



# Objective Setting Instruction Sheet and Samples

The Objective Setting Quality Conversation provides an opportunity for a manager and their employee to establish a shared understanding of performance expectations and work goals, and to ensure these are aligned with the needs and priorities of the unit/department/U of G.

This conversation typically takes place during the last quarter of the year/cycle in preparation for the next year, following the Performance Summary Quality Conversation. It is a good practice to refer to these objectives regularly (e.g., discuss and acknowledge progress during Check-In Conversations), as well as to update the objectives when changes occur that impact the employee's work priorities.

It is important that the manager shares the overall priorities of the unit, department, and university in advance of setting objectives as this helps each employee to see more clearly how their individual efforts and performance contributes to the overall mission of the unit/department/U of G.

The number of objectives set will be determined by the unit/departmental goals and scope of the job; however, **aim for a maximum of three to five objectives/projects** that support unit/department priorities.

## Types of Work Objectives

The objectives set will typically fall into one of these three categories:

1. **An Improvement Objective:** Taking something that is already being done and doing it better. Identify what level of improvement should be reached and by when (e.g. Increase the number of clients in workshops by 30%).
2. **A Maintenance Objective:** Maintaining an activity or output at the same predetermined standard and helping by contributing to the maintenance of departmental standards of quality (e.g. Ensure clients receive a response within 24 hours).
3. **A Development Objective:** Doing something completely new, or developing an existing activity into a new direction or for a different customer group. Ensure the objective is relevant and contributes to either the key result areas for the job or to departmental plans (e.g. Launch a new client survey program).

Setting performance standards for each objectives provides clarity about the observable behaviors that enable achievement and make it easier to recognize when progress is being made. Performance standards are typically expressed in one of these ways:

- **Quantity:** specifies how much work must be completed within a certain period of time (e.g., enters 30 enrollments per day).

- **Quality:** describes how well the work must be accomplished. Specifies accuracy, precision, appearance, or effectiveness (e.g., 95% of documents submitted are accepted without revision).
- **Timeliness:** answers questions such as: By when? How soon? Within what period? (e.g., all work orders completed within five working days of receipt).
- **Effective Use of Resources:** used when performance can be assessed in terms of utilization of resources: money saved, waste reduced, etc. (e.g., the computer handbook project will be completed with only internal resources).
- **Manner of Performance:** describes conditions in which an individual's personal behavior has an effect on performance (e.g., assists other employees in the work unit in accomplishing assignments).
- **Method of Performing Assignments:** describes requirements; used when only the officially-prescribed policy, procedure, or rule for accomplishing the work is acceptable (e.g., 100A Forms are completed in accordance with established office procedures).

## Sample Objective for Employee A:

**Unit/Department Priority:** Increase applications for department's programs.

**Work Objective 1:** Partner with IT and external designer to replace the existing outdated departmental website with a new, visually appealing, and easy to navigate one that will engage students and draw significantly more traffic.

**Learning and Resources that will support Work Objective 1:**

- Time to participate in AODA compliance course to ensure all content posted on web is compliant with new legislation.
- Support from manager to source external designer.

## Sample Objective for Employee B:

**Unit/Department Priority:** Provide excellent client service.

**Work Objective 1:** Continue to provide accurate and timely information to clients, acknowledging emails and phone inquiries within 24 hours and resolving client's inquiry within 3 days. Target is to achieve 75% or more of clients indicated satisfaction with services.

**Learning and Resources that will support Work Objective 1:**

- Bring repeat issues that come up on a regular basis to the weekly client issue resolution meetings.
- Support the clients' utilization of the online Q&A guide by ensuring to mention it on each call and pointing out where they can find it.

## Sample Objective for Employee C:

**Unit/Department Priority:** Employee safety in the lab.

**Work Objective 1:** Expand the level of detail provided in the safety procedures and safety check protocols.

**Learning and Resources that will support Work Objective 1:**

- Consult with Environmental Health and Safety Consultant to identify appropriate resources that will support this task.
- Attend the Laboratory Safety Conference in June to gain insight into good practice and information that could be helpful.

**Sample Objective for Employee D:**

**Unit/Department Priority:** Cultivate a supportive and inclusive work environment

**Work Objective 1:** Develop a new employee welcoming program that will ensure new hires get the information and personal support they need from their manager and peers to feel part of the team and contribute their best.

**Learning and Resources that will support Work Objective 1:**

- Connect with Human Resources to identify what is currently being included in NEW Days and if they have any resources to support departmental new employee welcome program.
- Reach out to colleagues across campus to identify what good practices others have in place that could work in this department.
- Meet with recent hires from the past two years and identify what we have done well and what was a challenge with regards to supporting them and ensuring they feel included in their first couple of years in the department.