# Career Goal Setting Workbook

## Overview

### Purpose of this Document

The Career Goal Setting Workbook helps University of Iowa Professional and Scientific Staff determine their long-term career goals, discuss them with their supervisor and create an action plan on how to reach those goals.

### How to Best Utilize this Workbook

It can be easy to list several goals and things you want to accomplish in your career, but have you taken the time to really think about what will truly make you happy, while making the most of your strengths and pushing you to grow? Have you considered the motivation behind your goals? We encourage you to work through each section of this workbook to establish your career goals and help you navigate career conversations with your supervisor. Setting career goals and sharing them with those who can help you achieve them is a key step in the journey to a long and meaningful career at the University of Iowa.

**You are in the driver’s seat.**

Throughout this workbook consider using **Co-Pilot** as a virtual thought partner. Co-Pilot is an AI- powered assistant that is integrated into Microsoft Edge and other Microsoft applications and is available to UI Faculty, Staff, and Students. For more information on how to use Co-Pilot, please visit the [ITS Information Site](https://its.uiowa.edu/services/copilot).

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## Section 1: Personal Reflection

### Career Reflection Questions:

1. What parts of my current job do I like? What parts do I dislike?
2. What aspects of my work feel the most challenging? What feels easy?
3. What problem do I most wish I could solve in the workplace?
4. What am I most proud of in my career so far?
5. What feedback have I received in my performance reviews, from my supervisor, or from my colleagues that can shine a light on my strengths?
6. Which of your strengths or talents are you not using in your current role?
7. What other career opportunities sound interesting to me?
8. What do I want to accomplish in my career before I retire?

**Question for Co-Pilot: “**If you were my career coach, what career goals would you set for me based on the following question and answer exercise? **(copy and paste questions and answers from above)**

### Reflecting on your Career Motivators:

1. What am I motivated by?
2. What does work-life balance look like in my life?
3. What are my non-negotiables for a work environment?
4. Which aspects of a job are most important: title, salary, location, organization’s culture?
5. What causes or missions do I feel passionate about?
6. What type of achievements do I find most rewarding?
7. How important is job security to me?
8. Do I prefer collaboration or working independently?
9. What level of leadership do I aspire to? Do I aspire to be a supervisor?
10. How does my career support my personal life objectives?

**Questions for Co-pilot:** “If you were my career coach, what types of jobs or industries should I look for or avoid based on the following question and answer exercise?” **(copy and paste questions and answers from above)**

“What would you summarize are my 5 main values I should keep in mind as I set career goals?”

## Section 2: Establishing your Goals

### Long-term, Career Goals (HARD goals):

Now that you have taken the time to ask yourself some reflection questions and complete a SWOT analysis, it is time to identify your long-term career goals. SMART goals are the preferred framework when looking at your goals over the next year, but HARD is an acronym that stands for Heartfelt, Animated, Required, and Difficult and can be helpful to think through when you are setting your long-term goals. Your long-term goals should matter and be motivating to you as you move throughout your career.

**HARD acronym:**

* **Heartfelt:** The goals should be something you want (personal, motivational, inherent to your values)
* **Animated:** Envision what things you’ll be doing 3, 5, or 10 years from now.
* **Required:** Think about what accomplishments are needed to stay on track to reaching your goal.
* **Difficult:** The goal should encourage you to develop the most critical skills to achieve it.

**Long-Term Career Goal #1**

**Long-Term Career Goal #2**

**Long-Term Career Goal #3**

### Short-term goals (SMART goals):

When you have determined your long-term career goals, it is helpful to begin to break down your goals into smaller, SMART goals. The SMART framework allows you to create an action plan over the next 1-5 years to accomplish your HARD Long-Term Career Goals.

SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

* A **specific** goal is clear, detailed, and answers key questions such as what you want to accomplish, why it’s important, who is involved, where it will happen, and any relevant constraints.
* A **measurable** goal includes concrete criteria to track progress.
* An **attainable** goal is realistic yet may be challenging, often pushing your skills while remaining achievable.
* A **relevant** goal aligns with your broader objectives and is something truly needed or wanted.
* Finally, a **time-bound** goal has a clear deadline, focusing your efforts.

**Over the next year, what SMART Goals would you like to set to move you toward your Long-Term Career Goals?**

SMART Goal #1

SMART Goal #2

SMART Goal #3

Further workshop and refine your goals on the [SMART Goals Setting Worksheet](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fhr.uiowa.edu%2Fsites%2Fhr.uiowa.edu%2Ffiles%2F2024-10%2FGoal%2520Setting%2520Worksheet.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK).

When setting your HARD and SMART goals, consider utilizing Co-Pilot to refine your goals.

**Questions for Co-Pilot:**

* “Can you please review my long-term goals and give suggestions on how to make them more concise and compelling?”
* “Based on these 3 career-goals, what SMART goals would you set over the next year to help me achieve those goals? (copy and paste long-term career goals)”
* “Can you please refine my goals to align with the SMART goal-setting framework? (insert goals)”

## Section 3: Executing your Goals

### Sharing your Goals:

Research shows that by writing your goals down, you are 42% more likely to meet those goals. By working through this workbook, you are already 42% closer to meeting your goals![[1]](#footnote-1) Research also shows that by writing down your goals AND sharing your goals with a trusted colleague, supervisor, or friend, you are 76% more likely to meet that goal.[[2]](#footnote-2) Certain times of year, such as performance review season or New Years Day lend themselves to thinking about your goals, but it is also important once they are established, that you share them and review them regularly to ensure you are staying motivated and on track.

**Ask yourself:**

Who am I going to share my goals with?

Who will be my accountability partner? (*An accountability partner is an individual who helps monitor your progress and helps you stay motivated to follow-through on your goals and commitments to your career growth*)

How and how often will I connect with my accountability partner on my goals?

### Asking for feedback:

Sometimes we get stuck when reflecting on and setting goals. It can also be hard for us to identify our strengths without consulting with a trusted colleague, supervisor, or confidant. Remember, you can ask those trusted thought partners the some of the same reflection questions listed in this workbook and collect feedback as you start establishing your goals.

**Ask those you trust:**

* When have you seen me at my best?
* Do these goals align with what you know about my values and aspirations?
* Are there any areas where you think I could stretch myself more?

**Ask your supervisor:**

* What unique contributions have you seen me bring to our team and the University of Iowa?
* How do you see these goals supporting our team or UI priorities?
* What resources or support do you think I might need to achieve these goals?
* Who else should I talk to or learn from as I work toward these goals?
* What feedback have you heard (directly or indirectly) that could help me grow?

## Section 4: Staying on Track

### Celebrating your Accomplishments:

Some leaders like to take their SMART goals further and make them SMARTER. The E in the expanded acronym stands for Evaluate, which you can do with the accountability partner you have identified. The R stands for Reward. To continue your goal-setting journey, it is also important to celebrate your accomplishments and reward yourself when you meet your goals.

**Ask yourself:**

* In what ways will I celebrate meeting my goals?
* Who do I share my accomplishments with?
* How does accomplishing this goal open other doors for career growth?

### Writing and Remembering your Personal Vision Statement:

Now that you have a good understanding of your career interests, values, strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, threats, and goals you can now begin to establish your Personal Vision Statement. This is something that can be a guiding light as you continue your career journey.

**What does an effective Personal Vision Statement reflect?**

* Short-term and long-term goals
* Your principles and values
* The difference you want to make
* Your passions and career you want to pursue

**Fill in the blank template for your Personal Vision Statement:**

My career goal is to become a (insert desired title). I am committed to (include some of your values, strengths, or pieces of feedback you have received) and (include some of your values, strengths, or pieces of feedback you have received).

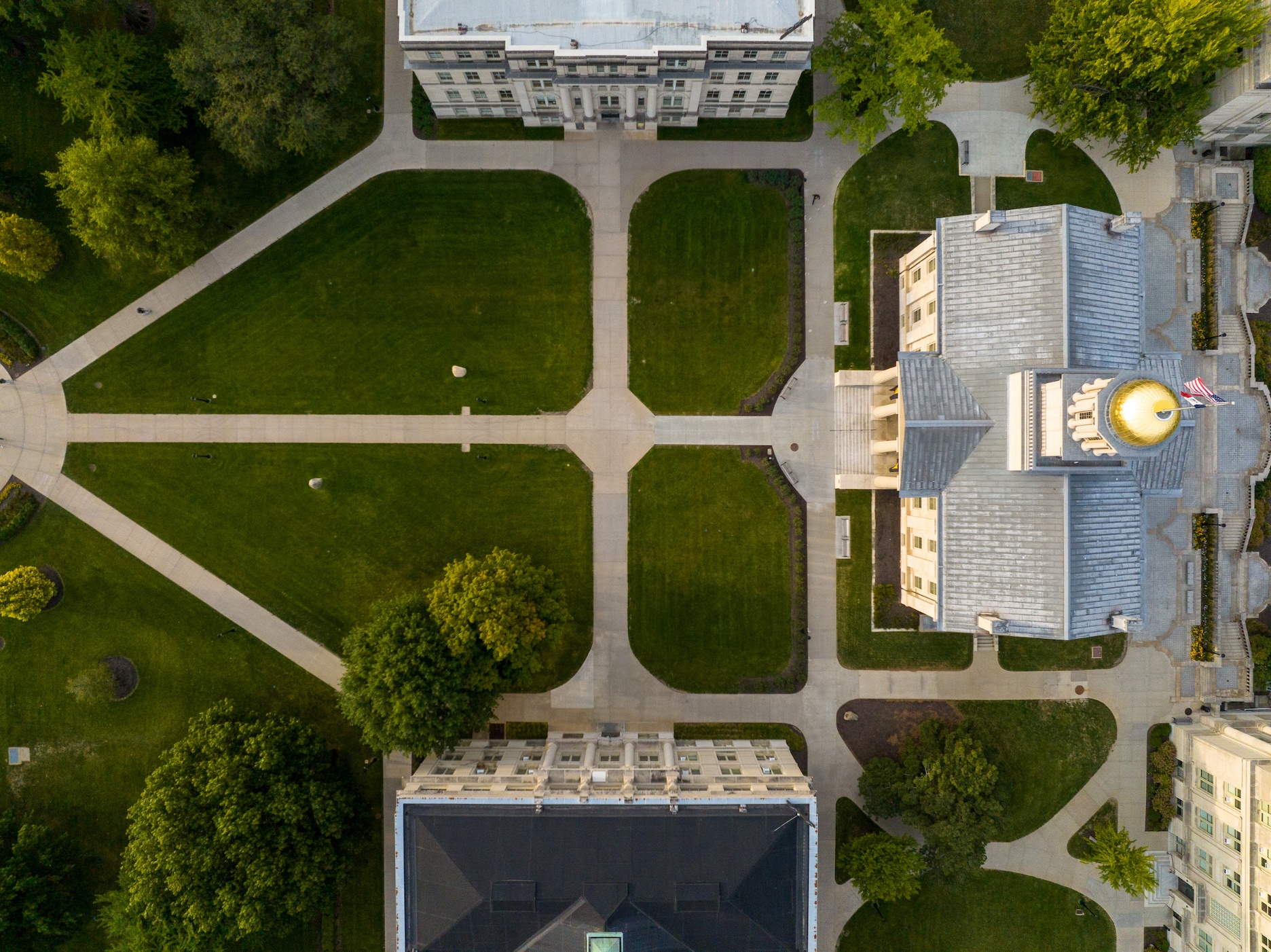
Consider utilizing Co-Pilot to workshop and finalize your Personal Vision Statement.

**Questions for Co-Pilot:**

* Can you please help refine my Personal Vision Statement (insert completed template) to make it clear, compelling, and motivational?

## Sources and Additional Resources

* [10 Important Questions to Ask Yourself to Determine the Next Step in Your Career](https://www.forbes.com/councils/theyec/2021/11/10/10-important-questions-to-ask-yourself-to-determine-the-next-step-in-your-career/) (Forbes.com)
* [Career Planning Process Guide](https://status.net/articles/career-planning-process-step-by-step-guide-with-template-examples/) (Status.net)
* [How to do a Personal SWOT Analysis + Template](https://www.parabol.co/blog/personal-swot-analysis/) (Parabol)
* [Personal Vision Statement Definition and Examples](https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/guide/personal-vision-statement-examples/) (Glassdoor)



1. [**The Power of Writing Down Your Goals: Evidence from Multiple Studies**](https://oakjournal.com/blogs/resources/the-power-of-writing-down-your-goals-evidence-from-multiple-studies) **(OAK Journal)** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [**Achieving your goals: An evidence-based approach**](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/achieving_your_goals_an_evidence_based_approach) **(Michigan State University)** [↑](#footnote-ref-2)