



Criteria of a Successful Performance Objective

An objective is a statement in specific and measurable terms that describes what you intend to achieve.

SMART Objectives:

Specific

What specifically is to be achieved? Not just what actions are to be performed, but what results are to be achieved through the proposed actions? Keeping objectives simple ensures they are clear and specific. This also reduces the chance for disputes or confusion for reviewers. Complex objectives should be broken into sub-objectives. This allows individuals to focus their efforts and guides them in marshaling the resources necessary to achieve results.

Measurable

How will you know how well an objective has been achieved? Although it may not be readily apparent, every object can be measured. Some objectives can be measured quantitatively; others must be measured qualitatively. What data will be used to measure/track what is proposed and are those data available to provide ongoing feedback on how the objective is being accomplished? Measurements are subject to change and should be reviewed periodically.

Achievable

Accountability for performance objectives must be crystal clear and must specifically state who is accountable. The more detail the better. A clear definition of what is to be done will help reduce confusion for reviewers. Defining accountability will ensure a sense of urgency and purpose on the part of the proposal.

Realistic

For an objective to be meaningful, it must be realistic and reasonable. A well written performance objective focuses on the goals and objectives required to meet the objective. Objectives should challenge the PI toward continuous accomplishment, but should not be unrealistic or unattainable.

Time bound

An achievable time frame must be set for reaching the objective's goals. Consider assigning specific target dates not only for the performance objective itself, but also each lesser milestone linking the entire goal. Remember to be specific toward achieving results and guide action in a results-oriented way toward the objective.