

## Designing programme learning outcomes: consultation meetings

A key aspect of the consultative approach to programme design is consulting with various stakeholders. These consultation meetings are optional based on your needs and timeframe. Below we provide guidance for three types of consultation meetings:

- Consultation with a curriculum designer
- Consultation with programme/department team members
- Consultation with your students

### Consult with a curriculum designer

Once you have created a draft of your programme learning outcomes (PLOs) and very likely some questions or notes, we suggest you schedule a meeting with your Eden Centre [department adviser](#) who has considerable expertise and experience in curriculum design, to review the PLOs and get their feedback. They can serve as a critical friend asking probing questions helping you to justify and revise your PLOs. They can also help with fine-tuning the language and terminology. Your department adviser or curriculum designer can also help you with creating PLO maps.

### *PLO maps*

Mapping the learning outcomes of the core courses and the most popular two-five elective courses against your draft PLOs is useful in visualising the spread, overlap, and gaps on the programme. These [curriculum maps](#) from two MSc programmes in Economics and the accompanying commentary provide an example of what this looks like in practice.

You could also choose to map the assessment on the programme - by assessment method, due dates, formative assessment, etc. - against the PLOs. This kind of an assessment map would help you, as PD, visualise possible issues or problems in the programme structure or student learning experience such as bunching, assessment diversity or homogeneity to name a few. More information on using PLOs to create assessment maps is available in the LSE Assessment Toolkit. (see [Approach 1: Curriculum-assessment mapping](#)). The example below is an illustration of an assessment map of the first-year courses on a programme.

Table 1: Assessment map - mapping assessment against PLOs

	PLO1	PLO 2	PLO3	PLO4	PLO5	PLO 6	PLO 7	PLO8	PLO 9
XX100	Exam	Exam			Exam				
XX104	Exam	Exam	Essay						
XX105	Essay		Essay	Presentation				Presentation	

XX126	Exam	Exam		Project	Project			Project	
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--> Amend your draft PLOs in light of gaps or overlaps as seen in the PLO maps and the curriculum designer's feedback. Make notes and flag issues where appropriate.

## Consult with programme team members

A meeting with key programme team members which might include key course leads, former programme director (PD), and education leaders (DHoD, DTC chair, etc.) in your department to review the latest version of your PLOs enables you, as PD, to get buy-in from the programme team and develop a shared understanding of the programme and PLOs, which will hopefully result in a more joined-up learning experience for students. In addition to sharing the draft PLOs, you can also table the PLO map and comparator list for discussion with your colleagues.

This consultation stage is important as it is an opportunity to ensure the structural integrity and coherence of the programme – that the courses and their learning outcomes are aligned with the PLOs. As in the case of the [Economics example](#), consultation with the programme team allows for comparison with other programmes offered by the department to ensure complementarity, and where overlap does occur, it has been carefully thought through and is beneficial for all stakeholders. This is also a good point to review the LSE-ness of the programme and how it measures up to comparator programmes. When seeking input from academic colleagues, you may wish to discuss other related aspects of programme design such as structure, assessment, pre-requisites, etc.

You can draw on the support and guidance of your [department adviser](#) to help you prepare for this consultation phase, or even request them to facilitate the consultation meeting.

--> Amend your draft PLOs in response to gaps or overlaps as seen in PLO map. A result of this consultation could well be amendments to course learning outcomes to ensure alignment at the programme and course level. Make notes and flag issues where appropriate.

## Consult with students

Existing student feedback can be used to inform the design or redesign of the PLOs. TQARO [course surveys](#), [Student Staff Liaison Committee \(SSLC\)](#) minutes, and other forms of student feedback can be factored into curriculum design and the PLOs. In the recent programme review pilot in 2023-24, several departments convened focus groups with students and alumni to gain insight into certain aspects of the programme – balance of theory and technical skills, inclusive education, professional accreditation, etc. When seeking student input, it's a good idea not to restrict it just to programme learning outcomes, but other aspects of programme design too (e.g. structure, assessment, pre-requisites, etc.).

You can draw on the support and guidance of your [department adviser](#) to help you prepare for this consultation phase, or even request them to facilitate the consultation (i.e. focus group, long table, etc.).

--> Amend your draft PLOs to take into account issues raised in student feedback.

The consultation meetings can also be used to consult on other aspects of programme design such as assessment, employability, course choice, inclusive education, fieldwork, etc. This PLO creation process is designed not only as a valuable pedagogic tool, but also as an opportunity for rich dialogue and communication with a variety of stakeholders. The consultative approach is flexible and any of its constituent stages/approaches can be used to design new PLOs as well as review existing PLOs. An initial discussion with your Eden Centre [department adviser](#) might help you decide which stages would be the best investment of your time and effort.

[More information ...](#)