



**Institutional  
Effectiveness and Research**

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A&M-COMMERCE

# Writing Goals for Support Unit Assessment

2020 IE Spring Series

# Agenda

- I. Define goals and their importance
- II. Discuss how to develop and write goals
- III. Review common issues when writing goals
- IV. Activity
- V. Closing announcements

# What is a goal?

**A goal is considered an observable and measurable outcome that assesses a particular process, service, or experience.**

It represents an impact or quality improvement the unit would like to see as a result of its actions  
*(Outcome)*

**A goal is NOT what you do but rather the desired *intended effect* of what you do.**

# Why are goals important?

- Guide strategic planning for the unit
- Identify achievable quality improvements
- Create a framework for assessing overall effectiveness of the unit

“Assessment gives us several ways to gather, interpret, and use data to provide information we need to take appropriate action.” (Walvoord, 2010)

# Developing Goals

## Sources to consult:

- Unit or division mission/vision/strategic plan
- University mission/vision/strategic plan
- Professional association guidelines
- Industry practices/standards

# Developing Goals

## Questions to ask:

- What is the overall purpose of the unit? (*mission*)
- What does the unit do to support this purpose? (*output*)
- What additional impact or quality improvement would the unit like to see as a result of those actions? (*outcome*)

# Example #1

**What is the overall purpose of the unit?**  
*(mission)*

Improve student grades and enhance learning

**What does the unit do to support this purpose?**  
*(output)*

Provide tutoring services to students

**What additional impact or quality improvement would the unit like to see as a result of its actions?** *(outcome)*

The number of students utilizing the tutoring center will increase

# Example #2

**What is the overall purpose of the unit?**  
*(mission)*

Act as a source of communication on behalf of the university

**What does the unit do to support this purpose?**  
*(output)*

Respond to external news media inquiries

**What additional impact or quality improvement would the unit like to see as a result of its actions?** *(outcome)*

All inquiries from the news media will be answered in a timely manner.

**OUTPUTS: What is your unit going to do?**

<i>Areas of Action</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Sample Verbs</i>	<i>Sample Behaviors</i>
<b>Maintain records, processes, or facilities</b>	Processes overseen or monitored by the unit	Maintain, monitor, collect, oversee, manage, comply	Maintain faculty records
<b>Perform tasks</b>	Tasks performed by the unit	Submit, record, track, enroll, process, complete, implement, prepare, organize	Process financial transactions
<b>Provide services and resources</b>	Services developed and offered by the unit to constituents	Develop, offer, provide, advise, train, instruct, educate, counsel, assist	Provide assistance to graduate students in the enrollment process
<b>Resolve problems</b>	Efforts to resolve complaints, disputes, or problems for constituents	Resolve, adjudicate, improve, support	Resolve customer service complaints
<b>Communicate information</b>	The communication, distribution, and promotion of relevant information to constituents	Communicate, promote, market, publicize, share, distribute	Promote unit services to the university community
<b>Create relationships and partnerships</b>	Efforts to bring in new constituents and stakeholders to serve or to partner with in unit activities	Recruit, establish, partner with, network, create, build, cultivate	Establish partnerships with industry internship providers

**OUTCOMES: What is the desired impact or quality of your unit's action?**

<i>Effectiveness Indicators</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Key Question</i>	<i>Sample Behaviors</i>
<b>Quality</b>	Improvements in the quality of the process/experience/service – flaws or errors resolved and value improvements made	How will the process/experience/service have more value because of this?	The error rate will be reduced
<b>Efficiency</b>	Processes are streamlined, resources are conserved, and productivity is increased	How will the process/experience/service operate more efficiently because of this?	The application process will be streamlined to eliminate redundancies
<b>Timeliness</b>	Time to completion is reduced and timeframes or relevant deadlines are achieved	How will relevant timeframes be positively impacted by this?	The report will be submitted prior to the agency deadline
<b>Cost</b>	Operating or student costs are reduced or optimized	How will costs be positively impacted by this?	Expenditures will be reduced by 5%
<b>Reach</b>	Increases are made in the number of people reached, impacted, or served by the process/experience/service	How many people/processes/entities will be impacted by this?	The number of student research presentations will increase by 15%
<b>Perceptions</b>	Changes are made in perceptions of or attitudes about the unit's processes/experiences/services	How do constituents view the process/experience/service?	95% of students will rate the academic advising they received as "Satisfactory" or "Very Satisfactory"
<b>Behavioral changes</b>	Services offered produce intended behaviors	What student/faculty/staff behaviors will change because of this?	Staff will follow safety procedures when operating university equipment
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	Services offered produce intended learning outcomes	What knowledge should students/faculty/staff be able to demonstrate because of this?	Students will be able to apply money management principles to their personal finance

# Sample formulas for writing goals

Formula #1:

[Description of desired impact or quality improvement]

Increase the number of students who visit the Tutoring Center to receive tutoring services.

Formula #2

[Constituents] who [description of constituents' participation in Unit's services] will [verb describing impact or quality improvement]

Students who attend the study skills workshop will be able to identify their learning style.

# Sample formulas for writing goals

Formula #1:

[Description of desired impact or quality improvement]

Outcomes related to:  
*Quality*  
*Efficiency*  
*Timeliness*  
*Cost*  
*Reach*

Formula #2

[Constituents] who [description of constituents' participation in Unit's services] will [verb describing impact or quality improvement]

Outcomes related to:  
*Perceptions*  
*Behavioral Changes*  
*Learning Outcomes*

# Activity #1

- Draft one goal which states a desired impact or quality improvement the unit would like to see as a result of its actions. (see worksheet)

# Common Issues

- Measuring intervention instead of outcome

Ex. 1: Offer three workshops.

Ex. 2: Students who attend the study skills workshop will be able to identify their learning style.

# Common Issues

- Covering multiple outcomes in one statement

Ex. 1: Increase student attendance in order to increase usage of services and promote educational achievement.

Ex. 2: Increase the number of students who visit the Tutoring Center to receive assistance.

Ex. 3: Improve test scores in Core math courses

# Common Issues

- Outcomes that are difficult to observe or measure

Ex. 1: Improve the health of students.

Ex. 2: Increase the number of students who receive flu vaccinations

Ex. 3: Students who complete the wellness survey will Agree or Strongly Agree that A&M-Commerce provides services which allow them to practice a healthy lifestyle.

# Common Issues

- Outcomes that are unrealistic or unattainable given the conditions/time

Ex. 1: Enroll 69,000 students in Fall 2020.

Ex. 2: The admit-to-enroll rate will increase by 2% over the prior year.

# Activity #2

- Indicate where the following goals fall in the range of weak to strong. Rewrite each goal to make it stronger, as applicable. (see worksheet)

# Final Considerations

Can the goal be used to identify areas to improve?

Do the unit goals accurately reflect the strategic planning of the unit?

Department of Institutional Effectiveness & Research

## Institutional Effectiveness SPRING SERIES

*This event series offers professional development opportunities for continuous improvement within academic programs and support units.*

Register at [TAMUC.EDU/IER](https://www.tamuc.edu/ier)

## SUPPORT UNIT WORKSHOPS

Mar 26      Fundamentals of Assessment Methods

Apr 29      Using Results for Improvement

**Location:** RSC Ambition A&B      **Time:** 2:00-3:00 pm

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