



## Session 2: Set SMART Academic Goals

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### Recap of Session 1

- Reflect on your experiences and progress from Session 1.
  - Discuss any tasks you completed, such as the list of goals you created.
  - Share any challenges or questions you faced, and work with your mentor to address them.
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## INTRODUCTION

### Welcome to Session 2: Setting SMART Academic Goals

This session focuses on helping you turn your aspirations into a clear, actionable roadmap. By learning to set SMART goals, you'll build focus, stay motivated, and enjoy a sense of accomplishment as you achieve your objectives. In the academic world, setting clear goals is like having a roadmap to success. But how do you ensure your goals are achievable and truly lead you in the right direction? This session will introduce the concept of SMART goals, a powerful tool used by top scholars and institutions globally. By working with your WMI mentor to set SMART goals, you'll gain the focus, motivation, and clear path needed to excel in your academic endeavors.

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## Understanding SMART Goals

### What are SMART Goals?

SMART is an acronym that stands for five key elements that will make your goals powerful and achievable. Let's break down each element.

#### **Specific (Well-defined, Clear)**

Clearly define your goal. What exactly do you want to achieve? Don't just say "improve my grades." Instead, define exactly what you want to achieve. For example, "Increase my GPA in Biology by 0.5 points by the end of the semester." The more specific your goal, the easier it is to track progress and stay motivated.



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## **Measurable (Quantifiable, Trackable)**

Measurable progress towards well-defined goals fuels motivation and keeps you engaged. How will you know if you've reached your goal? Define a way to measure your progress. This could involve numbers (e.g., GPA points, number of publications) or milestones (e.g., completing a research paper draft).

## **Attainable (Achievable, Realistic)**

Set a goal that is challenging but achievable within your capabilities and resources. Be ambitious, but also be realistic about what you can accomplish with the time and resources available. Discuss this with your WMI mentor to ensure your goals are challenging yet achievable within your capabilities.

## **Relevant (Meaningful, Aligned)**

Ensure your goal aligns with your overall academic aspirations and the WMI mentorship program. Make sure your goals align with your overall academic aspirations and the WMI mentorship program. Are these goals truly relevant to your academic journey and the support you'll receive through the program?

## **Time-bound (Time-limited, Deadline-driven)**

Set a realistic timeframe for achieving your goal. When do you want to accomplish this? Set a realistic timeframe for achieving your goal. This creates a sense of urgency and helps you stay focused. For example, "Publish a research paper co-authored with my mentor within one year."

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## **How to Set SMART Goals with Your WMI Mentor:**

### **Brainstorming**

During your initial meetings with your mentor, brainstorm potential academic goals that align with your interests and program objectives.

### **Refine and Define**

Work with your mentor to refine your goals using the SMART criteria. Make sure they are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.



### Develop an Action Plan

Create a step-by-step plan with your mentor to achieve your goals. This plan should outline specific actions, resources needed, and milestones for tracking progress.

### Activity 1: Transforming Goals into SMART Goals

#### 1. Brainstorm Common Academic Goals

Activity	Example
Brainstorm Common Goals	"Improve my grades."
Discuss Ineffectiveness	Explain why vague goals lack specificity or timelines.
SMART Transformation	Change "Improve my grades" to "Increase my GPA from 3.0 to 3.5 by the end of the semester by dedicating 2 hours daily to focused study."

2.

Example: "Improve my grades."

Discuss why such goals might not be effective (e.g., lack of specificity or timelines).

#### 3. Transform Goals Using the SMART Framework

Example: Change "Improve my grades" to "Increase my GPA from 3.0 to 3.5 by the end of the semester by dedicating 2 hours daily to focused study."

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### Identifying and Developing Your SMART Goals

#### Step 1: Identify Your Goals

- Reflect on your academic and personal aspirations for this semester or year.
- Think about your long-term dreams and how short-term goals will help you get there.



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### Step 2: Refine Your Goals Using the SMART Framework

Work with your mentor to make sure each of your goals follows the example table below.

Criterion	Question to Ask	Example
Specific	What exactly do I want to achieve?	Finish my lab reports two days before the deadline.
Measurable	How will I track progress?	Read two academic articles weekly.
Achievable	Is this realistic within my resources and abilities?	Dedicate 2 hours daily to focused study sessions.
Relevant	Does this align with my aspirations and mentorship program?	Goals should support overall academic or personal growth.
Time-bound	When will I achieve this?	Complete my research project by the end of April.

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### Benefits of SMART Goals

Imagine trying to navigate a maze blindfolded - that's what studying can feel like without clear goals. SMART goals are your academic GPS, providing the clarity and focus you need to reach your full potential. Here's how SMART goals act like a turbocharger for your academic success

#### Clear Roadmap

SMART goals provide a clear roadmap for your academic efforts, eliminating ambiguity and keeping you focused. Vague goals like "study more" leave you feeling lost. SMART goals define exactly what "study more" means for YOU. Think about the difference between "improve my grades" and "spend 2 extra hours studying each week for my Biology exam next month."



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Suddenly, you have a clear path to follow, eliminating confusion and keeping you focused on what truly matters.

### Measurable Milestones

Measurable progress towards well-defined goals fuels motivation and keeps you engaged. Picture yourself conquering a mountain, one step at a time. SMART goals work the same way. By setting measurable progress markers, you can celebrate mini-victories along the way. Imagine the satisfaction of completing that weekly study session you planned! These milestones keep you motivated and engaged in the long run.

### Time Management Mastery

Time-bound goals encourage effective time management skills to ensure you stay on track. Picture yourself conquering a mountain, one step at a time. SMART goals work the same way. By setting measurable progress markers, you can celebrate mini-victories along the way. Imagine the satisfaction of completing that weekly study session you planned! These milestones keep you motivated and engaged in the long run.

### Confidence Boost

Achieving SMART goals fosters a sense of accomplishment and boosts your confidence. Accomplishing SMART goals is like winning a trophy for your academic achievements! As you reach each milestone and achieve your goals, you'll build a sense of accomplishment. This newfound confidence is like a superpower, giving you the belief in yourself to tackle even bigger academic challenges in the future.

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## Activity 2: Create an Action Plan for Each Goal

Step	Example
<b>Outline Steps</b>	List specific actions (e.g., Attend all classes, revise daily, join a study group).
<b>Set Milestones</b>	Break goals into smaller tasks (e.g., Score above 85% on the next two quizzes).
<b>Define a Timeline</b>	Establish deadlines for each step and milestone (e.g., Complete research project draft by March 15).



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## 1. Outline Steps

List specific actions you will take to achieve each goal.

Example: For “Improve my GPA,” steps might include attending all classes, revising daily, and joining a study group.

## 2. Set Milestones

Break your goal into smaller milestones (e.g., “Score above 85% on the next two quizzes.”).

## 3. Define a Timeline

Establish deadlines for each step and milestone.

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## Preparation for Next Session: Time Management

### Activity

Track your time for one typical day this week.

- Record your activities, including classes, studying, leisure, and sleep.
- Reflect on how you currently use your time and areas where you might make improvements.

Bring your time log to the next session to discuss strategies for optimizing your time management.

### Feedback

After this session, please complete the mentee feedback form to share your thoughts and suggestions.

**Mentee feedback form:** [Feedback Form Link](#)