

# Individual Development Plan

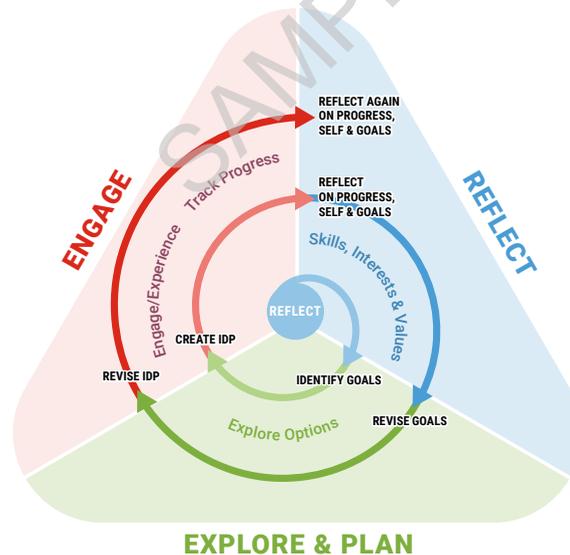
Goal setting is an important predictor of success in university and can help you transition successfully into your chosen career. By planning and aligning your activities with your goals, and tracking your progress, you can enhance your wellbeing and greatly increase your chances of achieving your goals.

## myPath

myPath's mission is to help you achieve your goals using an Individual Development Plan (IDP). Think of your IDP as a tailored roadmap that guides you from where you are now to where you want to be.

- **You can't make a plan if you don't know what you want!** An IDP can help you identify, articulate and prioritize your goals through self-discovery and reflection.
- **Think you have it figured out already?** Even if you already have a good sense of your overall goals, an IDP can help you to identify the specific steps that you will need in order to attain your goals, and will allow you to track your progress.

Your needs and interests will change over time, so it is important to revisit your IDP every 6 to 12 months. Creating your IDP is part of an iterative cycle that includes 3 phases:



myPath was custom built by McGill University Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. All of the exercises and activities in myPath are grounded in the literature on individual development, goal setting and student needs. To learn more about the IDP project, and check out the references used to develop the myPath toolkit, see:

[www.mcgill.ca/gps/students/idp](http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/students/idp)

# myPath Journal Kit

The myPath Journal Kit is designed to help you identify your goals, create your individual development plan, and track your progress.

## myPath IDP Workbook

<b>REFLECT</b>	Step 1 Reflect on Last Year Step 2 Understand Your Values Step 3 Identify Your Areas for Growth	<b>Module 1: Reflect &amp; Assess</b>  Spending 2–3 hours once a year to reflect on your needs, interests and abilities can go a long way towards creating meaningful plan. This module contains a variety of self-reflection exercises to help you better understand yourself and see how you have developed over time.
<b>EXPLORE</b>	Step 4 Imagine the Future Step 5 Create Your Vision	<b>Module 2: Brainstorm Your Future</b>  Now that you know yourself better, you will be better positioned to explore the options for your future. This module will help you to visualize and articulate your priorities so that you can focus on relevant goals and activities when you create your IDP.
<b>PLAN</b>	Step 6 Make a Plan Step 7 Complete Your IDP	<b>Module 3: Create your IDP</b>  Create a meaningful plan for the next year based on your vision for next year and beyond. This module will walk you through the steps of creating an IDP that will map out and define specific goals and activities that you want to pursue over the next year.  If you find it difficult to articulate your goals, consider going back to “Reflect & Assess” or “Brainstorm Your Future.”

## myPath IDP Planners

<b>ENGAGE</b>	Divided into 3 semesters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Autumn</b> (Sept 1 to Dec 31)</li><li>• <b>Winter</b> (Jan 1 to Apr 30)</li><li>• <b>Summer</b> (May 1 to Aug 31)</li></ul>	The myPath Planners can help you stay on track and revise your plans when life changes (which it does often!). Select your goals for the semester, identify specific projects you want to work on monthly, and plan your weekly tasks.
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*We recommend that you do the modules in order.  
But feel free to skip ahead if you are ready.*

# The Building Blocks of Planning

## VISION & PRIORITIES

**Year** Your vision is a description of who/where you want to be in the future. For many people, it can be hard to predict the future. Instead you can identify your annual priorities. Priorities are broad statements that describe what is important to you.

USE **MODULES 1 & 2** TO DEVELOP YOUR VISION OR PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR.

## GOALS

**Semester** Your goals are the broad concrete steps you need to take in order to achieve your vision or fulfill your priorities. Think about what your aspirations are for the upcoming semesters: What would you like to accomplish? What skills would you like to develop? How would you like to enhance your wellbeing?

USE **MODULES 2 & 3** TO HELP YOU CREATE YOUR GOALS.

## ACTIVITIES & PROJECTS

**Month** Break down your goals into specific projects and activities that you need to work on. Set monthly intentions to help you stay on track. These can have an end date, or they can be ongoing.

USE **MODULE 3** AND THE **MYPATH PLANNER** TO BREAK DOWN YOUR GOALS INTO PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES.

## ACTIONS & TASKS

**Week** University life is demanding and unstructured. To ensure that you focus on what is most important to you, it can be helpful to plan out your weekly actions and tasks. It can also be helpful to track the habits you want to work on.

USE THE **MYPATH PLANNER** TO CREATE MONTHLY PLANS AND KEEP TRACK OF WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AND TASKS.

## Three Domains of Life

In university, it can be easy to focus only on your **academic** goals and activities. However, your **personal wellbeing** has a significant impact on your engagement and motivation. It is also important to think about your **professional and career development** to ensure that you are concentrating on goals that serve your needs more broadly.

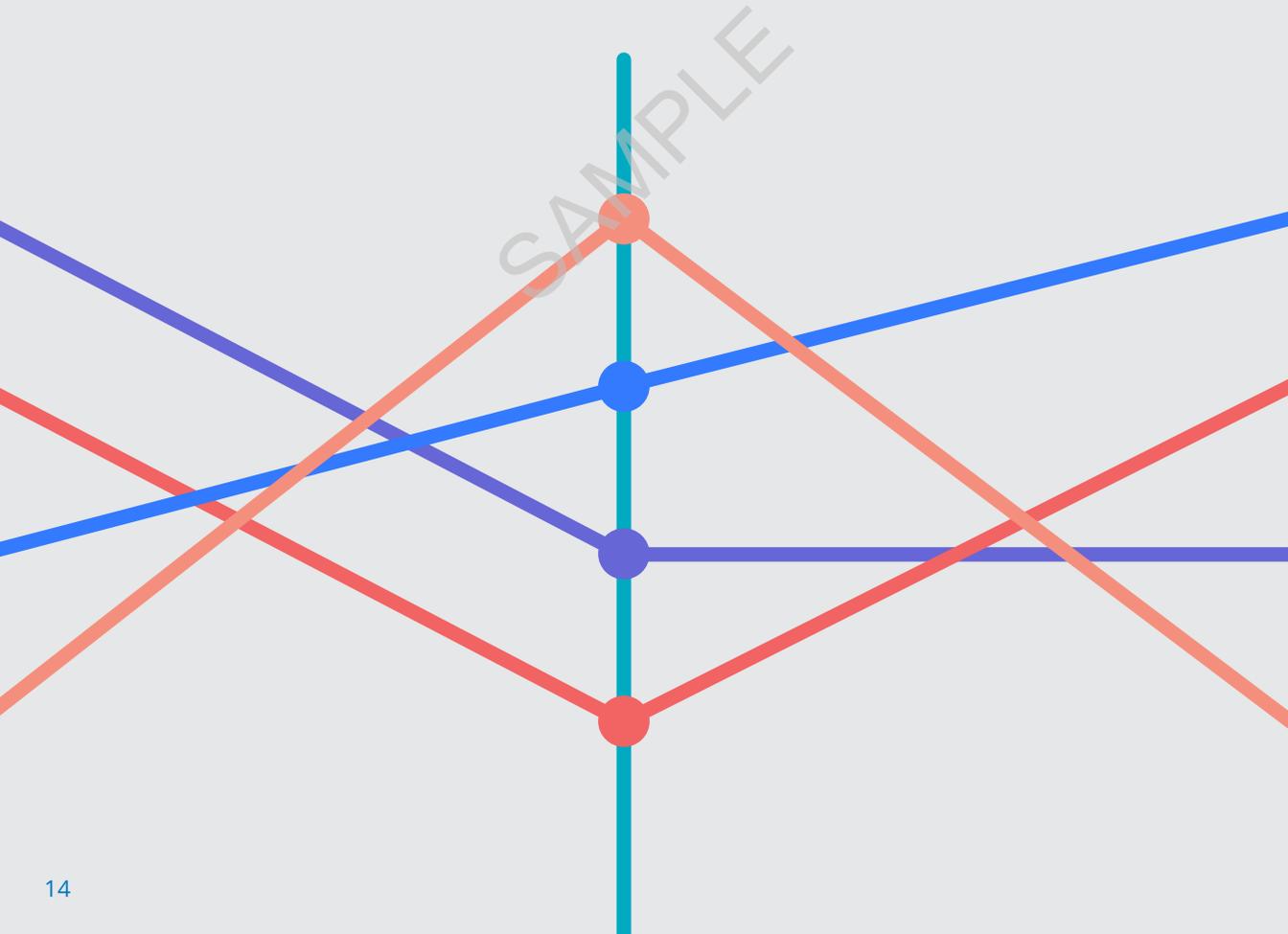
As you do the exercises in this workbook, think about how much you focused on each of the 3 domains.



## Value Your Values

We each have a unique set of values that are important to us, and this can change over time. Although there are no specific patterns of values preferences that necessarily predict happiness, one of the most significant predictors of career satisfaction is values congruency. Specifically, **when you are in an environment that has a culture that is congruent with your values, you are likely to be happier and more productive.**

While it is unlikely that you will get all of your needs and wants met all of the time, understanding your most significant values cluster(s) can help you to determine what your priorities are, and where you might be willing to compromise for now.



# Understand Your Values Clusters

The 16 value cards are organized into 4 clusters, grouped and described below to help you better understand how your values and preferences impact your decisions and your workplace needs.

**Look at your rankings on 13 and check off your top 5** needs below to get a sense of which cluster might be most relevant for you.

## STIMULATION & FREEDOM

AUTONOMY	CHALLENGE	FLEXIBILITY	VARIETY
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High rankings of values in this cluster indicate that you should look for opportunities where you will have the freedom to do things on your own initiative. It is important for you to be in an environment where you are able to make decisions independently, as well as take on difficult and/or new challenges.

## ADVOCACY & RELATIONSHIPS

CONTRIBUTION	COOPERATION	DIVERSITY	SUPPORT
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High rankings of values in this cluster indicate that it is important for you to be in an environment that values fairness and respect, and/or where you will have access to friendly or supportive individuals (e.g. colleagues or a supervisor). You may also want to consider looking for opportunities where you can advocate for or be of service to others.

## ACHIEVEMENT & RESPONSIBILITY

ACHIEVEMENT	COMPETITION	RECOGNITION	RESPONSIBILITY
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High rankings of values in this cluster indicate that you should look for opportunities that allow you to use your strengths and experience a sense of accomplishment. You are more likely to thrive in an environment where you will be recognized for your contribution and where you can see the results of your efforts directly. Consider seeking roles with the potential for leadership.

## STABILITY & STRUCTURE

STABILITY	STRUCTURE	TRADITION	WORK-LIFE BALANCE
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High rankings of values in this cluster indicate that it is important for you to be in an environment that provides security, clear expectations, and/or that will suit your personal work style (e.g. work pace or hours). Specific elements to consider include: pay, benefits, job security, organizational policies, and clarity of role responsibilities.

# A Plan Needs a Framework

To provide students with guidance on areas to focus on when creating their IDP, McGill has developed the Individual Development Framework (IDF): A framework of 21 categories organized into 7 themes that research shows are important for your wellbeing and success.<sup>1</sup>

## INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

THEMES	CATEGORIES
 <p><b>Lead Projects:</b> Beyond an ability to work well with others (see below), successfully leading projects requires strategic planning, behaving professional and ethically, as well as obtaining and managing project funds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Finances &amp; Funding</li><li>▶ Ethical &amp; Professional Conduct</li><li>▶ Project &amp; Time Management</li></ul>
 <p><b>Work With Others:</b> This theme includes using your interpersonal skills to collaborate successfully with diverse people and teams, lead and inspire others, empathize with and advocate for others, build an understanding of global and local context, or manage relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Equity, Diversity &amp; Inclusion</li><li>▶ Global &amp; Local Engagement</li><li>▶ Leadership</li><li>▶ Teamwork &amp; Interpersonal</li></ul>
 <p><b>Communicate Ideas:</b> Frequently cited as a top skill in demand by employers, this theme encompasses your ability to articulate your ideas and knowledge to diverse groups through teaching, presenting, and writing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Public Speaking</li><li>▶ Teaching</li><li>▶ Writing</li></ul>
 <p><b>Solve Problems:</b> Developing solutions to challenging problems involves analytical and critical reasoning, ideating creative options, and a willingness to work with ambiguity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Analytical &amp; Critical Reasoning</li><li>▶ Entrepreneurship</li><li>▶ Innovation &amp; Creativity</li></ul>
 <p><b>Expand Expertise:</b> Sometimes described as “hard skills” because they are more easily measured, this theme reflects your subject matter expertise and your ability to use specific tools, approaches, and technology (e.g. laboratory techniques or qualitative research approaches).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Subject Knowledge</li><li>▶ Tools &amp; Technology</li></ul>
 <p><b>Be Well:</b> Although it is listed as a distinct theme in this framework, wellness actually cuts across all of the themes. Having self-awareness and resilience, along with a healthy lifestyle will help you to be successful in all of the categories within the framework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Healthy Living</li><li>▶ Resilience</li><li>▶ Self-Knowledge</li></ul>
 <p><b>Plan Career:</b> This theme involves understanding your career preferences, exploring options and developing a network, and ultimately learning how to articulate your strengths to prospective employers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Career Knowledge</li><li>▶ Applying &amp; Interviewing</li><li>▶ Networking &amp; Job Search</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> To learn more about how the IDF was created, please go to: [www.mcgill.ca/gps/students/idp/idf](http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/students/idp/idf)

# Reflective Questions

Writing about past, present, and future has been demonstrated to be one of the most effective ways to gain insight and enhance goal attainment. Think of writing as a formalized way of thinking: when you write, you gain clarity about your perceptions and derive meaning from your experiences.

<b>OVERALL</b> (WELLBING & VALUES)	<p>What kind of person do you want to be? How would you like to be remembered?</p> <p>What activities do you want to make time for in your life?</p> <p>How do you want to take care of yourself?</p>
<b>PEOPLE</b> (WELLBEING)	<p>Who are the people you want to be surrounded by? What relationships are important to you?</p> <p>Describe your ideal family life and social life.</p> <p>How could you enhance your relationships?</p>
<b>WORKPLACE</b> (VALUES)	<p>Try filling in the blank: I would like to work in an organization that values / offers _____ (review your values sort exercise)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What kinds of workplace cultures would fit best with your values?</li><li>• How would you like your workplace to be structured?</li><li>• What needs do you have for work life balance?</li></ul>
<b>CAREER</b> (SKILLS & INTERESTS)	<p>Try filling in the blanks: i am interested in working in a role where i get to use my ability to _____ and can develop my skills in _____. (review the areas of mastery and growth you identified in the growth matrix exercise).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What fields or industries are you interested in? What causes are you inspired by?</li><li>• What skills do you want to use in your future career? What kinds of job responsibilities are you interested in having?</li></ul>

# How Will You Get There?

At the core of your IDP are your goals. Goals are concrete statements about what you need to accomplish in order to reach your vision or fulfill your priorities. **Think about what you want to accomplish over the next 6–12 months. Use the space on the following pages to brainstorm some ideas.**

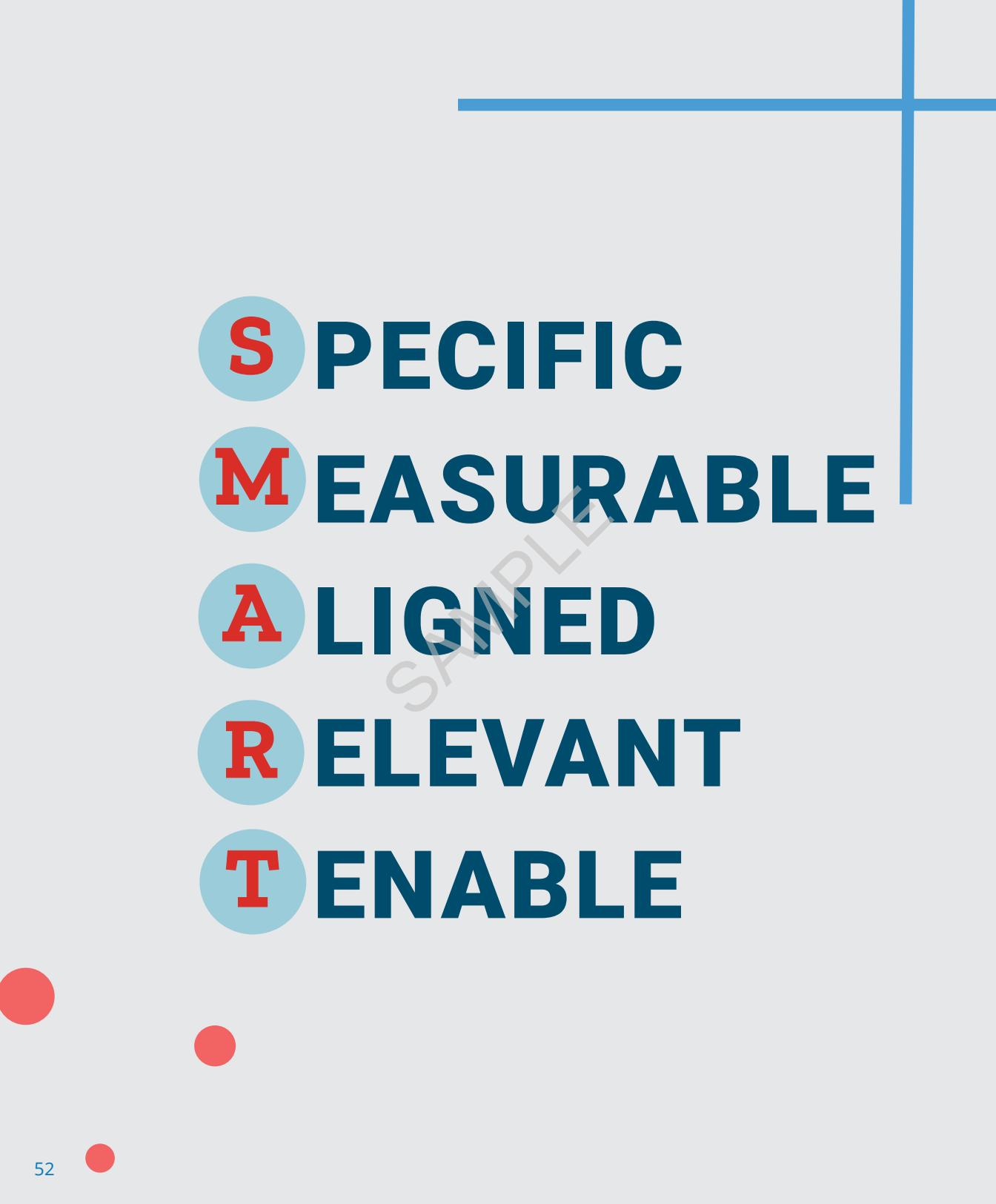
## Examples:

(see related Vision and Priorities examples on page 44)

1. To learn about policy careers in government or non-profit organizations where I can use my expertise in wildlife habitats
2. To gain teaching experience, so I become a better instructor and I can enhance my teaching portfolio.
3. To participate in events where I can network with people (preferably McGill alumni) in the food industry and learn about entrepreneurship—so I can figure out what it takes to start my own business developing personalized nutrition products.
4. To improve my running time by incorporating speed work into my training, so I am ready to run the half-marathon in June. Ideally, I'd like to find a friend who is willing to train with me.
5. To develop a new collaborative research project on language processing in multi-lingual children with Dr. Fancypants at the University of Gotham.

## TIPS

- Review the Vision and Priorities you established on page 45
  - ▶ Make sure your goals align with your values and interests.
  - ▶ If your priorities are related to the areas for development identified in your Growth Matrix, you can find **goal suggestions** in the handouts for each category: [www.mcgill.ca/mypath/idf](http://www.mcgill.ca/mypath/idf)
- Include any specific **academic requirements** (e.g. courses, internships, languages, exams, committee meetings, presentations, or papers) that you need to accomplish in the next 6–12 months.
  - ▶ View personalized due dates for your Academic Milestones in your **myProgress** accounts: [www.mcgill.ca/gps/myprogress](http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/myprogress)



**S**PECIFIC  
**M**EASURABLE  
**A**LIGNED  
**R**ELEVANT  
**T**ENABLE

# Be SMART

Step 7 in the IDP Workbook provides details on how to create SMART goals. Here is an overview:

## SPECIFIC

**Describe** each of the goals you prioritized. Try to be specific. Use action verbs to create a clear list of “to do” items for your goals and/or activities. Think about who, what, and where. Indicate what domain(s) this goal is focused on:

- **Academic** (e.g. conference proposal)
- **Personal Wellbeing** (e.g. healthy eating)
- **Professional/Career Development** (e.g. leadership experience)

*My goal is to learn about policy careers in government or non-profit organizations where I can use my expertise in wildlife habitats. Activities that will help me to get there: Meet people who are working in policy or environmental (e.g. through LinkedIn or career events) Go to the Career Planning Service Resource Centre to find books and resources on policy or environmental careers.*

## MEASURABLE

Explain how you will evaluate whether the goal is complete? Set criteria that are measurable so you can chart your progress. Include a due date Use the goal type to help you determine how to measure:

- **Project:** Has an end (e.g. write an article) -define outcome/deliverable and create a due date
- **Habit:** Ongoing (e.g. living a healthy life) - define aim and create a schedule to monitor maintenance
- **Development:** Ongoing with milestones (e.g. learn to teach) -define specific milestone and create due date

*I will make at least 2 new direct connections in environmental policy per month. By the end of the semester I will a) grow my network on LinkedIn by at least 20 people b) have list of at least 10 organizations am interested in, c) will have summary of the specific career paths I am most interested in.*

## ALIGNED

Think about why you are committing to this goal. Why is it important to you? How does it fit with your personal and professional values? How will it help you to get closer to your definition of success and wellbeing?

*I want a good/secure job after I graduate. Teamwork and collaboration are important for my success and wellbeing, so I'd like to learn about different work environments and make connections with potential future colleagues.*

## RELEVANT

Make sure that your goal is linked to your current priorities. Why is this goal a priority for you in the next 6 to 12 months? This can overlap with the previous section (Aligned) but should be more focused on shorter-term reasons.

*Networking with professionals now will help me to learn more about different career options, and provide me with connections that I can reach out to later when I am applying for jobs. It is important to me that I develop professional relationships early, so I am not stressed about the career transition later in my degree.*

## TENABLE

Explain how you will ensure that this goal is doable, What resources or help will you need ? Use IF/THEN statements to proactively overcome obstacles you might encounter.

*I will not be graduating for at least a year, so I can do this slowly over the next few months. This is doable if I limit myself to 2 hours per week. IF I have trouble meeting people, THEN I will go to the McGill Career Planning Service for help.*

1

**Goal Title:**

**My goal is... → The activities that will help me to get there are...**

**S**PECIFIC

**Goal Domain(s):** Academic    Personal Wellbeing    Professional/Career Development

**I will know I have succeeded when... My due date or timeframe is.....**

**M**EASURABLE

**Goal Type:** Project    Habit    Development

**A**LIGNED

**I want to pursue this goal because:**

**R**ELEVANT

**I know this is doable because .... I will need these resources / help from these people...  
IF I encounter a challenge, THEN I will ....**

**T**ENABLE