

The Objective Library

Introduction

We aim to create an environment that supports and motivates everyone to do their best work. The University has an Objective Library that you can use when you are setting your priorities and objectives for the year, both in your self-reflection and in conversation with your line manager. The Library is a collection of example objectives that offer you a guide to reflect on your contributions to a specific area of work and define your objectives. Library objectives are organised in key categories that reflect the University's priorities. As you adapt and tailor these objectives to ensure that they are specific and relevant to your circumstances and role, keep the [University Behaviours Charter](#) in mind - behaviours are **WHAT** we want our teams to do and clear and specific objectives add the **HOW**.

Thank you to the different departments across the University of Edinburgh who have been involved in creating these.

Objective Categories

- **People:** these objectives relate to activities that recognise people as integral to our success, including Leadership and Management.
- **Research:** these objectives relate to excellence in research, including a focus on Knowledge Exchange.
- **Teaching & Learning:** these objectives focus on improving and sustaining excellence in teaching and learning activities.
- **Social & Civic Responsibility:** these objectives focus on actions and activities that deliver positive change locally, regionally and globally, including Citizenship and Sustainability.
- **Operational** – these objectives relate to the operating and running of facilities and services of the University.
- **Career Development:** these are development objectives related to your individual career development goals; these may be short, medium or long term, not necessarily limited by your current role.
- **Finance:** these objectives relate to using and managing University money effectively and responsibly.
- **Organisational Change:** For leaders, these objectives focus on advocating change, seeking out the opportunities for continuous improvement and supporting their people through change. For individuals, these objectives focus on embracing change and the opportunities that it provides.



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You may also consider other Role Specific Development Objectives. Given the specific nature of these objectives, the Library does not include examples for this category.

People Example Objectives

These objectives relate to aiming to continuously improve our work, role modelling professional behaviour, and doing our best to deliver what is expected of us.

Leadership and Management

1. Set Team Objectives - Plan the aims, objectives and priorities of your work area and communicate these to your team, and colleagues as appropriate, through setting medium –longer term objectives.
2. Providing Feedback - Give and receive constructive and timely feedback always with the intention of improving performance or behaviour. Taking the time to identify and celebrate success.
3. Encourage new ideas - Promote a culture where diversity of thought is encouraged, actively supporting and encouraging new ideas and ways of working within your team.
4. Setting Expectations - Clearly and proactively articulate expectations and objectives to your team and support and empower team members to take things forward.
5. Be a role model - Role model effective workload management and support others to make effective use of their time.
6. Commercial Thinking - Ensure value for money by effectively managing and monitoring budgets and making the best use of resources, within University regulations.
7. Leadership - Take ownership of your own performance and development including your leadership and management skills.

All Staff

1. Investigate opportunities for cross-school or cross-University collaboration in order to provide greater flexibility in service delivery.
2. Improve customer satisfaction ratings for response times by XXX.
3. Answer all customer queries within X working days.
4. Seek and act on feedback received from X in relation to X project by this date.
5. Support the team work more efficiently and in new ways for X.
6. Work with XX in an evidence-based way to inform the activities and support offered to X.



7. Identify and contact key stakeholders to develop a network of contacts and align project X work with their priorities.
8. Develop feedback processes for X project.
9. Work with X project group to share knowledge and skills to support in the achievement of the project aims.

Research Example Objectives

These objectives relate to taking pride in our work, proactively looking for new and better ways of doing things, and valuing and exchanging different knowledge and skills.

Research Funding

1. Join the reviewer panel or College for key funding bodies.
2. Review the plans of relevant funders and schemes that would fit the research vision and discuss proposed funding strategy with a mentor. (Refer to the [Edinburgh Research Office Competency Framework](#)).
3. Build understanding and implementation of best practice in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in line with the University's ethos and priorities.
4. Strengthen network for future large scale proposals through workshop funding or conference organisation (UE08-UE10).

Leadership in Research

1. Take on a committee role in local [Research Staff Society](#) or represent research staff communities on other committees at school, college or university level
2. Take responsibility for aspects of group or project management (meetings, health and safety, community building, supervision, work package leadership).
3. Identify and apply for roles on funder strategic and advisory boards to shape future research themes.
4. Act as an effective mentor for research staff.

Journal Roles

1. Act as a reviewer for an academic journal(s) and/ or have an editorial role on an academic journal(s) (UE07-UE10).

Research Supervision

1. Build research supervision experience by supporting Undergraduate or Masters level students.

2. Gain formal recognition of PhD supervision, including participation in supervisor briefings and development opportunities (approach varies by College).
3. Potentially obtain recognition as a supervisor under the [UK Council for Graduate Education supervisor Accreditation Scheme](#).
4. Take an active part in the University viva examinations (e.g. as internal examiner or Non-examining Chair).
5. Take up offers to act as PhD internal or external examiner.

Knowledge Exchange and Impact

1. Develop relationship with [insert relevant organisations/sectors/companies] in order to get input into the new research proposal/programme on X, and if appropriate seek their involvement as partner.
2. Develop a knowledge exchange strategy for your group/project/five year research plan, identifying for whom the research will be of interest/use, how they may benefit/what the potential impact may be, how best to engage them and how to capture impact from the engagement.
3. Promote a culture within your research group/institute/department where engagement with the public/policy/practice/industry is encouraged, sharing your expertise and contacts and actively supporting colleagues in developing their own.
4. Share your experience and learning on how to engage effectively with external stakeholders with your research group and/or institute/department.
5. Ensure relevant stakeholders in industry, policy, practice and amongst the public [specify/delete as appropriate] are informed about the progress in research project X to maximise the potential impact of the research.
6. Ensure evidence of impact from research project x is captured and stored so it can be used in Research Excellence Framework impact case studies.
7. Lead on a public engagement activity, seeking funding from an external body if available.



8. Improve commercial and stakeholder awareness and experience through consultancy projects. Support from [Edinburgh Innovations Consultancy Team](#)).

Teaching and Learning Example Objectives

These objectives relate to being open to feedback and new ways of working, valuing and exchanging different knowledge and skills, and suggesting and trying out new approaches and taking acceptable risks.

Course Development and Innovation

1. Lead the design of a new course [name] or programme [name] in alignment with strategic priorities [provide detail of specific strategic priorities], and well-informed by research into learning and teaching in higher education.
2. Lead a major re-design of an existing course [name], for example a syllabus change or the introduction of new teaching methods [provide detail of re-design], in alignment with strategic priorities [provide detail of specific strategic priorities] and well-informed by research into learning and teaching in higher education.
3. Embed the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion in the development of a new course or re-design of an existing one [provide details].

Reflecting on your Teaching Practice

1. Share reflections on your teaching or course design practice with colleagues across the University in a [Teaching Matters](#) blog post or Learning and Teaching Conference presentation.
2. Share an evaluation you have done of a learning and teaching initiative [provide details] with colleagues beyond the University in a conference presentation [provide details] or journal publication [name].
3. Create a sustained culture of reflection and sharing about learning and teaching and practice in the School [detail specific actions].

Leadership in Teaching

1. Mentor or guide colleagues as they work toward the categories of Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.
2. Lead a strategic change project relating to learning and teaching at College or University level.
3. Act as an effective and active member of a Quality Assurance Committee.



4. Act as an effective and active contributor to a Course Advisory Group.

Assessment and Examination

1. Contribute actively to Departmental Boards of Study and Institutional Programme Reviews.
2. Act as an effective member of a Board of Examiners.
3. Take up the role of External Examiner for a Taught Programme (Postgraduate or Undergraduate).
4. Take an active part in the University viva examinations (e.g. as internal examiner or Non-examining Chair).
5. Take up offers to act as PhD internal or external examiner.
6. Lead enhancement of School assessment and feedback practices.

Student Experience

1. Show sustained commitment as a Personal Tutor, including supporting personal tutee's academic progress and development.
2. Participate effectively in a Staff Student Liaison Committee.
3. Adapt your teaching approach to embed new ways of motivating and engaging students.
4. Co-create a course, or elements of a course with students.
5. Use the evidence base to revising a series of lectures to embed active learning throughout.

Social & Civic Responsibility Example Objectives

These objectives relate to actively aligning our work to the achievement of Strategy 2030, embracing change and the opportunity it provides, and proactively looking for new and better ways of doing things. Social and Civic Responsibility is a key focus for the University as described in [Strategy 2030](#). Social and civic responsibility means helping to shape society in a positive way, such as by reducing inequalities or improving environmental protection.

A [Social and Civic Responsibility Plan](#) was approved by the University Executive in April 2020 setting out three objectives and one cross-cutting theme in order to fulfill the University's social and civic responsibilities:

1. We will become a zero carbon and zero waste university,
2. We will widen participation in higher education and support inclusion,
3. We will work together with local communities,
4. Cross-cutting theme: In our operations, research and teaching we will engage critically with, and contribute to the United Nation's [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

For more information visit www.ed.ac.uk/sustainability/staff

Becoming a zero carbon and zero waste University

1. Work on improving environmental impacts of your day-to-day work, by choosing actions which have lower carbon impacts, and which lead to less waste where possible.
2. Lead or contribute to improving sustainability of your school or department (or another appropriate group) by actively working on improving sustainability of its operations, encouraging and developing new ideas and ways of working for you and your team.
3. Improve your knowledge of how you can get involved in University's Social and Civic Responsibility objectives by taking part in one of the short training sessions offered at the University or through other means.

Working together with local communities

1. Ensure your staff make use of their annual day of paid volunteering leave (part of special leave), either individually or as a team. For more information visit www.ed.ac.uk/local/staff-and-students/volunteer



2. Undertake activities relevant to one or more of the University's current [Social Impact Pledges](#).
3. Incorporate community engagement into your work with students
4. Share learning from your work with local communities at local and international conferences and in other fora (including the University's own Community Engagement Forum)
5. Ensure that procurement contracts which you own deliver the greatest possible community benefits

Engaging with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

1. Improve [biodiversity](#) on campus by creating or improving a green space near your building, or helping out with "Hedgehog Friendly Campus" activities
2. Learn about Modern Slavery and how to spot those at risk by completing [Modern Slavery Training](#): a short online course provided by the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability
3. Integrate sustainability into your courses (for teaching staff) (SDG 4: quality education)

Operational Example Objectives

These objectives relate to aiming to continuously improve our work, being open to different ways of thinking and new ideas, and seeking to understand issues that arise and working constructively to resolve them.

1. Lead on the development of a new service or facility [specify service or facility] considering resourcing, customer requirements, service level agreements and ways of working.
2. Liaise with colleagues on major developments involving space changes, refurbishments and new systems purchase.
3. Conduct a complete review of legal compliance of service or facility [specify service or facility] regarding [specify legal aspects to be considered, e.g. Health and Safety] and outline the findings of the review in a report to be presented to [name of committee, body, individual].
4. Implement the business process improvement project [provide details] as agreed with Director of Department designed to improve the results of the Customer Service survey to be completed on [dates].
5. Lead on the development of new Standard Operating Procedures for [specify process name/s] obtaining input from [specify colleague and/or team name/s]
6. Ensure all equipment [specify type of equipment] in building [name] passes equipment maintenance testing and produce an up-to-date inventory.
7. Review stock monitoring procedures, suggesting improvements and implementing agreed changes.
8. Install and commission new equipment, processes or delivery methods.
9. Liaise with external contractors and bodies on statutory test, maintenance and health and safety issues.
10. Set up a process to inform and update a data base recording the service's use of substances hazardous to health under COSHH regulations.
11. Update the Health & Safety policy document for [specify campus name] campus and ensure all staff are advised of changes.
12. Produce written guidance on the use of [specify name] equipment.
13. Provide a catering food offer that delivers "healthy choices" throughout all catering outlets.



14. Ensure each room is cleaned as required by Health and Safety standards and University requirements so that the University facilities enhance our Academic Reputation.

Career and Role Development Example Objectives

These objectives relate to taking individual accountability for achieving high performance, doing what we say we will, and welcoming feedback to support our ongoing development.

1. Strengths and skills - Identify your current strengths, skills and experience.
2. Supporting Others - Identify opportunities where you can support others using your strengths.
3. Transferable Skills - Identify your transferable skills related to your career objective.
4. Understanding Values - Consider your values in relation to your objective.
5. Career Options - Research the career options in relation to your objective.
6. Future Skills - Understand the future skills/experience trends related to your objective.
7. Enhance Your Qualifications - Undertake key qualifications/development.
8. Professional Registration - Complete professional registration related to your objective.
9. Develop a Network - Develop your network with people who do these types of roles within and outside of the University.
10. Create opportunities - Seek opportunities to develop the skills you need to reach your objective.
11. Gain Experience - Identify opportunities to expand your experience in relation to your objective.

Finance Example Objectives

These objectives relate to proactively looking for new and better ways of doing things, suggesting and trying out new approaches and taking acceptable risks, and seeking to understand issues that arise and working constructively to resolve them.

1. Contribute to meetings to discuss and agree budgets
2. Prepare budgets based on the best available information to an appropriate level of detail.
3. Amend budgets to reflect changes in circumstances.
4. Negotiate the best price with X supplier.
5. Prepare forecasts and conduct sensitivity analysis to assess the potential impact of changes to the budget.
6. Produce cash flow forecasts to project the organisation's future cash position.
7. Identify and record actual revenue and costs on a timely basis.
8. Compare actual figures with budget and identify and explain any differences.
9. Ensure that forecasts are reviewed regularly to provide accurate management information.
10. Research any business opportunities.
11. Evaluate the risks and potential returns associated with business opportunities and make recommendations based on this evaluation.
12. Investigate the finance options available and analyse the costs and benefits of each option.
13. Discuss options with managers and support them to choose the most appropriate options.

Organisational Change Example Objectives

These objectives relate to embracing change and the opportunities that it provides, being open to feedback and new ways of working, and actively aligning our work in the achievement of Strategy 2030.

Leaders: Managing Change

1. To implement x system changes/new system within my team(s), with all team members adopting new ways of working by xx/xx/xxxx.
2. Ensuring that staff are aware of the changes to come, benefits of the change and how it will affect them by holding regular team briefings, relaying key communications as appropriate and ensuring that all staff have regular 1:1s → just making sure the term is consistent throughout the document with their line managers to discuss how changes will impact each individual.
3. Contributing to identification of new ways of working e.g. via working groups, focus groups for you and/or members of your team.
4. Ensuring that staff have the knowledge and training they require in new ways of working.
5. Monitoring adoption rates and tracking benefits.

For All Staff: Managing Change

1. Be aware of the upcoming changes by staying up-to-date with relevant communications and asking questions to ensure your full understanding.
2. Contribute to developing the new ways of working if possible e.g. through attending focus groups, workshops, completing surveys.
3. Taking full opportunity of any training materials including guides, online learning or webinars to fully understand changes to ways of working.
4. Using the new system and encouraging others to embrace new ways of working.
5. Ensure that any students/stakeholders are aware of the change by pointing them to the relevant communications.
6. Manage any relevant queries as efficiently and considerately as possible.



Leaders: Continuous Improvement

1. Use team meetings and regular team communications to ask staff for their ideas.
2. Involve team members in investigating continuous improvement tools and methods and agree what would be suitable within your team e.g. 5S, 5 whys, root cause analysis.
3. Look for ways to introduce capacity to focus on continuous improvement activities by building them into regular ways of working e.g. team meetings, team huddles.
4. Prioritise improvements and pilot them, tracking impact.

For All Staff: Continuous Improvement

1. Raise any ideas or suggestions you may have on how to improve ways of working within your team as part of team Continuous Improvement sessions or during 1:1s.
2. Take part in continuous improvement activities e.g. upskilling on tools and techniques.
3. Look for opportunities to champion your improvements e.g. during pilots.