

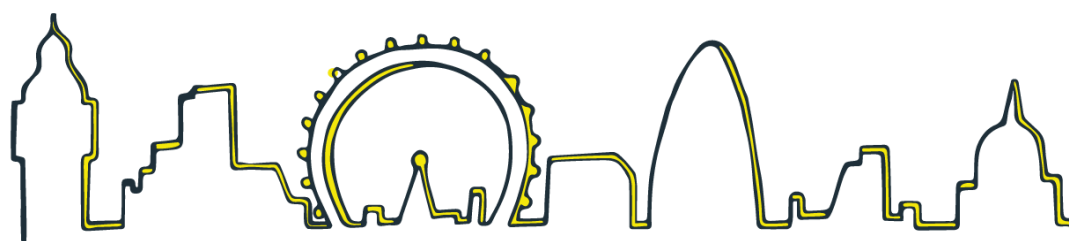
Setting Objectives

Once learning needs have been identified, the next stage is turning these needs into personal development objectives. Personal development objectives are essential to guide development and determine goals to achieve. The following need to be considered when setting objectives and personal development plans

- Prioritizing the learning needs with the most important or urgent to be completed first
- The number – too many objectives is demoralizing for the individual. It is recommended that there are no more than three personal development objectives for a period of time
- The timing – development objectives need to be staggered over a certain period of time to be realistic in terms of achievement
- The individual's preferred learning style – as people learn in different ways, choosing the most appropriate method of learning for the individual is more likely to lead to success in completion of an objective and the application of the knowledge or skill to the workplace and role
- Additional support that may be needed for the individual, how often this will be required, in what format and who from
- Application of learning to the role and workplace – this is essential for transference of learning of knowledge and skills to practice and gain experience

All objectives should be SMART:

- **Specific** – clear, concise and specific
- **Measurable** – identification of how completion of an objective may be measured and what success looks like
- **Achievable / Agreed** – the objective needs to be achievable within any constraints for the individual and agreed by the individual
- **Realistic / Relevant** – realistic in terms of method, timing and constraints. Relevant in terms of the individual, their learning needs and their role requirements



- **Timebound** – a defined deadline for completion. Whilst we may not like deadlines we focus on achieving by a deadline. Where an objective is ‘ongoing’ it is less likely to be completed

An example of a SMART objective could be:

“To attend the one day preceptor development training by *defined date* to be able to ‘precept’ a newly registered nurse joining the following month”

Objectives must be measurable to be effective and therefore words like ‘improve’ are not encouraged – this does not present a tangible outcome that can be monitored and measured.

However, setting personal development objectives requires self-motivation from the individual. Without this motivation, development is unlikely to be as effective or applied to the role.

A useful mnemonic for considering the employee’s self-motivation is AIM

- **Attitude** - Consider the staff member’s attitude towards development. Identify the best ways to motivate them by linking development activities to their learning style and to their own individual aspirations
- **Interest** - Consider the interests of the individual and the organisation. If the individual is not interested in the development and motivation is low it is unlikely to be of any benefit to the organisation. Focussing activities to the individual’s interests will stimulate the motivation essential in effective development and lead to a more-motivated and productive staff member
- **Measurement** - Without measurement of the effect, there can be no indication of success or achievement. Individuals need clear, measured goals to ensure they know what needs to be achieved and within what timeframe. This encourages learning and inspires effective application to the workplace.

