

The L&D: Programme Design Checklist

A practical guide for turning a business need into learning that is relevant, engaging and built to make a difference.

Great learning starts with understanding the need – not choosing the format.

Use this checklist before you build

Whether you are creating a leadership pathway, early careers programme, workshop series or digital learning journey, these questions help keep the design connected to the people and business need.

1. Start with the need

Get underneath the initial request before deciding what to create.

- Can we clearly describe the business, performance or capability need? ☐
- Have we spoken to the people closest to the challenge - not just the project sponsor? ☐
- Do we know what people need to do differently as a result? ☐
- Have we separated a true learning need from process, communication, role clarity or system issues? ☐
- Is there a clear reason why this matters now? ☐

2. Know your learners

Design around the people who will use the learning.

- Who are the learners and what do they already know? ☐
- What different roles, experience levels, locations or contexts need to be considered? ☐
- What will motivate them to engage? ☐
- What practical barriers could prevent participation or application? ☐
- Have learner accessibility and inclusion needs been considered from the outset? ☐

3. Define the outcome

Make success clear before creating the content

- Are the learning outcomes specific, practical and observable? ☐
- Can each outcome be linked back to the original organisational need? ☐
- Do we know what good performance or behaviour will look like? ☐
- Have we identified how learners will practice and apply the learning? ☐
- Do Stakeholders agree to what success means? ☐

4. Desing the journey

Choose the right learning experience – not simply the most familiar format.

- What is best learned through facilitated discussion, practice, digital learning or on-the-job activity? ☐
- Does the journey build logically rather than overwhelm learners with content? ☐
- Are there opportunities for reflection, practice, feedback and application? ☐
- Can managers, peers or workplace activity reinforce learning? ☐
- Is the programme realistic within the time and attention learners actually have? ☐

5. Create content people can use

Keep content purposeful, practical and easy to transfer into work.

- Does every piece of content earn its place? ☐
- Are examples, scenarios and language relevant to the audience? ☐
- Are activities designed to make people think, practise or act - rather than just consume information? ☐
- Are facilitator guides and learner resources simple enough to use confidently? ☐
- If using e-learning, is digital adding value rather than simply putting slides online? ☐

6. Plan for impact

Learning is only valuable when it travels back into the workplace.

- How will learners apply the learning immediately? ☐
- What support or reinforcement happens after the formal learning? ☐
- What evidence will show engagement, confidence, behaviour or performance change? ☐
- How will feedback be used to improve the programme? ☐
- Is there a clear owner for sustaining the learning after launch? ☐

A useful design test: If you removed half the content, would learners still be able to achieve the outcome?

From learning need to learning solution

Make Strides partners with HR and L&D teams to design learning frameworks, development pathways, facilitator-led programmes, learning content and digital learning. We are particularly strong in leadership and early careers development, bringing cross-sector insight and a collaborative approach.

Need a fresh perspective on a learning challenge? Use this checklist with your team, or bring us the challenge and we can help you shape the solution

How to use the framework

The strongest employability journeys do not treat work-readiness as a one-off final-year intervention. The framework can be used to map development progressively across the student journey and connect curriculum, careers activity, employer engagement and experiential learning.

Explore	Experience	Transition
Build awareness of self, careers and workplace expectations.	Practice through projects, placements, simulations, employer activity and reflection.	Prepare students to articulate their value, navigate recruitment and succeed in the first months of work.

Questions for your team

- Where are these capabilities already being developed?
- Which dimensions are strongest - and where are the gaps?
- Can students see how their academic and extracurricular experiences translate into workplace capability?
- Where are employers contributing insight, practice or feedback?

Want to explore your current employability journey?

Use this framework as a starting point for a team review or talk to Make Strides about creating a solution around your students and context.