SMART Goals

SMART is an acronym and an approach for setting yourself goals that are: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. When using this approach, aim to reflect honestly on your own learning and personal development, and to identify areas for improvement.

SMART goals can be used to motivate you to work towards achieving a specific objective, and to plan and structure the process. By thinking carefully about what you want to achieve and determining a clear course of action, you will have a better understanding of what your goals really are and how you can achieve them. Consider using the SMART goal technique in your studies and co-curricular activities to help your planning.

SMART goals are defined by the following characteristics:

**Specific** – To help you write a specific goal, think about: Who is involved? What do you want to achieve? Why do you want to achieve it? Ensure that your goal is well defined and clear.

For example, instead of “I want to get more feedback from my classmates as a Class Representative”, consider “I will increase the number of students providing comments by doing two additional lecture shouts before the next Staff-Student Liaison Committee Meeting.”

**Measurable** – You will need to be able to know how close you are to attaining your goal and when you have achieved it. Ask yourself questions such as “How many...?”, “How much...?” or decide on other criteria that will help you to know when you have achieved your goal.

**Achievable** – Make sure that your goal is realistic given your available time, resources and support. This does not mean that your goal cannot be ambitious, but you need to make sure that your aim is reasonable. However, your goal should be significant; by setting a goal too low, it will seem meaningless.

**Relevant** – Your goal should be relevant to your aims. In other words, you should actively want to achieve it! When writing down your goal(s), make sure that they are worthwhile.

**Time-bound** – Write down time-related criteria for your goal. This will help create a sense of focus, and knowing by when you want to achieve your goal will help you get there.

*Next steps:* Complete the tables in the “Setting SMART Goals” document. You should include as much detail as possible in each section. Documents outlining SMART goals can also form part of your MyAberdeen Portfolio to demonstrate your personal development and organisational skills as part of your STAR Award submission or to inform graduate job applications.