

## 6.1 The consultative approach to programme design

We propose a consultative approach to designing programme learning outcomes (PLOs), and programme design more broadly, that is organic and emerges from what the key stakeholders see as the key features and outcomes of the programme. This consultative approach was trialled during the School Periodic Programme Review pilot with four programme teams in 2023-24. This approach works with a single programme director driving the process or with an entire programme team and all combinations in between.

This process involves an initial drafting stage, followed by consultation with a range of different groups, with an opportunity to revise the PLOs at each stage. Within each stage, there are optional steps that you can follow or skip based on your needs and constraints. The entire PLO drafting process is designed to be flexible so that it can be adapted to the priorities and schedules of busy programme directors (PDs).

There are several benefits of using a consultative approach when drafting PLOs:

- Instead of a traditional top-down approach where a programme director designs the whole programme including the PLOs, a consultative process with key stakeholders brings in different perspectives and learning/teaching experiences ensuring the PLOs are designed to work at structural/pedagogic, disciplinary, and student experience levels.
- A consultative approach veers away from a formulaic approach, allowing for different models of curriculum design to be combined highlighting the distinctive and unique features of the programme.
- It factors in contemporary concerns such as critical thinking, the role of data and technology, interdisciplinarity, critical and social approaches, sustainability etc.
- The iterative nature of the consultative process allows for the wording and terminology in the PLOs to be refined at several points ensuring they can be understood across a range of contexts and audiences.

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.