

## Project Goals

Private and public funders always want to know what your aim, purpose, or goal is for the project. These terms usually refer to the broad impact of a project. For example, in a research proposal, the purpose or aim of the project might be to better understand how destruction of milkweed due to urban encroachment along migratory pathways affects Monarch butterfly populations. In other types of projects, we might see goal statements such as improving health care for the self-employed or the elderly. In all cases, the project seeks to move towards some type of improved condition. Goal statements must directly align with the problem or need statement. We usually see only one or two goal statements for a project.

## Project Objectives

Objectives are specific points in the project that, cumulatively, will allow you to achieve your goal(s). They must be measurable; they should be concrete. These objectives can be viewed as answering the question, “What are the benchmarks for achieving my goals?” For example, in a research project, these are normally the hypotheses or null-hypotheses. In non-research projects, these are the progressive steps you expect to achieve at certain points.

Objectives may be of several types: product, process, performance, and behavioral objectives are common types. In any case, the objective is the outcome of something that you have accomplished, whether that is to develop a new widget, determine the effectiveness or efficiency of a new manufacturing process, help students achieve higher scores on the GRE, or help students develop better study habits. All of these are the end result of some action or intervention you have made in the course of your project. Effective objectives should not be written as processes: To expose students to the arts, to prepare students for the GRE, to improve nutrition of the elderly. These are not measurable and thus cannot be used to judge the effectiveness of the activities you described in your Procedures/Methods section.

The function of objectives is to identify benchmarks of progress that are subject to some kind of evaluation method that will help you **demonstrate** the effectiveness of the strategies you propose in the Methods or Procedures section of the project. Words such as *increase* and *decrease* are standard terms for objectives: Increase the number of students who score above 120 on the XYZ Math Test. [\[See sample alignment schematic\]](#) When you reach your target objectives, you will have reached your goal. On the other hand, if you do not reach your target objectives, you will need to explain why not in the report. The link between objectives and evaluation will allow you to evaluate data and make necessary changes to the protocols that are not working. They will also allow others to replicate your methods that have resulted in proven, positive changes.