

How to set achievable goals?



Test Yourself

- ① I find it hard to motivate myself to start an action.
(for solutions, go to part 1)
- ② I find it hard to set goals.
(for solutions, go to part 2)
- ③ I find it hard to follow through with my goals.
(for solutions, go to part 3)



1. What are GOALS?

Goals are the desired ends that direct our efforts.

It is a motivating force that keeps us with our action towards the positive outcomes.


Setting good goals is vital for achieving and excelling in both our academic and personal life.



Checkpoint 1

What are good goals?

Are the followings good goals?
Why and why not?

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- I need to achieve good grades as this is my mother's wish.
 - I should get high marks in all of the courses.
 - I think I need to learn everything covered in this semester.
 - I want to go for straight As in this semester.
 - I just hope to have a mere pass in the subjects that I take.
 - I will obtain higher marks than Peter in this course.

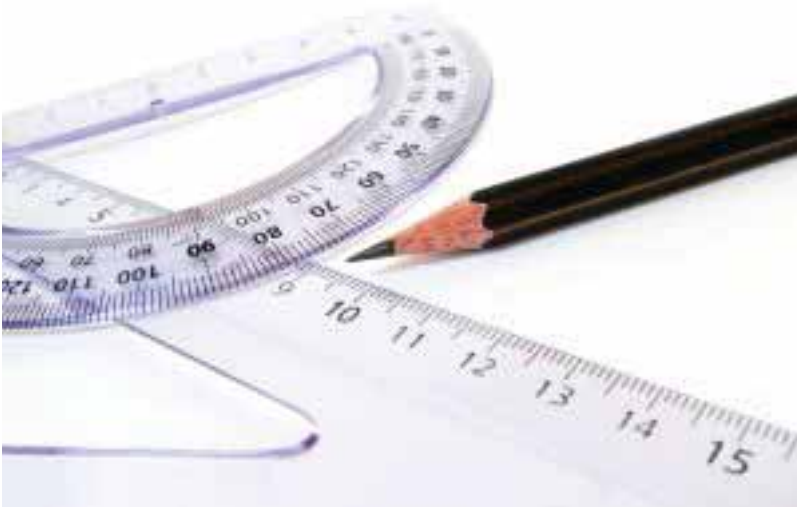
2. Characteristics of Good Goals

Good goals should possess the following characteristics:

1. Self-chosen: Goals set by others (e.g. parents, teachers, friends) may not be meaningful to you. We are more motivated to achieve goals that are set by our own self.

2. Specific: It is difficult to achieve a goal that is too general. What does that mean by “high marks” and “good grades”? A specific milestone will give us clearer directions to pursue further.





3. Measurable: Without any measurable indicator, it is difficult to evaluate whether we are “doing well in the course” or “learning everything in the class”. Quantify your goals with numbers, indicators, and examples.

4. Realistic: Best not to set goals that are unrealistically high or unachievable. If the probability of success in our goal achievement to be very low, we will find it disappointing and demotivating. We may easily become learned helpless and even avoid paying efforts in it.



And...

5. Moderately Challenging: It is also demotivating if the standard is set too low. If we do not need much effort in achieving our goals, we will easily become satisfied and laid-back. A moderately-challenging goal is the best to lead you through.

6. Learning-oriented: Comparisons and competitions can be motivating in nature, but what if our competitors are way too strong that we cannot live up with? What if the competitors are not too good and we can easily achieve better than them? It is more realistic and manageable to compare with oneself and aim at personal improvements over time.

7. Time-bounded: Without a time limit, we may have temptations for procrastination. Setting up a reasonable time frame can help us monitor our progress.



Checkpoint 2

Setting your own goals

Now

Set your short-term goals for the coming day or week. Make sure that your goals possess the characteristics of good goals listed before.



3. Achieving Goals

Goals can never be achieved without concrete actions. After setting goals, it is important for us to **ACT** accordingly.

1. Set Priorities: There are always competitive demands and goals in our lives. Prioritize your work and goals given the limited time and resources.

2. Develop Action Plans: Goals without actions is of no practical value. Develop achievable and manageable steps in achieving your goals. List out the materials required for each step or action.

3. Set Time Frames: List the steps or actions in sequence and set realistic time frames to achieve them.

4. Evaluate and Revise Action Plans Periodically: Close monitoring of progress helps you follow through on your action plans. Evaluate your attainment periodically. Revise your plans as necessary to keep you up with your goals.

Checkpoint 3

Transforming goals into actions



From the goals set in checkpoint 2, prioritize them based on their relative importance to you. Select the most important goal in the list above and work out an action plan using the template below.

Goal: _____

Action/Step in Sequence	Materials required	Due Date	Date of Completion	Self Evaluation
1.				
2.				
3.				

Recap



Characteristics of Good Goals

- Self-chosen
- Specific
- Measurable
- Moderately Challenging
- Realistic
- Learning-oriented
- Time-bounded



Achieving Goals

- Set Priorities
- Develop Action Plans
- Set Time Frames
- Evaluate and Revise Action Plans Periodically

Further information:

Study Smart

<http://cedars.hku.hk/studysmart>

Study tips compiled by CEDARS - Counselling and Person Enrichment

<http://w3.cedars.hku.hk/counselling>

FAQ Videos for Successful University Life

<http://wp.cedars.hku.hk/web/faqvideos/>

