



## Writing SMART Learning Goals

(Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant/Results-Oriented Time-Bound)

To begin, please watch [Writing Professional Learning Goals for your Self-Directed Learning Tool](#) on the CDO YouTube channel.

The SMART approach, as described in the four steps below, will help you write your professional learning goals in a clear and concise format. We recommend that you avoid abbreviations and use plain language whenever possible.

**Step 1: Make a list of your goals.** What professional learning goals would you like to achieve? Consider areas where you would like to improve your knowledge and/or skills to fill a gap and grow your ongoing competence.

**Example:**

- *Improve my active listening skills.*
- *Expand my knowledge on plant-based nutrition topics.*
- *Increase my knowledge of prenatal nutrition.*

**Step 2: Specify your learning goal.**

To assist with specifying your learning goal, using the S, R, and T elements in the SMART acronym: Specific/Strategic, Relevant/Results-oriented, and Time-bound.

**Specific & Strategic:** Focuses on clearly individualized, specified learning to be achieved. Ensure that it is a learning goal and not a work task expectation. (i.e., What do you want to know? Why is this a learning goal?)

**Example:** *My learning goal is to improve my active listening skills.*

**Relevant/Results Oriented:** Produces an "endpoint" change in learning which can be defined and sustained. What is the expected outcome of the learning? (i.e., Why are you setting this goal now? How will you apply knowledge or skills in your practice?)

**Example:** *This new learning will enhance my communication with interns.*

**Time-bound:** What are your timelines for achieving your learning goals? (i.e., What's the deadline and is it realistic?)

**Example:** *I will achieve this learning by July 31, 2022.*

### Step 3: Write your Action Plan.

To assist with writing your action plan, consider the M and A elements of the SMART acronym. Remember to align your action plan to your learning goal (think about the resources you need to achieve your goal(s) and measure the learning).

Measurable: Able to be demonstrated by observable and specifiable improvement in learning. (How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met your goal?)

#### Example:

*I will obtain feedback from Interns regarding my coaching by June 30, 2022.  
I will utilize their feedback to ensure continuous improvement by July 31, 2022.*

Attainable: Limited to strategies and activities that can be expected within the context and time frame of the goal. (Do you have the resources required to achieve the goal? If not, can you obtain them? Is the amount of effort needed roughly equal to what the goal will achieve?)

#### Example:

*I can accomplish my learning goal by doing the following:  
Complete the SkillPath 'Active Listening Seminar' by Feb 28, 2022.  
Read 3 journal articles on active listening by March 15, 2022.  
Review CDO Resources regarding supervising learners by March 30, 2022.*

### Step 4: SMART Goal

Review what you've written above and combine what you've written in steps 2 and 3 to write your new learning goal and action plan.

#### Learning Goal

##### Example:

*I will improve my active listening skills so that I can enhance my communication with interns. I will utilize their feedback to ensure continuous improvement by July 31, 2022.*

#### Action Plan

##### Example:

- *Complete the SkillPath 'Active Listening Seminar' by Feb 28, 2022.*
- *Read three journal articles on active listening by March 15, 2022.*
- *Obtain feedback from Interns regarding my coaching by June 30, 2022.*
- *Review CDO Resources regarding supervising learners by March 30, 2022.*

For additional resources, click on these Self-Directed Learning Tool examples of SMART Goals for Client Care ([English](#), [French](#)) and Non-Client Care ([English](#), [French](#)).