Personal development plan (PDP) for appraisal

Use this with your appraiser. Part 1 reviews last year's actions; Part 2 sets your objectives for the coming year. The GMC sets no required format for a PDP, so use whatever suits you. Keep it free of patient or colleague details.

Part 1: Review of last year's PDP

Action in last year's PDP	Done, part done or not done	What I learned, or why it wasn't done	Carry forward? (Yes / No)

Part 2: Objectives for the coming year (see page 2 for help writing SMART objectives)

Learning need (what and why)	SMART objective	How I will achieve it	Support or resources	Target date	How I will know it worked

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Writing SMART objectives for your PDP

SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. Use the five questions below to check each objective you write in Part 2.

	Letter stands for	Ask yourself	Example
S	**Specific**	What exactly will I do, and which part of my work does it relate to?	Improve how I run team debriefs, rather than "get better at teamwork".
M	**Measurable**	How will I know I have done it? What will I count, observe or collect?	Lead three debriefs and collect brief feedback from the team after each.
A	**Achievable**	Can I do this with the time, support and resources I have?	Three debriefs in six months fits my rota and my team has agreed to try it.
R	**Relevant**	Does it matter for my patients, my team and my scope of practice?	Debriefs are part of my role and support learning from events and complaints.
T	**Time-bound**	By when will I do it, and when will I review progress?	Complete by 31 March; review with my appraiser at my next appraisal.

Worked example (an illustration, not a recommendation): By 31 March I will lead at least three structured team debriefs and gather brief feedback from team members after each, then write a short reflection on what I changed. I will review progress at my mid-year check and at my next appraisal.

How to achieve a SMART objective

Write it as one sentence that answers all five questions; split large aims into steps; agree it with your appraiser; schedule the activity; keep notes as you go; and review it during the year, not only at appraisal. SMART is a common goal-setting tool. It is not a GMC requirement.

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