

# Creating Planning Unit Mission, Goals, and Objectives

## Mission

Mission is a general statement succinctly outlining the overall purpose and function of the unit. A mission describes what the unit does and for whom. A mission should be aligned with the college's mission. It should not change except in the event of fundamental changes to the role or purpose of the unit.

A mission statement should address:

- What is your department's purpose?
- What needs does it fulfill?
- Who does it exist to serve?
- How does it help the college fulfill its mission?
- What activities and functions does it perform?
- What sets it apart from other departments?

## Goals

Goals are broad statements about the desired ends to which a unit aspires—a vision for how the unit will fulfill its mission. Goals describe what the unit intends to achieve or to look like in the future. Goals are more specific than the mission, but still general enough that the department or program can use them for multiple years. They should connect directly to the unit's mission statement.

While they provide direction for the unit in setting its objectives, goals are less precise than clearly measurable objectives. Administrative goals might include such broad intentions as *provide a quality experience, operate efficiently or maintain a positive climate for student development*. (Note, however, that in order to assess the objectives for these goals, one must be able to specifically define "quality," "efficiency" and "positive.")

## Objectives (Intended Outcomes)

An objective is the intended outcome of an activity being undertaken to achieve a goal. It is more specific than a goal and describes one way to achieve the goal.

There are three types of objectives typically used for administrative units. It is common to find a mixture of process, learning outcome and satisfaction objectives in a given unit

Type	Focus	Examples of Objectives
PROCESS	Focused on desired quality of key functions and services (i.e. timeliness, accuracy, efficiency,	1. Accounting office will reduce vendor statement processing time from 7 to 4 hours.

	volume, responsiveness, compliance, etc.)	2. Registrar’s office will shorten response time for transcript requests from 7 to 4 days.
<b>LEARNING OUTCOME</b>	Focused on how services or educational support have impacted/changed a student (or faculty or staff member) in terms of knowledge, skills, attitude or values	1. 80% of graduates seeking employment will have the ability to write an acceptable career resume. 2. 75% of students seeking summer internships will be able to access and use an online experiential learning search tool.
<b>SATISFACTION</b>	Focused on levels of overall satisfaction with the services provided	1. Increase student satisfaction with the overall online registration process from 70% to 80% by academic year 2017. 2. 80% of graduates using the Office of Career Development will be satisfied with their job advisement services.

Objectives (a.k.a. intended outcomes) should be **SMART**:

Each objective should be **Specific** to the unit.

- The objective should be associated with key processes and services provided to students, parents, employers, faculty members, etc.
- The objective should be distinctive to the unit that is conducting assessment.

The objective should be **Measurable** and results oriented.

- The objective should include quantifiable statements that can be used to determine progress toward the overall goal.
- The collection of accurate and reliable data should be feasible for the unit.
- The objective should produce results that can be used for program, service or operational improvements.

The objective should be **Attainable** and realistic.

- Consideration should be given to the available resources (e.g., staff, technology, assessment support, institutional-level surveys, etc.) in determining whether the objectives are attainable and the collection of data for each objective is a realistic expectation.
- There should be an aggressive but realistic level of improvement expected.
- Careful consideration should also be given to the timeframe established to achieve the expected unit objectives.

The objective should be **Related** and **Relevant** to the unit's mission.

- The objective should focus on intentions that are critical to the unit and its mission.
- The objective should aid in identifying where program, service or operational improvements are needed.

The objective should be **Time bound**.

- The objective should describe where the unit would like to be within a specified time period and when the assessment should be complete.

EXAMPLES:           10% increase in funding within one year  
                          90% satisfaction rating for next year  
                          10% improvement in student performance within 12 months

Objectives may be for a single assessment cycle (e.g., *Reduce vendor statement processing time from 7 to 4 hours by May 2015*) or may continue for more than one cycle (e.g., *Increase student satisfaction with the overall online registration process from 70% to 80% by academic year 2017.*)