

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 academically and professionally. As a degree apprentice, setting goals may help you manage upcoming assignment deadlines. At work, you could be asked to set goals 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 academic or professional, 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 academic or professional 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 academic performance or enabling you to succeed in the workplace?
Time-bound
Determine when you would like to accomplish the goal, producing a timeline for completion . For long-term goals such as meeting assignment deadlines, break the process down into stages – establishing targets for the completion of research, planning, drafting, and editing.

(Adapted from Purdue University Global, 2024)

Examples of SMART Goals for Degree Apprentices:

You can use SMART goals to keep yourself **focused** and **motivated** whilst completing your degree apprenticeship.

1

I will enhance my time management skills by committing to 30 minutes of uninterrupted study per weekday – using the blocker app Flipd to minimise distractions. After two weeks, I will reflect on my progress and adapt this routine as needed.

2

Exercising the Pomodoro Technique, I will draft the 350-word introduction for my assignment by 2:30pm.

3

For the duration of this semester, I will dedicate two hours each week to completing the recommended reading in advance of my lectures. I will employ the SQ4R Method, reading with purpose and keeping accurate notes.

4

Following my tutor's feedback, I will improve my understanding of reflective models – blocking time in my diary to attend the [relevant ACE Study Skills Workshops](#). Moreover, I will schedule [a one-to-one tutorial with ACE](#), obtaining further guidance and support prior to my upcoming deadline.

5

In advance of my End Point Assessment, I will prepare answers for each mock interview question – adopting the STAR acronym.

When Setting SMART Goals...



Share your goals with friends, coworkers, or lecturers. 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: 29 November 2024).

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

<https://www.purdueglobal.edu/blog/student-life/smart-goals-for-students/> (Accessed: 29 November 2024).

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.



[QA.com](https://qa.com)