

Club Development Plans

17.1 What is a club development plan?

A development plan is a short document that outlines the objectives that a group or organisation hopes to achieve. It should help to structure developments within a framework so that it is easy to understand and accomplish. All UCD clubs are required to submit a development plan each year. In 2025/26 clubs must submit their development plan by October 24th.

Ideally all clubs should be working to achieve aims and objectives set out in three year development plans. These plans will help to ensure that your club is doing more than just standing still by giving you a set of goals to achieve and a framework to help you do that.

Strategic goals that should be considered by all UCD clubs are:

- Increasing participation
- Improving performance
- Sustainability
- Governance and leadership

Each club is responsible for setting out its objectives and target under the suggested goals above.

17.2 Why a three year plan?

There is nothing worse than spending a year developing a project only to see progress lost because there wasn't a handover or because there wasn't the understanding of how to continue with a project. Therefore, a three year plan aims to lessen the chance of this happening by providing a clearer direction over an extended period of time. If done correctly, the aims should build over time giving long-term benefits, consistency of objectives and should encourage a good handover between committees.

17.3 How does it work in practice?

Under each strategic goal you are asked to come up with one or more objectives, which in turn are broken down into three year targets. These three year targets should build on one another each year and all seek to achieve the set objective.

Each committee works on the first year of their three year plan, knowing that by reaching the targets they have set themselves, they have contributed to the development of their club over the following two years.

At the end of the year the old and incoming committees should work together to add an additional year to the plan, so that the club is constantly relooking at what it can achieve and what it is setting out to do, ensuring that it is relevant.

For example, let's say that one of the goals is to increase overall membership from 30 to 50 in three years. The first target may be 38, then 45, and then finally 50. In practice the club might have a fantastic year and reach 45 in year one, meaning that the next committee might decide to update their target to reach 50 in their year. By keeping the targets fluid you'll be able to make sure that you're developing at a pace that is right for your club.

17.4 Setting Objectives

To achieve more than just what's required you must plan ahead. To help you reach your goals try using the acronym **SMART**:

S	Specific: It is no use having a goal such as "get more members". That is not a specific enough target – are you looking for one extra member or are you looking for 30?
M	Measureable: How are you going to measure your goal? It is easy if it is something like increase in members to a social event, but what if your goal is to improve defensive play?
A	Achievable: Don't aim to win the National Senior title if you are in Division 5! Make sure that you set targets that you can achieve.
R	Relevant: Will this goal really achieve what the club needs? Why is this goal important? Is this the right time to pursue this goal?
T	Time-bound: Having a goal set within a time scale helps to motivate and to complete in a certain period. Do you want your goal to stretch the season or just the first three weeks?

Bad examples:

- *"We are going to win the varsities in two seasons."* It is time bound and - depending on the club - it could be realistic, but it is too vague. How are you going to win varsities? What is it that needs to change for you to win?
- *"I want to increase attendance at socials."* Great, but how? And by when?

Good Examples:

- *"By December 2026 we will have 20% of our members trained up to level 1."* Only the club can know if this is realistic, but assuming it is, it is a SMART goal.
- *"We will reduce the number of short corners conceded in semester 1 by 10% by running extra defensive drills."* Ticks all the boxes.

17.5 Making it Happen

Once you have set your objectives and broken them down into yearly targets, then you need to make sure that they are going to happen. Your role as a committee member is to make sure that you are reaching the targets that you set yourself.

Breaking down the targets into task lists allows you to identify each aspect of the job at hand; importantly it clearly states who is responsible for each aspect of the job and when this should be completed by. See a simple example below.

Objective: Increase Netball membership by 10% before the end of Semester 1			
Task	Responsibility	Role	Timescale/Deadline
Authorise payments for any promotional/advertising items that could be used to generate publicity.	Finance	Treasurer	12 weeks Nov 31st
Collect any new membership monies. Forward to Treasurer. Update membership list on SISWeb.	Correspondence/ Membership	Secretary	12 weeks Nov 31st
Integrate new members into training session and squad.	New members	Team Captain	12 weeks Nov 31st
Monitor/Evaluate membership figures. Review if 10% target was reached.	Monitor and evaluate objective	Club Captain	Review date Dec 1st

Although very simple, you can see from the example above that if the Secretary fails to upload the new members on SISWeb that the Club Captain cannot monitor membership increases.

The use of task lists is incredibly important to allow you to monitor your progress and where necessary chase those on the committee that might be holding you back from developing your club.

17.6 **Monitoring Your Development**

It is not enough to have a development plan written down. For it to work and to work well it needs to be monitored, reviewed and consistently adapted to make sure that your objectives and targets remain relevant to those who are trying to achieve them.

17.6.1 **Profile Your Club**

The first thing you should do at the beginning of your term, before you even start to think about your objectives is to profile your club. Write down key statistics for your club such as the number of members, gender split, number of teams, coaches, competition entered etc. It is only by knowing where you are that you can begin to understand where you would like to go.

For example, following your profiling you may have noticed a gender split that heavily favours males. An objective therefore could be to attract members through introductory women-only training sessions.

17.6.2 **Development Meetings**

At any stage through the year you can meet with the AUC Executive Secretary to discuss your progress and, if required, help you to adapt or adjust your targets. We are here to help.

17.6.3 **Annual Report**

At the end of the year your committee should present an annual report. This should include details on your progress against your set targets, and will also help form the basis of the handover to your club's next committee.