## My Annual Plan (MAP)

This MAP is an annual planning tool to help you identify short- and long-term goals to help you make timely progress through your graduate program and achieve your career objectives.

## Purpose

- To identify short-term goals in making timely progress toward completion of your graduate degree.
- To identify long-term career goals and the steps necessary to meet those goals.
- To facilitate ongoing guidance conversations between you and your faculty advisor.

## Outline of the MAP process

1. **Look Back**: Review your progress in terms of coursework completed, volunteer work and professional training in the past year.

- List accomplishments of the previous year and how they have helped you to make progress toward your goals.
- Update your CV/résumé. It's good to maintain a current CV/résumé for yourself (to apply for funding, internship, and/or job opportunities) and for distribution to faculty and others who might write letters of recommendation for you.

2. **Look Ahead**: Set goals for the next year.

- Describe your career objective and re-visit it annually. It's okay if your career goals change as you advance through your program.
- Set goals for projects within your graduate program during the upcoming year.
- Set goals for progress toward your career objective.
- Prioritize your goals and create a Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed (**SMART**) line for reaching them.

3. **Implement your MAP**

- Meet with your advisor, mentor and/or thesis committee to discuss your MAP.
- Revise, if necessary, based on this conversation.

## Progress Review: Research and professional training in the past year

- Describe your thesis project or training in one paragraph.
- Who are your primary research mentors? Are there other faculty with whom you would like to make connections, at MSMU or at other institutions?
- New areas of research or technical skills acquired in the past year
- Seminar presentations (title, department, where seminars was given, audience)
- National or other professional meetings or conferences attended (indicate meeting title, oral or poster presentation)
- Funding (include fellowships and grants written/applied for/received, professional society presentation awards or travel awards, etc.)
- Publications
- What career exploration events or career preparation workshops did you attend?
- How successfully did you meet last year's goals? Are there any top-priority goals that you didn't meet? Why?
- At this point, what month and year do you expect to complete your degree?

# Set goals and make plans for the upcoming year

1. Research project and progress toward thesis project or completion of degree

- Courses to take.
- Research methods or technical skills to learn.
- Plans for conducting your thesis research this year (e.g., literature review, design of experiments, data analysis).
- How will you write up and present your findings?
- Plans to attend any professional conferences and/or workshops? Plans to present a paper or poster.

2. Professional goals and career planning

- Describe your current career goal(s).
- What career exploration events or workshops will you attend this coming year?
- Are you interested in doing an internship? If so, in what employment sector? How will you seek out such an opportunity?
- Are you interested in doing any teaching? If so, in what capacity? How will you find teaching opportunities?

3. Create a month-by-month timeline for the next 12 months, taking into consideration SMART goal setting, thesis, completion of degree and career goals.

**Understanding your goal – Begin by writing your goal in sections**

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| **S**<br>**Specific** | Be precise about what you are going to achieve — each objective should address only one achievement<br>• What do I want to accomplish?<br>• Why is this goal important?<br>• Which resources or limits are involved? |
| **M**<br>**Measurable** | Set criteria for measuring progress of goal.<br>• How much?<br>• How many?<br>• How will I know when it is accomplished? |
| **A**<br>**Achievable** | Are you attempting too much?<br>• How can I accomplish this goal?<br>• How realistic is the goal, based on other constraints, such as financial factors?<br>• Look for opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals. |
| **R**<br>**Realistic** | Do you have the resources to make the objective happen (personnel, money, materials, time)?<br>• Is this the right time?<br>• Does this match my other efforts/needs?<br>• Is it applicable in the current socio-economic environment? |
| **T**<br>**Timed** | State when you will achieve the objective (within a month? By February 2020? Give yourself a specific time frame.)<br>• When?<br>• What can I do today?<br>• What can I do six weeks from now?<br>• What can I do six months from now? |