

Effective Goal Setting for QB3-Berkeley PhDs

Use a “SMART” framework such as the one below to define goals, and to lay out the steps towards achieving them. For any skill or competency you wish to develop further, consider how it fits in your IDP, and your goals for the year.

Specific - What do you want to accomplish? Is the goal clear to you?

Measurable - What does the completed goal look like? What data will measure the outcome you are seeking? (e.g. “how much” or “how well”?)

Attainable - What will make it possible for you to attain the goal? What knowledge, abilities, and resources (including time!) will you employ to accomplish your aims?

Relevant - Does your goal align with the multiple priorities in your life? Why is the result important?

Time-bound - Specify a deadline for the goal and timeframe for any intermediary steps. What actions will it take on your part?

Describe the goal you are setting for yourself – what do you want to accomplish or what skill do you want to develop (be as specific as possible, including why this is important to you at this time):

I need to finally get the first draft of this paper/thesis written. I have felt overwhelmed lately, esp. with needing to work at home with kids. Want to be better organized and figure out ways to focus on writing. End goal: have some routine to know I am addressing what I need to, set and meet my target dates for getting my paper out, and (ideally) the result is I feel productive and less stressed.

Describe how you will attain the goal – what actions will you take, what resources will you need (including help or actions by others such as your advisors):

- Start keeping better track of my schedule and set aside regular time in the morning to just get a sense of what I have to do that day. Start with bcal but look into time-track/project management software - Trello, Pomello, etc.
- Probably it would help to talk to other students about what they are doing to get through their projects and fitting in their writing
- Attend the time management tips workshop offered by GradPro/GradDiv or something like it
- Look into Graduate Writing Center for support (advising/writing group?)
<https://grad.berkeley.edu/professional-development/graduate-writing-center/>
- Consider accountability mechanism - maybe someone to check in with, or setting up some reward system to help stick to my timeline
- Just start writing! Don't spend too much time creating the “perfect” environment/system

Describe your timeframe for accomplishing the goal – make sure you include a list of intermediary steps towards its completion. If other's actions are required, include those in your timeline/schedule:

- My aim is to take action on this soon, like starting tomorrow. I think I should start with the organization and scheduling.
- By end of this week, develop a tentative schedule for next week and sign up for relevant workshops/advising (this week, or as soon as I can)
 - Sometime by the end of next week start using Trello or something else that is recommended to me (so, need to ask around by end of next week)
 - Come up with weekly writing goals to ideally finish manuscript by mid-November. Engage with accountability (check in with advisor? reward system?) if seem to be off track.
 - Ideally - Thanksgiving break totally free for family time.

Additional SMART goal information, and relevant examples

- <https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2013/12/goal-setting-strategies-scientific-and-career-success>
- <https://irp.nih.gov/blog/post/2016/07/using-smart-goals-to-make-scientific-progress>
- <https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2006/12/mastering-your-phd-setting-goals-success>