

ACE Quick Guide to SMART Goals

What are SMART Goals?

Learning how to **set effective goals** is a fundamental skill to help you to **realise your full potential, both professionally and personally**. During your apprenticeship, you will be expected to **create SMART goals with your DLC at every review**. You may also be asked to set goals at work within the context of a performance review.

The acronym **SMART** can be used to set **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound** goals.

Specific
Ask yourself what you would like to accomplish. Whether your goal is professional or personal, you should be able to explain it clearly and succinctly – detailing how and when it will be accomplished.
Measurable
How will you know when the goal is accomplished? You may find it helpful to track your progress as you work towards it, evidencing your professional or personal development.
Achievable
Whilst it is important to aim high, setting unrealistic goals may result in frustration and missed deadlines. Your goal should be challenging but accomplishable, factoring in your commitments at work and at home .
Relevant
How will accomplishing the goal develop your skillset – benefiting your performance at work and on your apprenticeship?
Time-bound
Determine when you would like to accomplish the goal, producing a timeline for completion . For long-term goals such as completing a work-based project, break the process down into stages – establishing targets for project initiation, planning, implementation, completion and review.

(Adapted from Purdue University Global, 2024)

Examples of SMART Goals for Apprentices:

You can use SMART goals to keep yourself **focused and motivated** whilst completing your apprenticeship. Below are 5 different examples of both personal and professional SMART goals.

1

I will enhance my time management skills by using the [Pomodoro technique](#) when completing apprenticeship work on my study day. At my next review, I will reflect on my progress and adapt this routine as needed.

2

In preparation for my mock portfolio discussion in 2 weeks' time, I will review the distinction criteria and prepare answers for each KSB using the STAR method. I will gather feedback from my DLC and make a note of action points on how to improve my answers.

3

I will complete 3 of my set BKSB English activities every week on my study day and submit my skills progression PDF in the messages and submissions area of my FS2 activity on BUD.

4

I will build by confidence in using Python so I can manage tasks independently and without support by completing 3 beginner level projects agreed by my manager and DLC in time for my next review.

5

I will improve how I manage my anxiety by using the Stresscoach app when I start to notice indicators that my anxiety levels are rising and complete 1 of their recommended activities.

When Setting SMART Goals...



Share your goals with your DLC, manager, colleagues, friends and family. When others know about your goals, you establish accountability for yourself.



Anticipate obstacles! For each of your goals, produce a list of potential challenges – including any resources which may help you to overcome them.



Break them down into small, manageable tasks or action points. This will help you to maintain focus and motivation as you progress towards your goals.



Revise your timeline for completion. As you undertake each task or action point, you may require more or less time than originally planned.



Celebrate your progress! It is important to reward yourself for working hard to accomplish your goals.

(Adapted from Oregon State University, 2024)

Reference List

Oregon State University (2024) *SMART Goals*. Available at:

<https://success.oregonstate.edu/learning/smart-goals> (Accessed: 24 September 2026)

Purdue University Global (2024) *SMART Goals for Students*. Available at:

<https://www.purdueglobal.edu/blog/student-life/smart-goals-for-students/> (Accessed: 24 September 2026)

Additional Resources

[Berklee College of Music](#) provides further information on creating SMART goals, including a video guide.

[Southern New Hampshire University](#) offers additional examples of SMART goals, including a series of questions and prompts to help you set your own.



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