



accountabili-buddy

— CLARITY. COMMITMENT. FOLLOW THROUGH. —



CASE
STUDIES

CASE STUDY 17

GOAL COMPLETION

1. TRAINING OBJECTIVE

Recognize when a goal has actually been completed and conduct explicit closure rather than automatically replacing it with a larger or adjacent goal.

The trainee should understand that completion is an accountability event in its own right and that waiting for an external outcome does not necessarily mean the completed goal remains active.

2. CLIENT PROFILE

Client: Natalie

Goal: Complete and submit a portfolio required for admission to a professional certification program

Current Commitment: Make the final revisions and submit the portfolio by Friday.

3. RELEVANT HISTORY

Natalie has worked on the portfolio for approximately four months.

The Accountabili-Buddy has supported her through:

- Establishing weekly work sessions

- Revising individual sections
- Resolving a period of perfectionistic over-editing
- Obtaining outside feedback
- Preparing the final submission

Submission of the completed portfolio is the defined endpoint of this goal.

4. CLIENT MESSAGE

Accountabili-Buddy: Final submission today. Where are we?

Natalie: DONE.

Natalie: Submitted at 2:17 this afternoon. Confirmation email received. There is literally nothing left for me to do.

Natalie: It feels strange after talking about this every week for four months.

5. TRAINEE TASK

What should the Accountabili-Buddy do with the goal?

Does waiting for the admission decision keep this goal active?

Should a new commitment be established immediately?

What information, if any, needs to be retained?

6. EVIDENCE ANALYSIS

FACTS

- The defined deliverable has been completed.
- The portfolio has been submitted.
- Submission has been confirmed.

- No remaining accountable action belongs to the original goal.
- The goal has occupied substantial accountability attention for approximately four months.
- An external admission decision may occur later.

CLIENT INTERPRETATION

Natalie correctly identifies that her work on the portfolio is complete.

She also reports that ending a goal that has occupied weekly attention for four months feels strange.

ACCOUNTABILI-BUDDY INFERENCE

There is no reason to keep the portfolio goal active for accountability purposes.

Its completion may still be acknowledged or briefly reviewed, but no further accountable behavior remains within the goal.

Waiting for an external admission decision does not convert waiting into an active accountability commitment.

A new goal should not be manufactured merely to maintain continuity.

7. PRIMARY FORMULATION

Goal successfully completed. Explicit closure is appropriate.

8. ALTERNATIVE FORMULATIONS

If the admission process later creates new actions within Natalie's control, those actions may support a new goal or accountability phase.

They do not prevent closure of the completed portfolio goal.

If no new accountable action exists, there is nothing that needs to replace it immediately.

9. MISSING INFORMATION

No additional information is required to determine whether the portfolio goal is complete.

Natalie may decide whether she wants accountability around another goal, but that decision does not need to be made as part of closing this one.

10. RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

“Then this goal is complete. Portfolio submitted and confirmed. We can close it. After four months, I can understand why that feels strange. When you're ready, we can look separately at whether there's anything you want accountability around next.”

11. REASONING

Accountability can develop an activity bias in which completion of one goal immediately produces pressure to create another.

That obscures an important distinction between continuing an accountability relationship and continuing a particular goal.

Explicit closure creates an accurate record of successful completion.

It also prevents external waiting periods from being treated as though accountable behavior is still required.

Natalie retains ownership of whether, when, and around what she wants accountability next.

12. PLAUSIBLE ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE

“Submitted and confirmed. That closes the portfolio goal. You don't need to turn the waiting period into another commitment. We can decide separately what, if anything, you want to work on next.”

13. WEAK RESPONSE EXAMPLES

WEAK RESPONSE A

"Amazing! Now let's set a goal for getting accepted."

Problem: Acceptance is an external outcome that may not be within Natalie's control. The response also bypasses closure by immediately manufacturing another goal.

WEAK RESPONSE B

"Great. What's the next goal?"

Problem: The response assumes that successful completion must immediately be replaced by another goal rather than allowing explicit closure and client choice.

WEAK RESPONSE C

"Let's keep checking on the portfolio until you hear back."

Problem: No accountable behavior remains within the portfolio goal. Waiting for an external decision is not itself a reason to keep the completed goal active.

14. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The portfolio goal is closed as successfully completed.

Natalie may simply wait for the admission decision without converting the waiting period into an accountability task.

If she identifies another outcome or behavior for which she wants accountability, a new goal can be established on its own terms.

If the admission process later requires additional action from Natalie, that action can be evaluated as a new accountability need rather than reopening a goal that was already completed.

15. RECORD / UPDATE

Goal: Complete and submit professional certification portfolio

Final Commitment: Complete revisions and submit by Friday

Result: Completed; submission confirmed

Goal Status: Closed, successfully completed

Outstanding Accountable Action: None

External Status: Admission decision pending

Next Decision: Natalie determines whether and when she wants accountability around another goal

16. SCORING CRITERIA

Full-credit responses should:

- Recognize genuine goal completion
- Explicitly close the completed goal
- Distinguish completion from waiting for an external outcome
- Recognize that no accountable behavior remains within the completed goal
- Avoid manufacturing further activity merely to maintain continuity
- Avoid turning an external admission decision into a client commitment
- Distinguish continuation of the accountability relationship from continuation of the completed goal
- Preserve Natalie's ownership of whether and what she wants to pursue next

