

SMART Action Plan: Practical Advice

A SMART Action Plan helps you set clear, achievable goals and track progress effectively. Even if you're now using an online toolkit, the SMART approach remains a powerful way to plan and deliver successful projects.

What is a SMART Action?

SMART stands for:

Specific: Be clear about what you want to achieve. Avoid vague language—describe exactly what will happen, where, and for whom.

Measurable: Define how you will know if the action is successful. Use numbers, feedback, or other evidence to track progress.

Achievable: Make sure the action is realistic given your resources, time, and skills. Set a goal that stretches you, but is possible.

Relevant: Ensure the action aligns with your wider aims (e.g., your organisation's strategy or the Fairtrade award criteria).

Time-bound: Set a clear deadline or timeframe. This helps keep momentum and allows you to check progress.

How to Write a SMART Action

1. Start with the outcome: What do you want to change or achieve?
2. Break it down: What specific steps will get you there?
3. Assign responsibility: Who will lead or support each action?
4. Decide how to measure success: What data or feedback will you collect?
5. Set a deadline: When will you review or complete the action?

Example SMART Actions

Action	Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Relevant	Time-bound	Who is Responsible	Status
Run a Fairtrade Fortnight event	Host a coffee morning for staff and students	Number of attendees, feedback survey, social media reach	Yes, with support from catering and volunteers	Supports Fairtrade awareness (award criteria MN004)	By end of Fairtrade Fortnight	Events Lead, supported by volunteers	In planning
Increase Fairtrade product range	Add two new Fairtrade snack lines to the campus shop	Number of new lines stocked, sales data	Yes, with supplier agreement	Supports continual improvement (award criteria MN006)	By end of term	Retail Manager	Not started

Tips for Success

- Use your online toolkit to track actions, but keep the SMART principles in mind for each goal.
- Review progress regularly - update actions, celebrate successes, and adapt if needed.
- Involve your team: collaborative planning leads to better ideas and shared ownership.
- Link actions to monitoring and evaluation - this helps demonstrate impact for awards or reporting.