



SETTING TARGETS

METHODS AND EXAMPLES

MEANINGFUL TARGETS

Setting your target shouldn't be guessing what you might achieve, but depends on the outcome, measure, and prior data. Reflect critically on what level do your students need to be able to show in order to be successful?

MORE RESOURCES

Check out the [Assessment](#) page for more resources or contact us at assessment@nl.edu.

TARGETS FOR SUCCESS

Targets for success are the **desired or expected level of performance** you want to see; acting as an indicator for whether or not the outcome was achieved. Targets can be expectation (achievable through no further effort), aspiration (achievable through some additional effort), or stretch (achievable through major focus). **Note that targets, and assessment as a whole, is never used as punishment for students, faculty or staff.** Set reasonable but rigorous targets to help you reflect on your data without fear of risk. Be sure to set your targets before collecting data.



BENCHMARKING DATA

INTERNAL

Data that you've already collected in the past is useful for knowing the average performance level. Prior data also allows us to see trends and look for abrupt changes in performance and investigate reasons why.

- Example target language: Increase from baseline (74%) by 5%.
- Example target language: Students will achieve a mean score at or above baseline for 80% of the discipline content test subscales.

If no prior data exists, use the first year of assessment as benchmarking, but still write a target as a starting point.

EXTERNAL

Peer institution benchmarking data is useful in comparing to our competitor programs. Set targets that are reasonable for the benchmarking data you obtain. Professional associations can be a source of benchmarking or performance expectations; use these targets to push and challenge our students to perform above industry expectations.

- Example target language: Association minimum pass rate is 80% on national exam; students at NLU will score, on average, 10% higher (90%) on exam.



QUALITATIVE DATA

Focus group, listening sessions, and interview data can be used as assessment methods for measuring an outcome or objective, but targets should be worded meaningfully.

- Example target language: Assess qualitative results to find common themes to address student needs and barriers.



QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS

Quantitative measures are useful for reporting purposes, just be sure you are clear on what they are measuring. For example, key performance metrics such as persistence, retention, graduation rates, and advancement rates are easy to compare against University or College averages but should not be used alone as a target for outcome achievement.

- Example target language: Increase student attendance at workshop by 20% from prior year.
- Example target language: Schedule appointments with 70% or more of referred students within two weeks of initial referral notice.



OTHER NOTES ON TARGETS

- Completion of a task is not typically a meaningful target (i.e. Students will write a paper).
- Grades are not typically meaningful targets for learning outcomes.