



Q & A: SMART Learning Goals

Q. Why are SMART learning goals a requirement of the CCP?

A. Setting SMART goals allow dietitians to self-reflect and engage in intentional learning to meet self-identified learning needs. They help the dietitian to focus on specific learning which will enable a dietitian to achieve the goal within the year. Therefore learning goals rather than job task-related goals are a part of the program.

Job task goal: I will develop and deliver a presentation on enteral feeding to colleagues.

SMART learning goal: I will increase my knowledge of enteral feeding related to general surgery by June 2015.

Q. What if the goals that I set in March are no longer relevant by the end of the year?

A. You may change your goals during the year as learning needs change or new learning opportunities arise. Simply state your new goal on the learning log at the top of the form.

Q. I find that I need more than one year to meet my goals. Is it necessary to evaluate each goal annually?

A. Ideally, set a SMART learning goal with the aim to achieve the goal within one year. If you are engaged in a learning opportunity (e.g. series of workshops) that is projected to take more than a year to complete, choose a portion of the curriculum to focus on for this year's goal and a portion for next year. It is important to make all goals specific and timely.

Q. How many learning activities should I complete for each goal?

A. This is based on your professional judgment to identify whether the learning activities have been sufficient to increase your understanding and lead to a meaningful learning outcome.

Q. I have to keep learning objectives for both work and the NSDA. Can I use the same goals for both work and NSDA?

A. Yes. Work-related learning goals may be used in the CCP if there is new learning with an impact on professional competence. When using work-related learning goals, ensure they are different from 'job tasks.' 'Job tasks' do not necessarily lead to new learning. A work-related learning goal should focus on enhancing knowledge, skill or attitudes that underpin competence.

Q. If a dietitian is employed in a teaching hospital, is it necessary to set two goals per year?

A. Yes. Dietitians in various settings teach courses or offer presentations to groups throughout the year. Developing and offering presentations does not necessarily increase knowledge if a dietitian is well versed on the topic.

Q. I would like more direction on setting SMART competency goals. Is there someone I can send my goals and learning log to before submission for review?

A. Yes, please send questions to Amanda Connors aconnors@nsdassoc.ca. Amanda generally works two days per week and always welcomes the opportunity to assist dietitians in goal development, learning log review and assisting with any other CCP questions.