**SMART Objectives**

**Specific**

A Target must be specific and not general. It must be clear and unambiguous and explain exactly what is expected, why it is important and when it will be completed.

**Measurable (Success Criteria)**

There must be concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of the target. If a target is not measurable, it is not possible to know whether someone is making progress toward successful completion. Measuring progress helps an individual stay on track, reach target dates and standards, and feel good about their ultimate achievement.  A measurable goal will usually include things like:

* Quality standards expected
* Outcomes to be achieved
* Timescales

**Achievable**

Before a target is entered on the probation form it is vital that both the line manager and employee agree that the target can be achieved to the standard described in the time available. It is essential to ensure that the employee has all the resources they require to achieve it, including tools, knowledge and skills, or access to acquiring or developing them. This avoids building in failure by creating a target that is not physically achievable.

**Realistic**

The fourth term refers to how realistic the employee believes the target to be. This will influence whether they feel positive, motivated and raring to get on with it, or lacking in confidence and negative about their chances of success. Even if a target appears physically possible to achieve, the manager can still be building in failure if he or she fails to ensure it is motivating for the employee. It’s vital for the manager to check how the employee feels about the target, and if they do not feel motivated what would need to change to make them feel differently, and more positive. The target can then be revised so that the employee does feel motivated to achieve it.

**Time-bound**

The fifth term stresses the importance of grounding goals within a time frame, giving them a target date. A commitment to a deadline helps an individual focus their efforts on completion of the goal on or before the due date.