

Writing SMART Goals

1) A practical guide for meaningful goals at St. Olaf College

Your SMART goal could connect to one of the three things:

- Your job
- St. Olaf College's Mission
- Professional Development

2) Make your goal SMART

S — SPECIFIC

What exactly will I do or accomplish?

→ Name the action, outcome, or area of focus.

M — MEASURABLE

How will I know I made progress or succeeded?

→ Identify evidence: a deliverable, milestone, number, behavior, feedback, or outcome.

A — ACHIEVABLE

Is this realistic but still meaningful?

→ Consider your time, resources, responsibilities, and available support.

R — RELEVANT

Why does this matter?

→ Connect the goal to your role, team priorities, St. Olaf's mission, or your professional development.

T — TIME-BOUND

When will I accomplish it?

→ Include a clear deadline, timeframe, or milestones.

3) REMEMBER

A SMART goal is more than a to do list.

It is meaningful work, how you will know you succeeded, and why the work matters.

Think: What will I do? → Why does it matter? → How will I know? → By when?

Example of a SMART goal

By May 31, 2027, I will reduce my email backlog to fewer than 50 unread messages and respond to at least 90% of emails requiring a response within 48 business hours, while maintaining my sanity and resisting the urge to dramatically announce, “I’m never checking email again.”

S Specific <u>What exactly will I do or accomplish?</u>	Reduce my email backlog and improve my response time.
M Measurable <u>How will I know I made progress or succeeded?</u>	Get the inbox below 50 unread messages and respond to 90% of emails within 48 business hours.
A Achievable <u>Is this realistic but still meaningful?</u>	Spend 15 minutes at the beginning and end of each workday managing email.
R Relevant <u>Why does this matter?</u>	Better email management will improve productivity and help me keep up with communication in a higher education environment.
T Time-Bound <u>When will I accomplish it?</u>	Achieve the goal by May 31, with progress tracked monthly.