

Guide for Writing Goals, Objectives, and Actions

1. *Goal*

- a. You must enter at least one goal.
- b. At the program level, a goal is a major aspiration that the program intends to realize over the next three years.
- c. A program goal should have the following characteristics:
 - 1) Reflects the program's Big Picture
 - 2) Clearly serves the interests of the program as a whole
 - 3) Ambitious—even audacious!—yet attainable in principle
 - 4) Achievement of the goal represents a major improvement in the functioning of the program, and/or significant progress toward realization of the program's vision for the future.
 - 5) Relatively long-range and stable over time, until it is achieved
- d. Remember to list your goals in priority order, with Goal 1 being most important.
- e. Examples
 - 1) Meet the learning needs of underperforming students in the department.
 - 2) Ensure that the scope and timeliness of all department services are sufficient to meet client needs.
 - 3) Triple the fundraising capacity of the department.
 - 4) Maximize student engagement with the college.

2. *Objective*

- a. You must enter at least one objective under every goal.
- b. At the program level, an objective is a concrete, measurable milestone on the way to achieving a goal.
- c. Each program objective should have the following characteristics:
 - 1) Relevant and significant with respect to the applicable goal
 - 2) Brings the goal down to earth in clear language
 - 3) Achievement of the objective represents significant progress toward achievement of that goal
 - 4) Achievement of all the objectives related to a goal does not necessarily mean achievement of that goal; it often represents completion of one phase of work that will continue with the formulation of additional objectives and actions.
 - 5) Specific
 - 6) Measurable
 - 7) Reasonable with respect to:
 1. Scope
 2. Timeline
 - 8) Lends itself to formulation of a coherent set of actions
- d. Examples
 - 1) Implement an afternoon and evening tutoring program for at-risk students taking classes in the department.
 - 2) Evaluate the match between client needs and department services.
 - 3) Develop and implement an alumni relations information system.
 - 4) Compile a set of best practices for community-college student engagement.

3. *Overall Priority*

- a. Establishing the overall priority of each objective is important to the unit in deciding how best to pursue all the goals and objectives during the next year. It is also important in the District's overall planning process, during which objective priorities across units are consolidated at the Department, Area, and District Office levels.
- b. Enter the overall priority of each objective among all unit objectives, regardless of goal. For example, if you have three unit goals, each with three objectives, rank the nine objectives in priority order, and enter the priorities from 1 to 9 in the web tool.
- c. The initial priority order of any resource requests will be determined by the priority order of the objectives with which they are associated.
- d. On average, the objectives under high-priority goals tend to be higher in overall priority than objectives under lower-priority goals. However, it is perfectly all right to rank an objective under a lower-priority goal higher overall than an objective under a higher-priority goal. In the example, the priority of the objectives under Goal 1 might be 1, 3, and 4, while the priority of the objectives under Goal 3 might be 2, 7, and 8.

4. *Person Responsible*

List the title and name of the specific person with overall responsibility for ensuring that progress on the objective occurs as planned.

5. *Timeline*

Provide a realistic, reasonable estimate of the time period during which work on the objective will occur. The end of this period represents the target date for achievement of the objective.

6. *Resources*

- a. List all the significant resources needed to achieve the objective, including personnel, training, technology, information, equipment, supplies, and space.
- b. Every resource request must support at least one objective.
- c. If you know of potential external sources of support for listed resources, please identify them here.
- d. Consult the Long-Range Financial Plan and Forecast provided by Business Services to help you plan your resource requests over the next three years.
- e. To assist you in planning and prioritizing human resources, consult the District Staffing Plan and the [Aggregated SBCCD Employee Demographics](#) dashboard.

7. *Rationale (Optional)*

For each resource listed, enter the reason(s) the resource is needed to achieve the objective.

8. *Cost/Savings*

- a. Enter the estimated additional cost of, or savings associated with, each resource listed (compared to the current year's budget). Please label savings as such; if an entry has no label, the committee will assume it represents a cost.
- b. If you need help in estimating costs or savings, please contact Business Services.

10. Actions/Tasks

- a. At the program level, an action is one of a coherent set of specific steps that must be taken to achieve the objective.
- b. Each action should have the following characteristics:
 - 1) Specific
 - 2) Reasonable with respect to:
 1. Scope
 2. Timeline
 3. Workloads
 - 3) May show the specific person with overall responsibility for ensuring that the action occurs as planned
 - 4) Completion of all the actions under an objective means achievement of that objective.
- c. Describe each action at an appropriate level of detail. If you end up with 25 actions for one objective, you probably have included too much detail; if you end up with two, you might have included too little.
- d. List the actions in a logical sequence.