



for staff

Purpose and Goal Sample Library

Performance Excellence Job Aid

This job aid for staff provides examples of purpose statements and SIMPLE goals for roles around campus, as an aid to individual purpose and goal creation. Purpose statements are not formally included in Performance Excellence, but can be helpful as a preliminary step leading into goal-setting. For a step-by-step guide to goal-setting, see resources at perform.northwestern.edu.

Clarify Purpose

The most powerful planning starts with a question: “**What value am I creating in my role, and for whom?**” Here are a few examples of purpose statements:

Role	Purpose Statement Samples
Department Program Assistant	To help students, faculty, and staff colleagues maximize the time they spend on what is most important to them.
Program Coordinator	To ensure a research or educational program runs smoothly, to the benefit of associated students and faculty.
Business Administrator	To enable the success of an area or unit’s mission by overseeing all business needs.
Facilities Management Groundskeeper	To create a safe and beautiful environment that reflects the excellence of the University.
Developer	To help stakeholders accomplish their business goals using technology, by testing existing software and creating new technical solutions as needed.
Financial Assistant or Accounting Assistant	To support the success of a program, department or unit by ensuring that all finance and accounting processes are managed well.
Financial Coordinator	To enable faculty to maximize the resources available for research while safeguarding the University and public against the misuse of assets.
Development Director	To enhance the ongoing connection of Alumni to Northwestern, making both alumni and the University stronger in the process.
Research Administrator	To support researchers and ensure successful research efforts by taking care of all pre- and post-award administrative needs.

Research Project Coordinator	To enable the research team with the subjects, information, and process to create new knowledge and discoveries.
Research Technician	To contribute to high-quality research outcomes by providing researchers with reliable data.
Associate Director, Academic and Career Management	To support students in their efforts to proactively manage their career and academic choices.
Associate Dean of Administration	To lead the school's advancement by aligning finite resources (e.g., finances, talent, and space) to priorities.

Set SIMple Goals

Most of us should aim for **two to four** performance goals. Northwestern uses the SIMple framework as a guide to setting goals.

S = **Specific** or objectively measurable (quantitative or qualitative).

I = **Important** or aligned with your unit's goals.

M = **Meaningful**, motivating or important to you.

Here's a formula to get you started (used in some of the samples below):

I want to achieve _____, and will know I've succeeded when I can measure _____.

(Important) (Specific)

This is motivating to me because _____.

(Meaningful)

Role	SIMple Goal Samples
Department Program Assistant	<p>(Core Responsibility) I want to provide students who visit the Department office an exceptional experience, by giving them information and guidance that allows them to accomplish their goal, while making them feel valued and respected by the Department. I will know I've succeeded when I can resolve student's need during their initial visit 80% of the time. This is motivating to me because I like taking care of people.</p> <p>(Project or Initiative) I want to improve the faculty expense reimbursement process, allowing faculty to spend less time and have a better overall experience. I will know I've been successful when we ask for faculty</p>

	feedback and see a reduction in average time from incur to reimburse cycle. This is motivating to me because it's creating order and efficiency.
Program Coordinator	(Core Responsibility) I will work to enhance the visibility and reputation of the program by revising and improving the social media plan and activity, increasing traffic to the program website by 25%.
Business Administrator	(Core Responsibility) I want to increase registration to our department colloquia and seminars by strengthening marketing and documenting the planning process for colloquia and seminars so that logistics are in place earlier. I will know I'm successful when registrations increase by at least 5% over previous years and this is motivating to me because I am inspired by the work our department does, and want more people to know about it.
Facilities Management Groundskeeper	<p>(Core Responsibility) Interact with community members as an ambassador of the University. Answer questions and provide directions in a way that conveys caring and professionalism.</p> <p>(Project or Initiative) I want to improve the way my team does work, by identifying and taking the lead in implementing at least one improvement in how we do things. I will know I'm successful when we've tested it, gotten good results, and shared it with other teams. This is motivating to me because I like continuous improvement and being someone who creates positive change.</p>
Developer	(Core Responsibility) Better serve internal business leaders by improving the process and frequency of reviewing all feature/upgrade and change requests in order to make a case to supervisors or vendors about most pressing user needs. Success is measured by quality and quantity of structured reports about change requests (target based on previous #).
Financial Assistant or Accounting Assistant	(Core Responsibility) To help all those who have questions get the information they need, and build confidence that the finance and accounting team is there to help, by improving the internal system used to catalogue queries and responses, and achieving a 100% satisfaction rate on calls or emails.
Financial Coordinator	<p>(Core Responsibility) Track and communicate faculty research accounts such that faculty can maximize their resources with a minimum of effort. Results will be measured by faculty feedback and reduction of accounting rework.</p> <p>(Project or Initiative) Design and implement a new report that solves a currently unmet Department need. This report will provide insight to support better decisions or a better ability to manage.</p>

<p>Development Director</p>	<p>(Core Responsibility). Support the strategic objectives of the University by raising major and principal gifts, attaining a high score on fundraising accountability metrics by exceeding stated goals for commitments, solicitations, dollars raised, visits, and proposal assists.</p> <p>(Project or Initiative). Design and execute strategy to raise funds for Unit priorities through increased collaboration with Gift Planning and Regional Major Gift teams, leveraging volunteers and strategically deploying University leaders to enhance fundraising productivity. Gain insight into Unit fundraising dollars, proposal progress and prospect management by leading enhancements to the data development process.</p>
<p>Research Administrator</p>	<p>(Core Responsibilities) Make it easier for researchers to strengthen relationships with donors or granting organizations by improving the system for tracking technical and financial progress post award, and delivering data to researchers for reports. Success will be measured by reduced time between request for data and report completion.</p>
<p>Research Project Coordinator</p>	<p>(Core Responsibility) Achieve or exceed subject recruiting targets. Manage subject expectations such that an increasing percentage of subjects participate in all aspects of the study.</p> <p>(Project or Initiative) Create an interest group of research coordinators from other studies. Identify best practice from another study that could be implemented and result in an improvement in your study.</p>
<p>Research Technician</p>	<p>(Core Responsibility) Maximize research output by maintaining uptime and accuracy of the lab's instruments. Instruments will be available to researchers 95% or more of the time when requested.</p> <p>(Project or Initiative) - Enhance the impact of lab's research by introducing and operationalizing two new research techniques. Techniques will be reflected in analysis supporting published research.</p>
<p>Associate Director, Academic and Career Management</p>	<p>(Core Responsibility) Encourage out-of-the-box career planning for students by identifying alumni with unique career paths and inviting them to fill five guest speaker spots in career events throughout the year.</p>
<p>Associate Dean of Administration</p>	<p>(Core Responsibility) Enable the Dean, faculty, staff, and students to achieve their objectives by leading the provision of services that anticipate and fulfill these stakeholders' needs.</p> <p>(Project or Initiative) Improve the alignment of School resources to goals by redesigning the intra-unit budgeting process.</p>