

## **Solvay Brussels School of Economics & Management** **AoL Guidelines (AoLGs)**



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## **Introduction**

These are the AoL Guidelines (AoLGs) at the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management – Université libre de Bruxelles.(SBS-EM).

The AoLGs have been validated by the Faculty Council on 27 avril 2023 and are valid as of its promulgated date and applicable to all degree programmes including those delivered by the Solvay Lifelong Learning ASBL.

In some cases, they may also be applied to non-degree granting executive education programmes, either entirely or to some extent that is relevant to the learners' need and the organisation of the programme.

## **Lexicon**

AACSB: Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business

AMBA: Association of MBAs

AM: Advanced Master

AoL: Assurance of Learning

BAPS: Bureau d'Appui Pédagogique Solvay (Educational support office)

CLO: Course Learning Outcome

EMBA: Executive Master of Business Administration

L&D Hub: Learning and Development Hub

PCG: Programme Competency Goal

PLO: Programme Learning Goal

QA: Quality Assurance

SBS-EM: Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management

SLL: Solvay Lifelong Learning ASBL

ULB: Université libre de Bruxelles

## **Chapter 1 - Aim & Content**

### **Article 1.01 - Aim**

The aim of the AoLGs is to provide a set of coherent and consistent rules to frame the organisation of the AoL for degree programmes (state-funded & privately-funded degrees).

### **Article 1.02 - Content**

The AoLGs are divided into three chapters each of them providing the regulatory information on the organisation of the AoL process where:

- Chapter 1 provides the regulatory context and the definition of the key terms structuring the AoL process and outlines the involved stakeholders and their role.
- Chapter 2 provides information on the organisation of the process and the cycle.
- Chapter 3 provides the instruments to be used for the AoL process.

### **Article 1.03 - Definitions**

#### **Article 1.03A - Assurance of Learning (AoL)**

SBS-EM's understanding of the AoL is aligned with the definition of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) as demonstrating, through assessment processes, that learners achieve learning expectations for the programmes in which they participate. The AoL is a process that:

- Sets competency goals and objectives for each degree programme (and non-degree if participating)
- Maps and aligns curricula with course outcomes
- Develops the appropriate measures of learning and organises the collection of data
- Analyses and reports findings
- Closes the loop by applying corrections or improvements for each expected programme outcome and evaluates the effectiveness of these changes

#### **Article 1.03B - Programme Competency Goals (PCGs)**

Competency goals are the product of faculty reflection on the skills, attitudes, and knowledge that they expect students to learn as a result of matriculating through their institution's programmes. They are the roadmap for the curriculum and are the foundation on which the assessment programme is built. However, competency goals are broad and not sufficiently specific and observable to be measured.

#### **Article 1.03C - Programme Learning Objectives (PLOs)**

Learning objectives identify specific, observable behaviours and actions related to a goal that faculty will use to describe, monitor, and assess student achievement. Thus, objectives are used as indicators of goals. Learning objectives are clear statements about outcomes that faculty expect from students. Formulation of learning objectives should be aligned with the different learning levels and terminologies described in the Bloom's Taxonomy.

## **Article 1.03D - Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)**

Course Learning outcomes (CLOs) explain what learners should be able to achieve by the end of a course. These may be changes in their knowledge, skills, attitude or behaviours. Learning outcomes are the first element to improve in course design because assessments and activities will subsequently align to these. The goal is to ensure that appropriate and high-quality outcomes will have benefits for academic programmes, learners, and the teaching faculty.

Each course should clarify their contribution to the PLOs. The different levels of contribution should be as follows:

- Introduction: Learners will develop basics in this area which will be reinforced in other courses in the continuation of the programme (normally at the early stage of the programme).
- Reinforcement: Learners will reinforce the basics that were introduced in the prerequisite courses (normally in the continuation or middle of the programme).
- Mastery: Learners will have developed an advanced level at the end of the course, which is aligned with what is expected from a graduate (normally in the last part of the programme).
- Not Covered: Learners do not develop this skill in the course.

## **Article 1.04 - Stakeholders**

AoL at SBS-EM is organised by the QA Office for state-funded degrees and the L&D Hub for privately-funded degrees on behalf of the Faculty Council.

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## **Chapter 2 - AoL Process**

### **Article 2.1 - Application**

The AoL process is required for all degree programmes, which includes:

- Bachelor in Business Engineering
- Bachelor in Economics
- Master in Business Engineering
- Master in Management Science
- Master in Business Economics, Economic Governance and Public Policy in Europe, Research Master in Economics or in Economics & Statistics
- Doctoral programme in Economics & Management
- Specialized Master in Industrial & Technological Management
- Specialized Master in Microfinance
- Executive Master of Business Administration
- Advanced Master in Financial Markets
- Advanced Master in Innovation and Strategic Management
- Advanced Master in Biotech and Medtech Ventures

Other programmes may also be part of the process and must contact the managing bodies for state-funded degrees QA Office and for privately-funded degrees the L&D Hub for the eligibility and modalities.

## **Article 2.2 - Procedure**

The AoL process is a consistent and codified process that should respect the below multi-stage procedure:

### Stage 1 - Set-up

During the first step, the academic leadership assisted by the quality and pedagogical offices or L&D Hub make sure that a clear picture of what the learner should know and be able to do upon completion of the programme is known to every stakeholder (especially the teaching faculty and learners). Graduate or teaching profiles describe the general content of each programme, as well as the programme competency goals (PCGs) and learning objectives (PLOs) that are targeted and an overview of the professional outcomes (typical positions of graduates).

### Stage 2 - Course Alignment

The second stage is for the teaching faculty to align the content and outcomes of their courses within the curriculum. This is done by using the instrument described in article 3.1 Course Outline. By indicating if and how they contribute to each PLO, they allow a mapping of the entire curriculum (through the instrument “curriculum mapping” as described in article 3.2) which in turn makes it possible to know which course is suitable for programme assessment. This exercise fosters synergies between the same fields of teaching at different levels. Typically, the first part of the programme should cover the basics that are then reinforced and mastered in the continuation of the curriculum.

### Stage 3 - Direct Measurement

The second stage is the collection of direct measures by faculty in selected courses through the assessment of learners with rubrics as per described by instrument 3.3. The teaching faculty for which courses are selected for the collection of direct measurements contribute by using parts of their tests and assignments to align with the AoL process.

The most suitable courses for assessing PLOs are not only those who truly cover them but also those that are in the continuation or end of the curriculum. We call these direct measures because faculty or experts can bring the evidence of how well learners have met the programme’s expectations. Ideally these measures should be put into perspective with indirect observations or feedback from all stakeholders.

### Stage 4 - Indirect Measurement

During the fourth stage, indirect measurements are collected at different moments of time and through the usage of different instruments. The data collection process is available in Annex 2.

### Stage 5 - Curriculum Review

Curriculum review is the last stage within the loop. The curriculum review can be specific for each curriculum however the below practices should be respected:

#### ***Involve all Stakeholders***

*Curriculum review should include everyone from educational administrators, faculty, employers, learners and alumni. Ideally, each programme director or administrator shall submit a “curriculum review committee list” to the Academic leadership of the school or L&D Hub each year or less often.*

### ***Involve the teaching faculty***

*Curriculum review is steered by a curriculum review committee. While a committee is likely to determine the broad outlines of the redesign, faculty will be translating specific needs into concrete courses—and teaching the new curriculum. Therefore, their input is essential.*

### ***Change Management***

*Curriculum review meets the most resistance when those most affected by the change incur costs—or “felt losses”—along the way. The curriculum review should be made for stakeholders to see how the benefits of redesign outweigh the costs.*

### ***Resources***

*Curriculum review necessitates resources (financial, manpower, time, etc).*

### ***Deadline***

*Curriculum review should be made in a coordinated and timely manner.*

### ***Facts***

*Curriculum review should be based on quantitative and qualitative evidence, including direct and indirect measures, the market's needs and the conclusions from discussions during programme review committees. AoL data should be the primary source of information for the review and accompanied by feedback from all stakeholders involved in the curriculum review.*

## **Article 2.3 - Cycle**

The observation and review cycle part of the AoL is 5 years during which evidence of successfully targeting the learning outcomes and implementing improvements must be collected. Closing the loop on each competency goal should be made at least once and preferably twice as this allows the assessment of implemented improvements. The cycle process is available in Annexes 1.1 and 1.2.

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## **Chapter 3 - Tools**

### **Article 3.1 - Course Outline**

The course outline process for degree programmes produces standardised documents that meet legal requirements and accreditation standards. The outlines themselves contribute to the AoL Process as they allow a clear understanding of when and how learners will meet the programme outcomes.

A course outline presents the main information about a course/unit. The below elements represent the minimum to be included in a course outline:

- Name of lecturer(s) & contact details
- Level/Semester, Status, Timing
- Credits and workload
- Description of the outcomes, the content and the sources, references and possible supports, with the indication of those which are essential to acquire the required skills
- Prerequisites (if relevant)

- Teaching Methods
- Learning Activities
- Contribution of the course/unit to the teaching profile of the programme as well as the specific learning outcomes (or PLOs) sanctioned by the assessment
- Assessment methodology / Learners Use of Time and Load
- Contribution to the Solvay Sustainable Development Initiative (if relevant)
- Asynchronous Learning Material (if relevant)

More details are provided in Art.77 (pages 126-127) of the 2013 decree describing the landscape of higher education (revised in 2022).

[https://www.comdel.be/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/20221026\\_VM-Paysage-22-23.pdf](https://www.comdel.be/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/20221026_VM-Paysage-22-23.pdf)

The course outline making process is available in Annex 3.

### **Article 3.2 - Curriculum Mapping**

When completing their course outlines, the teaching faculty are requested to inform their course contribution to each PLO. This is a legal requirement described in Art 77 of the Landscape decree.

Once all faculty members have completed the “contribution to the programme objectives” and assessment methods in their course outlines, it becomes possible to have a clear overview of who does what at different stages of the programme and how this can be evaluated.

The curriculum mapping allows synergies between different courses of the programme. It also allows to identify the courses that are eligible for programme assessment. For all degree programmes, the QA Office is responsible for the management of curriculum mapping except the data collection for privately-funded degrees which remains with the L&D Hub.

### **Article 3.3 - Assessment of Learners through rubrics**

Learners are already assessed through tests, individual and group assignments in every course/unit. Some courses particularly cover one of the PLOs and should indeed be used to evaluate how well these objectives are met upon completion of the programme.

Three levels of skills acquisition should be identified: meet, below and above expectations. Only a reasonable sample of a cohort of learners suffice (20% or 20 learners minimum).

There are several ways of measuring the target outcomes:

- With course-embedded assessment
  - By selecting questions of an exam or any other form of existing assessment that cover those programme outcomes that need to be measured and set the above levels according to the number of points scored. The measurement should be detailed in rubrics (or assessment grids) stating what exactly learners are able to do.
  - By using formative assessment with a grid whose outcome will be for the sole purpose of programme assessment and useful indication of the level met by learners. The grid may be completed by the faculty member responsible for the course or other learners if well managed (peer assessment).



- With integrative assessment (the most comprehensive)
  - A final exam, global case study, thesis or presentation that cover most or all of the programme outcomes. The idea is to use a grid that describes everything learners should know and be able to do upon completion of the programme, operationalizing the programme objectives into detailed clear actions.
- With external assessment (more biased and not entirely aligned with the faculty's expectations)

#### **Article 3.4 - Learner Evaluation Survey**

The Learner Evaluation Survey monitors the CLOs have been achieved according to the learner perception. The data collection process is available in Annex 2.1

#### **Article 3.5 - Programme Learning Outcome Survey**

The Programme Learning Outcome Survey monitors the PLOs have been achieved according to the learner perception. The data collection process is available in Annex 2.2

#### **Article 3.6 - Alumni Employability Survey**

The Alumni Employability Survey monitors the professional success of the alumni after completion of the programme. The data collection process is available in Annex 2.3.

#### **Article 3.7 - Alternative usage of the AoL Data**

The data collected by the various tools is primarily for the AoL. In some cases, as per mentioned in Annex 4 an alternative usage of the data may happen.

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#### **Conclusion**

The AoLGs are a guideline providing a clear and consistent framework to all stakeholders to achieve the AoL process.

The AoLGs are a living charter meant to evolve in light of accreditation compliance and advancement in the AoL process at the SBS-EM.

For state-funded degrees at QA Office ([Jean-Francois.Desoutter@ulb.be](mailto:Jean-Francois.Desoutter@ulb.be)) and for privately-funded degrees at the L&D Hub ([learning.development@solvay.edu](mailto:learning.development@solvay.edu)).

## Annexes

### Annex 1 - AoL Cycle

#### Annex 1.1 - State-funded degrees

The review cycle depends on the programme, its level and duration. Normally, each cycle lasts 5 years during which a combination of relevant direct and indirect measures is collected from participating faculty members and various stakeholders of the school (students, alumni, corporate partners).

Here is a typical observation cycle:

Year 1: collection of measures

Year 2: analysis, reporting and suggestions for improvement

Year 3: collection of measures (direct & indirect), possible implementation of mid-cycle adjustments and assessment of these (closing the loop)

Year 4: analysis, reporting and suggestions for improvement

Year 5: closing the loop on each programme learning objective taking into consideration all collected measures (level of graduating students, feedback of students on courses and programme, feedback of alumni and other stakeholders, graduate outcomes)

#### Annex 1.2 - Privately-funded degrees

The below cycle applies to degree programmes for privately-funded degrees:

Year Round

- Quality Satisfaction Surveys
- Assessment of Learners with Rubrics by the teaching faculty

December-January

- Course Outline Collection

February

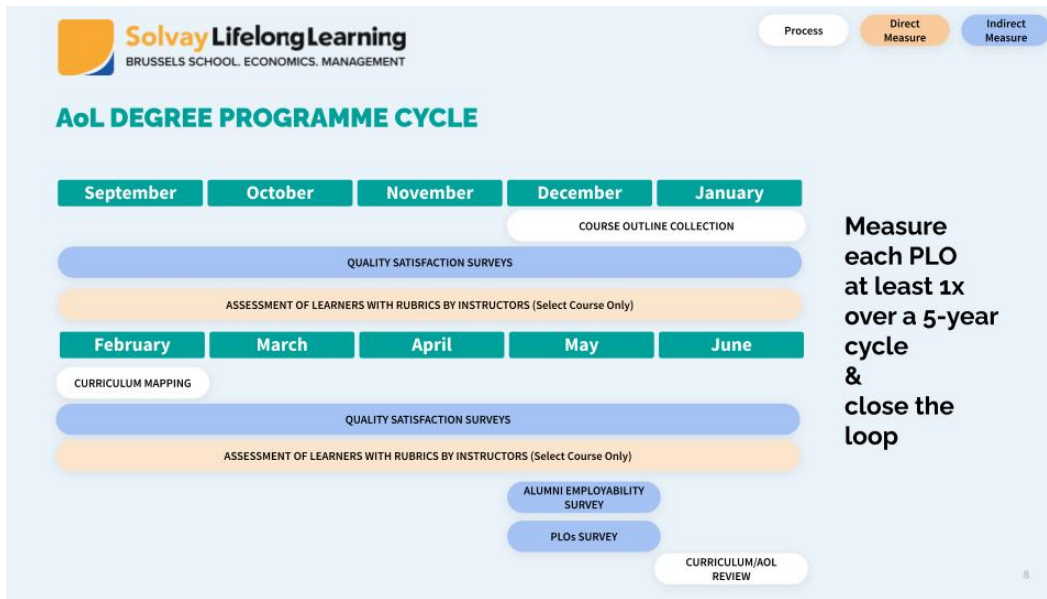
- Curriculum Mapping

May

- Alumni Employability Survey
- Programme Learning Outcomes Survey

June

- Curriculum Review



## Annex 2 - Indirect Measures Data Collection Process

### Annex 2.1 Learner Satisfaction Survey

#### Annex 2.1.1 Learner Satisfaction Survey - State-funded Degrees

The process for state-funded programmes can be found here [Évaluation des Enseignements par les Etudiant-es \(EEE\) - ULB](#). The evaluation concerns all Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Students give their opinion on: the teaching design, the course of the sessions, the evaluation of learning, and teaching performance.

Two campaigns are organized each year at the end of the teaching periods (just after the exams). Sets of questions are available on the above page.

#### Annex 2.1.2 Learner Evaluation Survey - Privately-funded degrees

The learner evaluation survey is conducted by the L&D Hub through the usage of a Learner Evaluation Survey System (LESS). The LESS will automatically manage the process with respect to the below procedure:

- The LESS sends the survey through the learning management system (Canvas) to the learner.
- The survey period is at the end of each course, and after the last piece of assessment has been handed-in by the learners and for a maximum of 7 days
- The survey is compulsory. The LESS will not allow grades to be posted in Canvas unless all the learners have not completed the survey.

The below set is the one to be used:

What is your overall satisfaction level toward the course?  
*0-10 (0 - Extremely Poor > 10 - Above Excellent)*

Does this course generate interest and and/or contribute to your professional or personal development?  
*(1 - Not at all, 2 - Slightly, 3 - Moderately, 4 - Properly, 5 - Absolutely)*

Did the content of the course meet your expectations in terms of quality?  
*(1 - Not at all, 2 - Slightly, 3 - Moderately, 4 - Properly, 5 - Absolutely)*

Did the instructor's performance in the course meet your expectations in terms of quality?  
*(1 - Not at all, 2 - Slightly, 3 - Moderately, 4 - Properly, 5 - Absolutely)*

How would you rate the overall level of difficulty of the course?  
*(1 - Not at all, 2 - Slightly, 3 - Moderately, 4 - Properly, 5 - Absolutely)*

Was the workload adequate?  
*(1 - Not at all, 2 - Slightly, 3 - Moderately, 4 - Properly, 5 - Absolutely)*

Overall, was the mix between theory and practise well-balanced?  
*(1 - Not at all, 2 - Slightly, 3 - Moderately, 4 - Properly, 5 - Absolutely)*

Are you satisfied with the organisational aspects of the course?  
*(1 - Not at all, 2 - Slightly, 3 - Moderately, 4 - Properly, 5 - Absolutely)*

Any other remarks?  
*Open answer field*

## Annex 2.2 Programme Learning Outcome Survey

### Annex 2.2.1 PLOs - State-funded degrees

The evaluation of programmes by the students is conducted by the University's quality department. The process is under development for an upcoming deployment.

### Annex 2.2.2 PLOs - Privately-funded degrees

The programme learning outcome survey is conducted by the learning and development hub following the below procedure:

- As soon as the programme board of examiners is celebrated. The programme administrator sends the list of learners due to certify with their email address at [learning.development@solvay.edu](mailto:learning.development@solvay.edu)
- The survey period is between the board of examiners and the certification ceremony.
- The survey is compulsory. A learner should not receive its university certificate if the survey is not completed.
- The learning and development hub collects and processes the data. It submits a report to the academic director and programme administrator within the framework of the curriculum review.

The below data-set is the one to be used:

For each of the programme learning objectives (PLOs), the certifying learner indicates:

How well has the learner met each PLO so far?

- *Below expectations*
- *Meet expectations*
- *Above expectations*

What are the most significant skills you acquired throughout the programme?

*Open Question (Optional)*

How could you perform better?

*Open Question (Optional)*

## Annex 2.3 Alumni Employability Survey

### Annex 2.3.1 Alumni Employability Survey - State-funded degrees

Surveys on the outcomes of Master's graduates are organised yearly on two levels.

On the institutional level, the ULB conducts two types of surveys for graduates: one on the graduate outcomes 15 to 18 months after obtaining their diploma, the other on the expectations of future Alumni. [Enquêtes à destination des étudiants - ULB](#).

In the first survey the opinion of alumni is collected on the master's degree that was completed. It provides valuable information to future students as to their professional prospects. In the second one, information is collected on expectations of the university once they graduate as well as elements of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of students with the university and/or their faculty with a view to improving the quality of services.

On the school level, the SBS-EM conducts a different type of survey where graduates are not contacted but the information that is publicly available on professional directories such as LinkedIn allows a broader picture of their outcomes that may be connected to the programme objectives.

### Annex 2.3.1 Alumni Employability Survey - Privately-funded degrees

The Alumni Employability Survey is conducted by the learning and development hub following the below procedure:

- The survey is sent based on the list of learners due to be certified 12 months prior by the programme administrator.
- The survey period lasts for 1 month and is scheduled 12 months after certification.
- The survey is optional.
- The learning and development hub collects and processes the data. It submits a report to the academic director and programme administrator within the framework of the curriculum review.

The below data-set is the one to be used:

<p><b>Personal Particulars</b></p> <p>Salutation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms</li> <li>• Mr</li> <li>• I do not identify with any of the above</li> </ul> <p>First Name</p> <p><i>Open Question</i></p> <p>Last Name</p> <p><i>Open Question</i></p> <p>Date of Birth</p> <p><i>DD/MM/YYYY</i></p> <p>Nationality</p> <p><i>United Nations List</i></p>
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Year of Certification

*Open Question*

***Employability Statistics - Professional Profile***

Overall Work Experience as today

*Open Question*

Function Level before starting the programme

- *C-suite, Chairman, or Board of Directors level*
- *Vice President level*
- *Director level*
- *Managerial level*
- *Lower than Managerial Level*

Work experience at a managerial level as of today

*Open Question*

How did you find your current job?

- *Solvay Alumni Network*
- *Pre-employer*
- *Own Contacts*
- *Executive MBA Career Advancement Programme (CAP)*
- *Other*

Function Level as of today

- *C-suite, Chairman, or Board of Directors level*
- *Vice President level*
- *Director level*
- *Managerial level*
- *Lower than Managerial Level*

Current Country of Employment

*United Nations List*

Sector of employability

- *Consulting*
- *Consumer Packaged Goods*
- *Energy*
- *Financial Services*
- *Government*
- *Healthcare*
- *Hospitality*
- *Manufacturing*
- *Media/Entertainment*
- *Non Profit*
- *Real Estate*
- *Retail*
- *Technology*
- *Transportation & Logistics Services*
- *Others*

***Employability Statistics - Overall Compensation Across Sectors and Regions***

Average previous annual salary in Euros before starting the programme

*Open Question*

Average annual salary within 12 months after completing of the completing the programme  
*Open Question*

### **Annex 3 - Course Outline**

#### **Annex 3.1 Course Outline - State-funded degrees**

Each course coordinator must complete or edit their course sheet(s) for each course before the beginning of the first semester. The administrative team (quality and educational support services) then verifies the completion for all subsidised degrees and provides faculty with additional guidance.

#### **Annex 3.2 Course Outline - Privately-funded degrees**

Ahead of the data collection process being launched, the programme manager is invited to submit the complete list of faculty members and associated courses. The course outline process can only be made when courses have been confirmed with dates and times for the course and assessment.

The data collection is made through a “course outline builder” provided by the L&D Hub to degree programmes administrators. The outlines are issued in a standardised format to the programme managers when an instructor has submitted the data in the builder. All outlines made available on a dedicated curriculum page in PDF format on a non-referenced landing page for internal and/or external use.

### **Annex 4 - Alternative usage of the AoL Data**

Usage of the AoL data collected is strictly controlled by the QA Office and/or the L&D Hub. The data may be used for:

- Accreditations
- Rankings
- Internal and external communication

The L&D Hub can also provide the below tools as an alternative usage of the data:

- Curriculum web-page
- Employment Statistics report and web-page



## **Annex 5 - Curriculum Review**

### **Annex 5.1 Curriculum Review - State-funded degrees**

When the proposed reforms are transmitted to the ULB central services by June, they will be implemented during the following academic year (Year +1). For example by June 2024 for the 2025-2026 academic year.

### **Annex 5.2 Curriculum Review - Privately-funded degrees**

The below process must be respected for review of programmes at SLL:

- The L&D Hub based on the direct and indirect data collected organise a review for each programme at least once every 2 years.
- The L&D Hub set-up a curriculum review committee for the programme which will be convened in the fall. The review decided by this committee will be implemented during the following academic year (Year +1). The committee includes:
  - Academic Director
  - Teaching faculty
  - Alumni / Class Representatives
  - Employers or any other relevant stakeholders
- The L&D Hub convenes the committee for an in-person meeting. It can be followed by an optional second meeting online.
- The L&D Hub with the academic director and programme manager materialises the review by completing the ARES Recognition File
- The review concludes with the completion of the ARES Recognition