



SMART Goals: Guidelines & Examples

A Support Tool for the Continuing Competency Program (CCP) for Opticians

The College of Health and Care Professionals of BC was created on June 28, 2024 through the amalgamation of seven health regulatory colleges:

- College of Dietitians of British Columbia
- College of Occupational Therapists of British Columbia
- College of Optometrists of British Columbia
- College of Opticians of British Columbia
- College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia
- College of Psychologists of British Columbia
- College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of British Columbia

All current requirements for standards of clinical and ethical practice issued by the seven colleges remain in place upon amalgamation.

This document was created by the College of Opticians of British Columbia and will be updated to reflect the amalgamation.

Table of Contents

SMART Goal Setting	4
Guidelines	4
1. What is a SMART goal?	4
2. How do I create a SMART goal?	5
Examples	6
1. SMART goal vs. General goal	6
2. Competency-based examples	7
<i>Example 1</i>	7
<i>Example 2</i>	8
<i>Example 3</i>	9
<i>Example 4</i>	10
3. Other examples of SMART goals	11
Tools	12
1. Other formulas/formats for writing SMART goals	12
2. Action words	13
3. Measurement methods	14
4. Practice worksheet	14

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SMART Goal Setting

A huge part of the new Continuing Competency Program (CCP) is setting appropriate and achievable learning goals for yourself. Goal setting will be different for everyone, but it always provides focus and direction, no matter what you are trying to accomplish.

To assist you in creating goals, the College of Opticians of BC (COBC) has chosen the framework of SMART goals. SMART goal setting is a way to create structured and attainable goals.

For more information on the learning goal portion of the CCP, please review the "Continuing Competency Program: Information Guide."

Guidelines

1. What is a SMART goal?

SMART is an acronym that stands for:

- S** **Specific** – clearly define what you are trying to achieve
- M** **Measurable** – criteria to know when you have achieved goal
- A** **Action-oriented** – action to achieve goal is clear
- R** **Realistic** – make sure it is attainable and reasonable
- T** **Time-bound** – set a definite deadline

The aim of SMART goals is to create realistic goals that produce an outcome. Often when setting goals, people will think big and get discouraged if they don't meet their goals. While the COBC encourages our registrants to think big, we also want to ensure registrants are creating achievable goals with practical results. The process is not meant to be daunting or overwhelming.

Goal setting will be different for everyone, but it always provides focus and direction, no matter what you are trying to accomplish.

2. How do I create a SMART goal?

Start by thinking about your practice: What do you want to improve on, and how can you get there? You will be given some suggested competencies to work on from your assessment results, so that will be your starting point. Once you have chosen a competency to work on, consider the following questions to help you turn it into a SMART goal:

Tips for setting SMART goals and action plan learning activities:

Your goal should be:	Some guidance:	Questions to think about:
Specific	Create learning goals and action plans that are specific and clear. Make them detailed enough to clearly define what you are trying to achieve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I want to achieve? • What specific knowledge/skill do I need?
Measurable	Establish tangible criteria so that you will know when you have achieved each goal and action plan strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much? • How often? • How many? • How will I demonstrate that I have accomplished the goal?
Action-oriented	Stating the desired outcome of each goal and action item makes them more clear and understandable. It also increases motivation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the ultimate outcome I want? • How will achieving my goal improve my practice?
Realistic	Make sure the goals and action items you set are attainable and reasonable, including the cost and time required to complete each action item. Consider whether the goal and associated action plan is substantial enough to meet your learning requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it attainable? • What can I do to make it realistic? • Have I selected appropriate educational strategies to help me achieve my learning goals?
Time-bound	Simply deciding when you want to achieve something can be a good motivator. Time must be measurable, attainable and realistic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When will I achieve this? • Have I established realistic deadlines to achieve my goals and action plan items?

Examples

1. SMART goal vs. General goal

Often, our goals are a bit too broad or vague. Here is an example of a goal that is well-intentioned, but doesn't fit under the SMART format:

"I want to grow my optical business."

This particular goal does not consider any of the questions above, so is not detailed enough to ensure that it will remain a focus. This goal is not likely going to be achieved without more thought about how it can be achieved, and without an action plan in place to get there. With more thought, we can break it down and turn it into a SMART goal.



Not yet a SMART goal:

"I want to grow my optical business."

Specific – I specifically want to gain four new patients for my clinic.

Measurable – I will measure my progress by keeping track of how many new patients I gain while maintaining my current patient base.

Action-oriented – I will advertise that we are accepting new patients.

Realistic – I can provide quality care to four new patients as I currently have four available spaces in my patient scheduler.

Timely – I want to have four new patients within the next nine months.



New Overall SMART Goal:

"I will gain four new patients for my optical business within a nine-month period by advertising locally that we are accepting new patients. This will fill my current available schedule and allow me to grow my business and serve more of the community."

2. Competency-based examples

The following are some different SMART goal examples that relate to specific competencies for the CCP. Your assessment results may reveal that you need to address these same competencies, or you may find that you are exemplary in these particular areas, and that you'll have different areas in which you can focus.

Example 1: Registrant Jane is a Contact Lens practitioner, so she was assessed on the Core, Eyeglass, and Contact Lens sections of the assessment. She now has her results and knows which competencies she needs to address. She checks the 3rd edition of the National competencies document (found on the Assessment Results page in her program) to get a better understanding of what each competency refers to.

For her first goal, Jane has chosen to focus on Core competency 1.0 - "Assumes Professional Responsibilities." She knows she needs to manage her documents better at work, which definitely falls under this category. She creates the following goal to improve in that area, and decides on an action plan to get there:

Competency	Learning Goal
Core competency 1.0 - Assumes Professional Responsibilities <i>(For this example, Jane has chosen to focus on the following, more specific competency domain, found in the National Competency breakdown: 1.3 Prepare documents and records in accordance with provincial legislation, standards, and guidelines)</i>	By December 2018, I will update my patient record system to electronic records in accordance with professional standards
Action Plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will review the COBC's standards and complete the COBC's education module on record keeping by May 2018 • I will research electronic record and patient management systems that align with regulatory requirements by June 2018 • I will have a session with my business coach to prepare for system implementation with staff and patients by August 2018 • I will attend a communications and marketing class to advertise the new online system to patients by September 2018 • I will adopt a new electronic record system, update website, and import patient files by October 2018 • I will pilot the new system with staff before launching it to patients by November 2018 • I will make any changes from the pilot and implement the new system by December 2018 	

In **example 1** above, Jane's goal is SMART:

Specific – she is clear about what she wants to achieve, and why.

Measurable – she will be able to determine whether she updated the system or not.

Action-oriented – it requires her to take action, and plan activities to accomplish the goal.

Realistic – it is attainable for her, as she has chosen activities that consider her budget and availability.

Time-bound – she states the particular date in mind for completing the goal.

Example 2: Jane has also chosen to focus on Core competency 4.0 – “Applies Organizational Management Principles.” She reviews the 3rd edition of the National Competency document to figure out exactly what this refers to and chooses to focus on a specific area in advertising that interests her.

She creates a new goal to succeed in a new area, with the following action plan to develop her skills in order to do so:

Competency	Learning Goal
Core competency 4.0 - Applies Organizational Management Principles <i>(For this example, Jane has chosen to focus on the following, specific competency domain, found in the National Competency breakdown: 4.3 – Apply principles of ethical marketing and advertising practices)</i>	To incorporate experiential marketing into my practice to increase sales by 5% by December 2018
Action Plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will complete marketing seminars to learn experiential marketing concepts by September 2018 i.e. Engaging Consumers: Experiential Marketing (Digital ECP) and digital marketing bootcamp • I will create a new marketing plan for my practice by October 2018 • I will implement the new marketing plan by November 2018 • I will find coaching and mentorship to help guide marketing improvements by December 2018 	

In **example 2** above, Jane’s goal is SMART:

Specific – she is clear about what she wants to achieve, and why.

Measurable – she will be able to determine whether she incorporated new marketing into her practice, and whether she increased sales.

Action-oriented – it requires her to take action, and plan activities to accomplish the goal.

Realistic – it is attainable for her, as she has chosen activities she knows will give her the knowledge she needs, and activities that are available and can be easily scheduled.

Time-bound – she states the particular date in mind for completing the goal.

Example 3: Jane has next chosen to focus on Eyeglass competency 9.1 – “Apply knowledge to determine the appropriate lenses and frames to meet the needs of the patient.” She has always struggled to stay on top of the latest technology but never made it a priority. She can now use the CCP to create a goal and make it a focus.

She has decided to do so with the following action plan:

Competency	Learning Goal
Eyeglass competency 9.1 - Apply knowledge to determine the appropriate lenses and frames to meet the needs of the patient	I will recommend 5 of the latest lenses to patients by December 2019, to ensure they have current options
Action Plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will complete seminars to learn about new lenses by September 2019 ie. Design to Production (Luxottica); Reinventing Near Vision (Essilor) • I will try recommending the new lenses to patients in the Fall of 2019 • I will meet with my peer learning group to discuss and compare experiences with the new 2019 lenses in December 2019 	

In **example 3** above, Jane’s goal is SMART:

Specific – she is clear about what she wants to achieve, and why.

Measurable – she will be able to determine whether she made new recommendations or not.

Action-oriented – it requires her to learn something new in order to take action and accomplish her goal.

Realistic – it is attainable for her, as she has found seminars that are available when she is free, and recommending new lenses is in her control to implement.

Time-bound – she states the particular date in mind for completing the goal.



Example 4: Jane has now chosen to focus on Contact Lens competency 10.2 – *“Select the appropriate trial lenses, taking into consideration patient/client specific needs and compiled data.”* Jane has considered offering specialty lenses in her practice for some time, but never went ahead with it.

She decides that now is a good time to incorporate something new into her practice, as the CCP would help structure a plan to do so, and it would certainly develop this particular competency:

Competency	Learning Goal
Contact Lens competency 10.2 - Select the appropriate trial lenses, taking into consideration patient/client specific needs and compiled data	To incorporate specialty lenses into my practice by December 2019, in order to meet broader patient needs
Action Plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will complete seminars to learn about specialty contact lenses by June 2019 ie. Specialty Lens (Xcel); Importance of Oxygen for Your Patients’ Eyes (Coopervision) • I will seek mentorship to fit specialty contact lenses to practice until November 2019 • I will practice fitting patients with specialty contact lenses • I will meet with my peer learning group to discuss and compare experiences with specialty contact lenses by February 2020 	

In **example 4** above, Jane’s goal is SMART:

Specific – she is clear about what she wants to achieve, and why.

Measurable – she will be able to determine whether she has in fact incorporated specialty lenses into her practice.

Action-oriented – it requires her to learn something new and take action to accomplish her goal.

Realistic – it is attainable for her, given her schedule and network of colleagues.

Time-bound – she states the particular date in mind for completing the goal.

3. Other examples of SMART goals

SMART goals can be created for almost any aspect of your life, and in any profession or learning environment. The following are some other examples of SMART goals, created by different professionals:

- By September 30, 2018, complete course work and attain my Project Management certification to enhance my skills as measured by feedback from my supervisor and the accomplishment of my performance plan goals.
- By July 31, 2019, I will create a new social media messaging process using a clearly defined process and best-practice guidelines, so customers clearly understand our clinic services which will help eliminate misunderstanding.
- Present a minimum of two breakfast seminars to my colleagues, per quarter, to improve confidence and presenting skills.
- Attend the “Assertive Communication” course by the end of Q4 to improve my communication and negotiation skills used in team work environments and with patients.
- Between April 2018 and March 2019, I will enhance my understanding of the legal requirements for record keeping. I will meet this goal through consultation with peers and a review of relevant legislation.
- By November 2019, I will enhance my media relations skills. I will meet this goal by participation in a workshop, peer review, and critical reflection on my practice.
- By March 2020, develop and implement a customer service plan that results in department staff reporting that they are clear about expectations for excellent customer service, and have the skills and support to perform at that level; and that results in customers reporting that they receive excellent customer service.



Tools

1. Other formulas/formats for writing SMART goals

The “S” in **SMART** reminds you that your goal should be Specific:

- What exactly do I want to achieve, and what will be involved to achieve it?

While every SMART goal should be specific, that doesn't mean there is only one way to write a SMART goal. As you can see from the examples given, the goals are formatted or written in a slightly different way, but they all contain the details needed to ensure they are SMART. There are many variations and different formulas you can use to write your SMART goals.

“I will _____ in order to _____ by _____.”
(action) (measurable outcome) (date)

“By _____ I will _____ to _____ for _____.”
(date) (outcome) (why) (who will be impacted)

Whichever format you use, you'll need to remember the “R” in **SMART** – make sure that your goal is also going to be Realistic for your situation:

- Is it attainable?
- Can you actually complete the action in the time you have given yourself to achieve the goal?
- Do you have proper access to the activity during that time?
- Does it fit within your schedule and budget?

By making sure your chosen goal includes things that are realistic for your situation, you are setting yourself up for success.

2. Action words

The “A” in **SMART** is often the most important piece of the goal, as it will direct you to put a plan in motion. To help specify what you plan to do to achieve your goal, it is important to use Action-oriented words. Think about:

- What is the outcome I want?
- How can I get there?

You may wish to consider incorporating the following action words into your goals, so you can ultimately take action:

Management Goals	Communication Goals	Organizational Goals	Technical Goals
Administer	Address	Approve	Apply
Analyze	Advertise	Arrange	Assemble
Assign	Compose	Catalogue	Calculate
Consolidate	Consult	Categorize	Code
Contract	Define	Chart	Construct
Coordinate	Draft	Classify	Convert
Delegate	Enlist	Compile	Design
Direct	Explain	Correct	Determine
Eliminate	Formulate	Distribute	Develop
Enforce	Interact	File	Devise
Enhance	Interpret	Generate	Engineer
Establish	Interview	Implement	Fortify
Evaluate	Lecture	Incorporate	Install
Head	Mediate	Inspect	Operate
Improve	Moderate	Log	Overhaul
Increase	Negotiate	Maintain	Program
Initiate	Outline	Monitor	Rectify
Institute	Participate	Obtain	Regulate
Manage	Present	Order	Remodel
Merge	Promote	Organize	Repair
Plan	Reconcile	Process	Solve
Prioritize	Recruit	Purchase	Standardize
Restore	Report	Record	Study
Review	Resolve	Systemize	Train
Schedule	Write	Update	Upgrade

3. Measurement methods

As the “M” in **SMART** states, there should be a source of information to ensure that your goal is Measurable. Sometimes measurement is difficult, so you will need to think of the most relevant source to measure your success, depending on your goal:

- How will I demonstrate that I have accomplished the goal?
- How can I actually see the results?
- How much? Or how often? Or how many?

Some common ways of measuring your success, and some different ways of how to find the information necessary, could include the following. These will not apply for all goals, and you will have to determine what results are appropriate for your specific goal:

Things to measure:	Ways to measure:
Amounts produced	Tests
Costs reduced	Surveys
Accuracy rates	Audits/inspections
Customer satisfaction	Automated reports
Productivity rates	Feedback logs
Time saved	Other documentation

4. Practice worksheet

Reminders for writing an effective goal:

- 1 Use SMART goal criteria.
- 2 Use clear, specific language.
- 3 Avoid using negative language. Think positive!

Another example of a SMART goal:

“To run the mini marathon in May and complete the 10 mile race in under 1 hour to beat my personal best time.”

Notice how this example uses a format that begins with the word “To”, and includes the verb “run.” It also specifies what (the marathon), why (to beat personal best time) and when (May).

Use this worksheet to identify the specific SMART criteria you will use to write your goal statement.

What is your basic goal?

1. Is it **Specific**? (Who? What? Where? When? Why?)

S _____

2. Is it **Measurable**? (How will I measure progress? How many? How much?)

M _____

3. Is it **Action-oriented**? (Can this really happen? Is it attainable with enough effort? What steps are involved?)

A _____

4. Is it **Realistic**? (What knowledge, skills, and abilities are necessary to reach this goal?)

R _____

5. Is it **Timebound**? (Can I set fixed deadlines? What are the deadlines?)

T _____

What is your SMART goal?

Use the SMART information you just completed and incorporate them into a goal statement. This should be a work-related goal that you would like to achieve in 12 months or less. Repeat this exercise as needed to write other goal statements.

