

# How to set objectives

Having formal objectives set for each member of staff ensures that they are aware of what is expected of them and how their performance will be measured. Objectives should form part of the appraisal discussion, and be clearly documented for the benefit of both the manager and the member of staff.

Managers should consider the following hints and tips:

- Objective setting should be a mutual discussion about what both the manager and the member of staff feel is important and relevant.
- Although objectives might be set annually, they should be kept under regular review throughout the year, and updated as circumstances change.
- Objectives should be personal – they are about what the individual needs to do, not what everyone needs to do.
- Objectives should reflect the level and range of responsibilities that the individual has.
- Always include elements of personal development. Again, development should be a mutual discussion, taking into account the needs of the role over the longer term, and the individual's aspirations.
- A good objective is one that, when read by someone else, can easily be understood – what is expected of the member of staff would be clear.
- Always check in with the individual – are they clear, and do they have any concerns about the objectives or their ability to achieve them. Ask – is any support required?
- Objectives should be relevant both to the job role, but also the wider team or University aims and objectives. Take these into account when agreeing the focus for the future.
- Always include a timeframe or deadline for objectives, along with a measurement of success. How will you know when they have been achieved?
- The following questions can be a useful way to start a conversation:
  - What do you think are the most important things you could focus on?
  - What areas do you need or want to develop?
  - What do you need to achieve this year?
  - What will success look like at the end of this year?