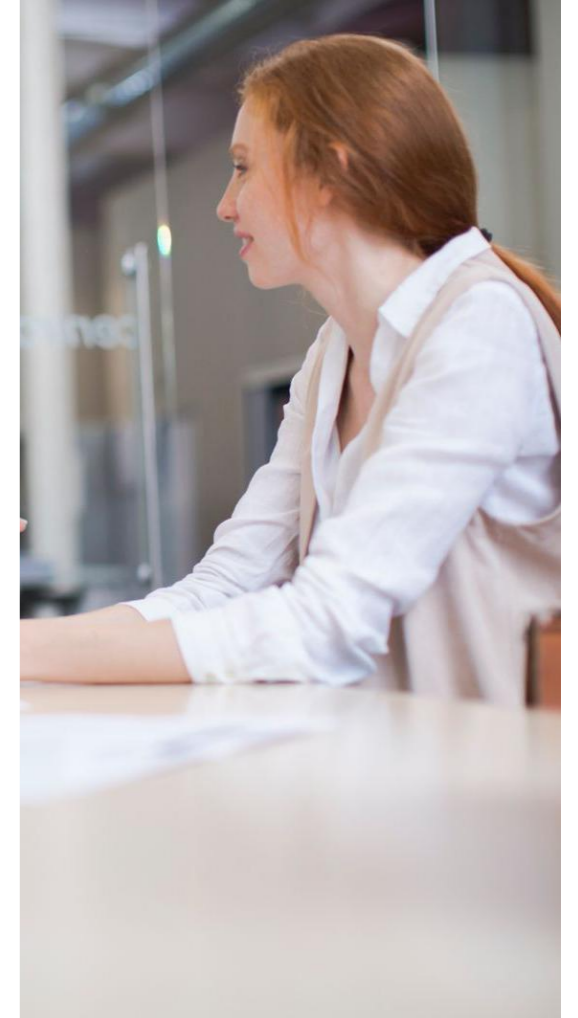
Work Objectives

Objectives are:

- Defined by a beginning and end point
- Should describe a result linked to achieving a particular goal at School/Department/Faculty level
- Are a clear statement of something that needs to be accomplished by a specific date/time.

Objectives are not:

- A 'to do' list
- Your day to day tasks
- Focussed on actions rather than results
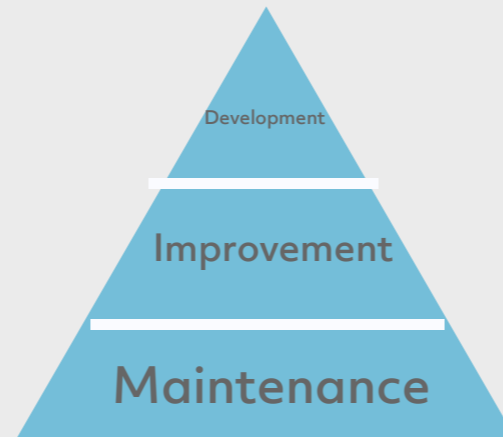
Three types of Objectives

Maintenance Objectives

Setting objectives where you are maintaining the good work that is being done

Improvement Objectives

Setting objectives where you are improving what is being done - improving performance in specific areas

Development

Improvement

Maintenance

Development Objectives

Setting objectives where you want to develop a skill

Objective Setting Process

01 Identify Key Strategic Themes

Identify the key strategic areas of focus for your School/Faculty/Department.
Consider the priorities, opportunities, changes and challenges.

02 Consider Key Areas of Interest

Consideration should be given to the reviewee's career development aims and opportunities (e.g. promotion and other development).

03 Develop Objective for Discussion

Developing objectives for discussion is a key element of the preparation process for both reviewers and reviewees. These proposed objectives should be included in the PRD self assessment.

Objective setting Process

04 Format into SMART

SMART Objectives are structured in a clear and concise way.   They are useful in gaining agreement and setting expectations for both the Reviewer and Reviewee as to what can be achieved.

05 Reaching Agreement

During the PRD meeting , objectives are agreed for the next review period. These agreed objectives are then recorded on the PRD form under the 'Agreed Future Objectives' section.

06 Working with Objectives

Objectives provide focus and direction for the year ahead and will form the basis for the next review period.

Setting Objectives using the SMART Template

S Specific

- What do you need to achieve?
- Have you given enough detail ensuring clarity and mutual understanding of what is to be achieved?
- What is the expected result?

M Measureable

- Can this be measured so as to clearly indicate that the result has been achieved?
- How will you know the objective has been achieved?
- What indicators will you look for to measure progress and success?
- What data is available to support this?

A Achievable/Aligned

- How does this objective fit with the strategic priorities for the University/School/Unit?
- In what way is the objective significant?
- What would be the impact to your Faculty/Department if the objective was not achieved?

Setting Objectives using the SMART Template

R Relevant/Realistic

- Is the objective appropriate for your role and grade?
- Will the objective stretch and challenge you (considering your career development)?
- Can you achieve your objective with the available resources ? If not, how can you address this?
- What help will you require from your line manager or are there others that you will require assistance from?
- Do you have all the relevant skills and knowledge to complete the objective?

T Time Bound

- Are there clear time frames attached to the objective (e.g. specific dates)?
- If the objective goes beyond the review period, have you set milestone dates?
- Are there other objectives which will depend upon the completion of this one?
- What could impact on the deadline? How can you resolve these if they are of a concern?
- Is the deadline realistic?

Transferring your SMART objectives to your online PRD form

When completing your online PRD form, you will not be required to include every detail. What needs to be recorded are:

- Specific - describe the objective and include only enough detail to ensure understanding
- Include brief details on how your objective will be measured
- Include the timeframe and whether it falls within the current review period.

Achievable/Aligned and Relevant/Realistic is part of the discussion with your Reviewer.

Example of a SMART Objective (Professional)

To review the departmental budget and make recommendations to Line Manager on innovative ways to achieve possible cost saving measures by dd/mm/yy

Smart Objective Example (Professional)

To review the departmental budget and make recommendations to Line Manager on innovative ways to achieve possible cost saving measures by dd/mm/yy
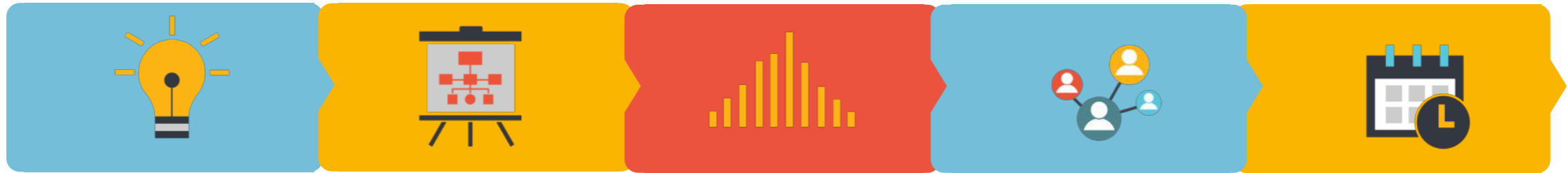
Specific	Measurable	Aligned/Achievable	Relevant	Time bound
What will the Reviewee do?	How will Reviewee/Reviewer know?	Is this a priority and does it fit with the strategy? Can it be achieved?	How does it fit with the reviewee's role and grade?	What are the target dates?
Review the departmental budget and identify cost saving measures	**Cost saving measures are identified and presented to the Line Manager**	**Department budget requires a review and meets DCU Strategic Goal 3**	**This is appropriate to the role and grade of the individual. Although stretching they have the capabilities to meet the objective.**	**dd/mm/yy**

Example of a SMART Objective (Professional)

To successfully take the lead on organising the December annual Conference achieving an average score from attendees on the feedback form of 80% satisfaction.
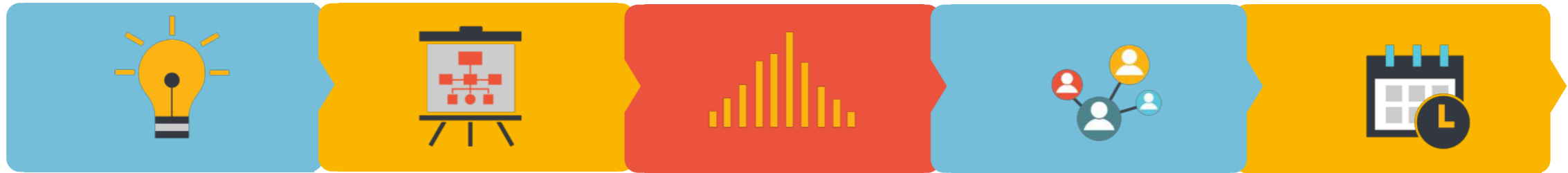
Smart Objective Example

"To successfully take the lead on organising the December annual Conference achieving an average score from attendees on the feedback form of 80% satisfaction".

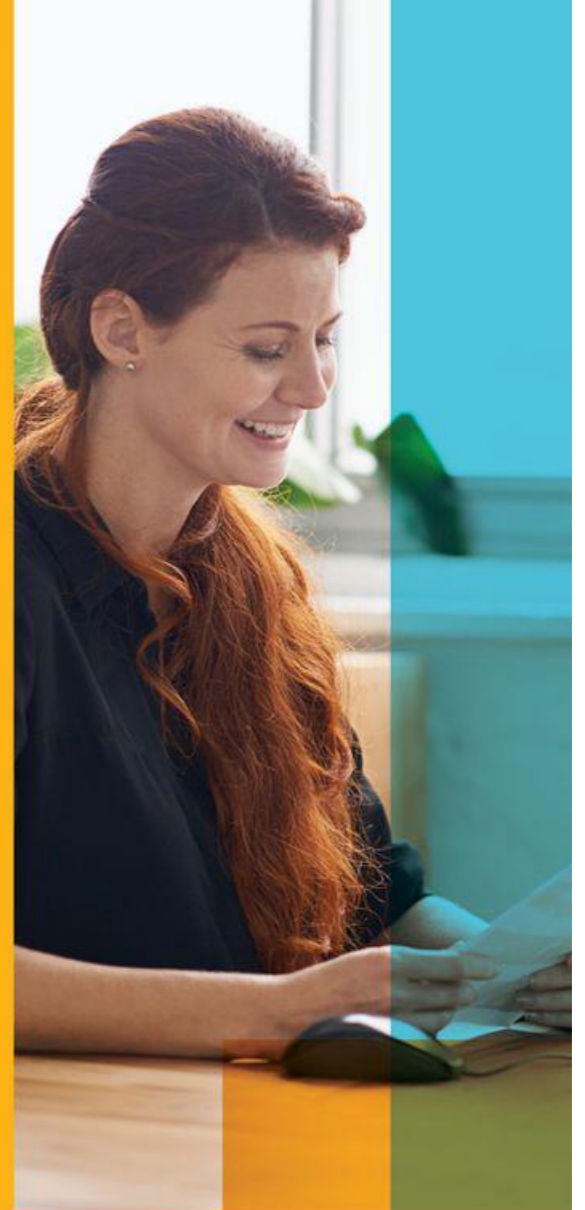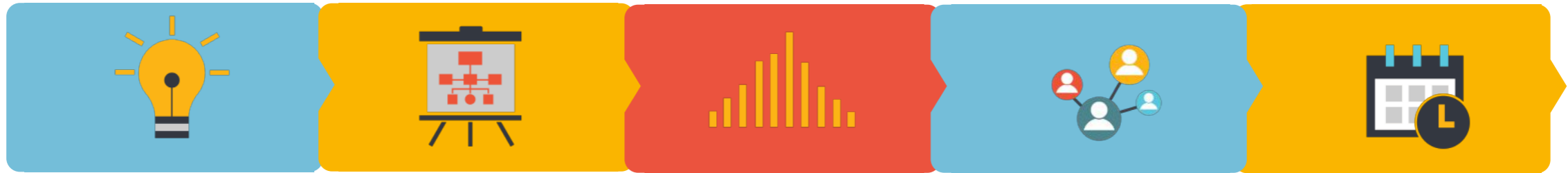| Specific	Measurable	Aligned/Achievable	Relevant	Time bound
What will the Reviewee do?	How will Reviewee/Reviewer know?	Is this a priority and does it fit with the strategy? Can it be achieved?	How does it fit with the reviewee's role and grade?	What are the target dates?
Organise the logistics for the annual conference	Achieving scores of 80% satisfaction rating on the event feedback form	Identified in University/Faculty strategy for the year and resources are in place to ensure this takes place	This is appropriate to the role and grade of the individual. Although stretching they have the capabilities to meet the objective.	Conference event date

Example of a SMART Objective (Technical)

Ensure all laboratory equipment in building X passes equipment maintenance testing and produce an up-to-date inventory by dd/mm/yy.

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Smart Objective Example (Technical)

Ensure all laboratory equipment in building X passes equipment maintenance testing and produce an up-to-date inventory by dd/mm/yy.

Specific	Measurable	Aligned/Achievable	Relevant	Time bound
What will the Reviewee do?	How will Reviewee/Reviewer know?	Is this a priority and does it fit with the strategy? Can it be achieved?	How does it fit with the reviewee's role and grade?	What are the target dates
Collate an inventory of lab equipment in X building	**All equipment will be in working order as per equipment maintenance standards.**	**Agreement with reviewer that there will be funding available to repair any faulty equipment. Meets DCU Strategic Goal 4**	**This is appropriate to the individual's role and grade, they have the capabilities and resources available to achieve the objective**	**dd/mm/yy**

Example of a SMART Objective (Researcher)

Successfully communicate my research by publishing research outcomes and /or presenting a paper at a (named) national or international conference to be held on dd/mm/yy.

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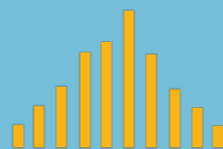
Specific

What will the reviewee do?

Submit research outcomes to a recognised journal and /or present at a conference

Measurable

How will the Reviewee/Reviewer know?

Papers will be published and/or accepted as speaker at conference. Invited to speak at further events

Aligned/Achievable

Is this a priority and does it fit in with the strategy? Is it achievable?

Research meets funding priorities, aligns with DCU strategic Goal 2

Relevant

How does it fit with the Reviewee's role and grade?

Appropriate for the role of the reviewee and relevant as they seek to grow their reputation within their field of research

Time bound

What are the target dates?

Publication dates for the journals and /or submission dates for abstracts for conference papers

Example of a SMART Objective (Academic)

Design innovative curriculum content suitable for blended delivery achieving high quality student feedback by Semester 1, 2021.

Smart Objective Example (Academic)

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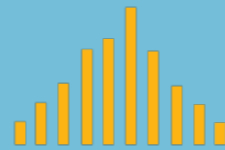

Specific	Measurable	Aligned/Achievable	Relevant	Time bound
What will the reviewee do?	How will the Reviewee/Reviewer know?	Is this a priority and does it fit in with the strategy? Is it achievable?	How does it fit with the Reviewee's role and grade?	What are the target dates?
Design curriculum content suitable for blended delivery	**High quality Student feedback from evaluation forms**	Current remote teaching requirements necessitate an innovative blended delivery approach. Meets Strategic Goal 1	Appropriate for the role of the reviewee and relevant as they seek to develop innovation and creativity	Semester 1, 2021

Resources

LinkedIn Learning:

Setting Team and Employee Goals Using SMART Methodology

https://www.linkedin.com/learning/setting-team-and-employee-goals-using-smart-methodology/setting-team-and-employee-goals?u=2372722

Performance Management: Setting Goals and Managing Performance

https://www.linkedin.com/learning/performance-management-setting-goals-and-managing-performance/crafting-appropriate-goals?u=2372722

Examples of SMART objectives used in this presentation are drawn from Edinburgh Napier University and University of Glasgow

file:///C:/Users/Susan/Documents/DCU/PRD/Objectives/Smart%20Objectives%20Uni%20of%20Glasgow.pdf

For more information on completing your PRD see https://www.dcu.ie/hr/performance-review-development-prd

HUMAN RESOURCES

Performance Review and Development

SMART Objectives Examples

Below you will find some examples of the type of objectives that you might include in your PRD. The relevance of the objective to you will depend on your role and level of responsibility that you have. For example, objectives concerning leadership or management might be less relevant to new colleagues.

Colleagues are encouraged to refer to the Academic Career Development Framework, the Research Framework and the Professional Development Framework criteria for completing their objectives.

Academics & Researchers

Research

- To develop, and design xx research proposals as a normal part of undertaking research, objectives and projects by dd/mm/yy which are successfully approved.
- To deliver xx presentations or exhibitions at national and international conferences and other similar events which receive x% of feedback from delegates which is rated good or very good.
- To apply innovative teaching techniques including technology enhanced learning, which create interest, understanding and enthusiasm amongst students, as measured through improved evaluation results of xx%.
- Attain national recognition of leadership in the profession or discipline by publishing research outcomes and /or presenting a paper at a (named) national or international conference to be held on dd/mm/yy.
- To be successful in obtaining x number of research grants/specific research grants by dd/mm/yy.
- To increase percentage of successful research funding applications by x per cent by dd/mm/yy.
- To improve External Presence by effectively managing the school's social media accounts, and growing the follower base by xx% in the next academic year.
- To increase the number of Research students by investigating new PhD opportunities

Teaching & Learning

- To identify one area for enhancement within my current learning, teaching and assessment practice, reflecting on appropriate evaluation from students and other evidence, and develop an action plan by dd/mm/yyyy.
- To work with relevant colleagues on the development of the new XX module for approval to be received by the start of the next academic year.
- To create and share Teaching and Learning materials throughout the academic year, such as Moodle platforms, textbooks and blogs.
- To develop a substantial revision to the programme structure and content of XX course before the next due commencement of XX course.
- Support the school in increasing student recruitment by XX% on previous year's recruitment.
- To contribute to improvement of XX% overall satisfaction in the School's Student Survey this year.
- To engage in continuing professional development in relation to teaching, learning, assessment, and as appropriate, related academic or professional practices throughout the academic year.

Academics & Researchers

Academic Leadership

- To take on the responsibilities of XX Module/Programme/Subject Group Chair by dd/mm/yy.
- To engage in Teaching and Learning activity outside the university, such as external examining or membership of national or international bodies and editorial boards.
- To take on membership of XX School/University committee by dd/mm/yy.
- Obtain a role as an external examiner by dd/mm/yy.
- To lead in the management, support and development of xx research students by dd/mm/yy.
- To support or mentor xx members of staff in research area, including Early Career Researchers, to build capacity and capability by dd/mm/yy.
- To mentor and support xx new academic colleagues as part of their induction.
- To supervise successfully xx postgraduate research students in learning and teaching by dd/mm/yy.
- To undertake, complete and record in Core Talent, all PRD's with my reportees within timescales set out by the University.
- To create a school learning and development plan for management team and whole school that connects to the university strategy.
- To ensure that 100% of information and records processed (received, created, used, destroyed) on behalf of the University are managed in compliance with the applicable legislation/regulations and internal policies e.g. Data Protection Policy.
- To support or mentor xx members of staff in research area, including Early Career Researchers, to build capacity and capability by dd/mm/yy.
- To supervise successfully xx postgraduate research students in learning and teaching by dd/mm/yy

Professional & Technical Services

Professional

- To review the school's filing systems and make recommendations for improvements to Line Manager by mm/yy with agreed implementation of recommendations by dd/mm/yy.
- Develop and implement an action plan to reduce error costs in accounting by dd/mm/yy resulting in accurate accounting report standards within two weeks of the monthly close.
- To effectively and efficiently take the lead on organising the logistics for a Conference scheduled for dd/mm/yy by achieving a score of 4 out of 5 on average from customers on the feedback form under 'effective organisation of the event'.
- To achieve attendance of at least xx guests at a conference or event on dd/mm/yy by undertaking effective marketing activities.
- To up-date the Health & Safety policy document for X campus and ensure all staff are advised of changes by dd/mm/yy
- To improve customer satisfaction ratings regarding response times for processing requests from x% to Y% by dd/mm/yy
- To ensure that 100% of information and records processed (received, created, used, destroyed) on behalf of the University are managed in compliance with the applicable legislation/regulations and internal policies e.g. Data Protection Policy
- To ensure all student enquiries are dealt with within x days
- Maintain the AAA database by ensuring new data is added within 2 days.
- Student enquiries through the help desks are responded to within 24 hours of receipt.

Technical

- Ensure all laboratory equipment in building X passes equipment maintenance testing and produce an up-to-date inventory by dd/mm/yy.
- Produce high quality and flexible practical solutions for student project requirements
- Install and commission new equipment, processes or delivery methods
- Investigate opportunities for cross-school or cross- University collaboration in order to provide greater flexibility in service provision
- Liaise with external contractors and bodies on statutory test, maintenance and health and safety issues
- Liaise with academic colleagues on major developments involving space changes, refurbishments and new systems purchase

Professional & Technical Services

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