

[See this page in the course material.](#)

## Learning Objectives

- Explain how time management plays a factor in goal setting, leading to short-term, medium-term, and long-term objectives

There is no doubt that doing well in college is a sizable challenge, especially for first-year students, who run the greatest risk of dropping out. You are faced with new physical surroundings, new social environments, new daily tasks and responsibilities, and most likely new financial obligations. Overall, you are swamped with new challenges! Do you feel confident that you can attend to all of them in a balanced, committed way? What will be your secret of success?

## Success Begins with Goals

Goals! A *goal* is a desired result that you envision and then plan and commit to achieve. Goals can relate to family, education, career, wellness, spirituality, and many other areas of your life. Generally, goals are associated with finite time expectations, even deadlines.



As a college student, many of your goals are defined for you. For example, you must take certain courses, you must comply with certain terms and schedules, and you must turn in assignments at specified times. These goals are mostly set for you by someone else.

But there are plenty of goals for you to define yourself. For example, you decide what you'd like to major in. You decide how long you are going to be in college or what terms you want to enroll in. You largely plan how you'd like your studies to relate to employment and your career.

Goals can also be sidetracked. Consider the following scenario in which a student makes a discovery that challenges her to reexamine her goals, priorities, and timetables:

Janine had thought she would be an accountant, even though she knew little about what an accounting job might entail. Her math and organizational skills were strong, and she enjoyed taking economics courses and well as other courses in her accounting program. But when one of her courses required her to spend time in an accounting office working with taxes, she decided that accounting was not the right fit for her, due to the higher-stress environment and the late hours.

At first she was concerned that she invested time and money in a career path that did not match her disposition. She feared that changing her major would add to her graduation time. Nevertheless, she did decide to change her major and her career focus.

Janine is now a statistician with a regional healthcare system. She is very happy with her work. Changing her major from accounting to statistics was the right decision for her.

This scenario represents some of the many opportunities we have, on an ongoing basis, to assess our relationship to our goals, reevaluate priorities, and adjust. Opportunities exist every day—every moment, really!

Below is a set of questions we can ask ourselves at any turn to help focus on personal goals:

1. What are my top-priority goals?
2. Which of my skills and interests make my goals realistic for me?
3. What makes my goals believable and possible?
4. Are my goals measurable? How long will it take me to reach them? How will I know if I have achieved them?
5. Are my goals flexible? What will I do if I experience a setback?
6. Are my goal controllable? Can I achieve them on my own?
7. Are my goals in sync with my values?

As you move through your college career, make a point to ask these questions regularly.

# Aids to Successful Goal Setting

The following video examines five aids to help ensure that your goal setting will be effective and will “take hold” and serve you in the short and long term.



[See this interactive in the course material.](#)

You can view the [transcript for “Five Rules of Goal Setting: How to set SMART Goals” here \(opens in new window\).](#)

## Short-, Medium-, and Long-Term Goals

In order to achieve long-term goals (from college on), you’ll need to first achieve a series of shorter goals. Medium-term goals (this year and while in college) and short-term goals (today, this week, and this month) may take several days, weeks, months, or even a few years to complete, depending on your ultimate long-term goals. Identify what you will need to do in order to achieve your all goals. Gain a full view of your trajectory.

### Examples of Long-Term Academic Goals

- I plan to graduate with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. My major will be Radio-Television-Film, and my minor will be Spanish.
- I plan to graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service degree with a major in international history.
- I plan to attain an associate’s degree in nursing (ADN).

### Examples of Medium-Term or Short-Term Academic Goals:

- I would like to study abroad in Spain before I graduate.
- I want to get involved in a service-learning project in my community, as part of my

preparation for eventual service work.

- I plan to join the student government organization so that I can gain some experience at the community college where I take classes part-time.

Additional immediate goals might be applying for financial aid, getting a part-time job, taking a short leave of absence, speaking with a counselor, and so forth.

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