**Setting SMART Objectives**

**What are SMART objectives?**

SMART stands for:

* **S**pecific
* **M**easurable
* **A**chievable (or sometimes attainable)
* **R**ealistic
* **T**ime-bound

**Why set SMART objectives?**

SMART objectives help prioritise work, monitor progress and celebrate people’s achievements. They help people focus on what’s important, what needs to be done and by when. An individual’s objectives should help to achieve the objectives of the team or Division/Faculty which in turn should be aligned with the wider business plan of Cognus Ltd.

**Specific** and **measurable** objectives provide a definition of the success of a project or initiative.

**Achievable** and **realistic** objectives engage and motivate individuals. Objectives can be designed to be challenging and with a reasonable amount of effort and application, the objective should be achievable.

**Time-bound** objectives ensure that all stakeholders agree when it is to be achieved by. A deadline, date or time when the objective will be accomplished or completed is necessary and must be included so as to make the objective measurable.

**How to set SMART objectives**

**Specific** – outline in a clear statement precisely what behaviour, achievement or outcome is required.

**Measurable** – include a measure to enable you to monitor progress and to know when the objective has been achieved.

**Achievable** – objectives should be stretching but not unachievable. Employees and managers should agree to the objectives to ensure commitment to them.

**Realistic** - focus on outcomes rather than the means of achieving them. Whilst objectives should be realistic this does not mean that they need to be easy. Realistic objectives take into account the available resources such as skills, funding, and equipment.

**Time-bound** – agree the date by which the outcome must be achieved.

**How many objectives should be set?**

Objectives should be additional to work that is considered to be “business as usual” so between **four and six objectives is realistic**. They should aim to help the individual gain, improve or demonstrate a range of skills appropriate to their role whilst helping to achieve the objectives of the wider team. Tasks that are part and parcel of the individual’s day to day role should not be considered as objectives.