

Evaluation Report

Evaluation of New Model for Pre-accredited Foundation Skills

August 2023

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About this report

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) was commissioned by ACFE to undertake an evaluation of the new model for pre-accredited foundation skills training.

ACER conducted the evaluation activities in collaboration with ACFE between May 2023 and August 2023.

This PowerPoint file provides a summary report of the evaluation process and findings. It has been structured to allow ACFE to use the content flexibly.

ACER has also provided ACFE with a separate report that details input gathered through stakeholder consultation.

Background

Context

To fulfil the objectives of the Ministerial Statement on the Future of Adult Community Education in Victoria, the ACFE Board approved a high-level proposal for a new pre-accredited model: ***Stronger by Design (SbD)***.

Based on the existing model, outlined in the Pre-accredited Quality Framework (PQF), the new model is more learner-centred, with a focus on building essential language, literacy, numeracy, employability and digital (LLNED) skills to enable clearer pathways to further study or employment.

PQF+ Pilot

The new SbD model is being tested with Learn Locals as part of a co-design approach through the **PQF+ Pilot**.

Stronger by Design

Learner centred model with 3 pillars:

- Pre-assessment
- Explicit inclusion of LLNED
- Exit interview that indicates learner gain and pathways

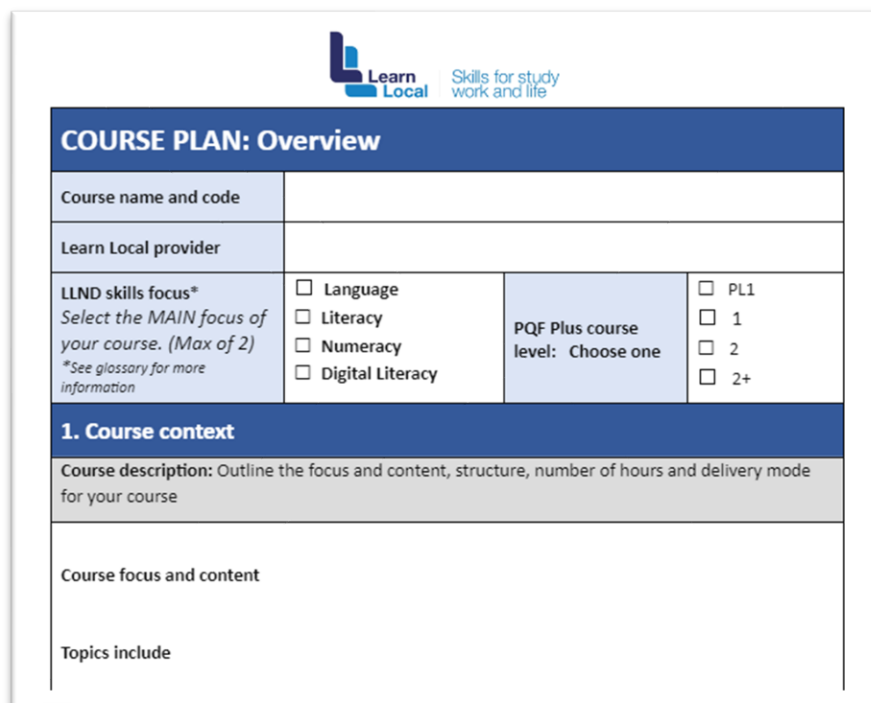
PQF+ pilot

- Co-design of model and materials with pilot participants
- PQF+ forms and templates
- Support and guidance documents
- PD workshops
- Courses mapped and delivered
- Session plans shared to central hub
- PRIAK pre-assessments conducted with learners
- Pathway conversations conducted with learners
- Reflection on delivery by Learn Locals

Pilot activity

Tranche 1 included 7 providers and 15 active participants in Term 4 2022.

Tranche 2 included 15 providers and 32 active participants in Terms 1 and 2, 2023.



The image shows a sample PQF+ course plan template. At the top, there is a logo for 'Learn Local' with the tagline 'Skills for study work and life'. Below the logo is a blue header bar with the text 'COURSE PLAN: Overview'. The form is divided into several sections:

Course name and code			
Learn Local provider			
LLND skills focus* <i>Select the MAIN focus of your course. (Max of 2)</i> <small>*See glossary for more information</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> Language <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Numeracy <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Literacy	PQF Plus course level: Choose one	<input type="checkbox"/> PL1 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 2+
1. Course context			
Course description: Outline the focus and content, structure, number of hours and delivery mode for your course			
Course focus and content			
Topics include			

Sample PQF+ course plan template

Pilot activity included:

- **A PD program** – comprising F2F and online workshops, 1:1 individual and small group check ins, and specific workshops on PRIAK and professional judgement
- **Use of PQF+** templates and documents to plan a course
- **Provision of feedback** to ACFE (resulting in adjustments to templates)
- **Trialing PRIAK** and learner pathway plans
- **Delivering courses** at varying levels and in various focus areas
- **Uploading artefacts** including samples of learner work (portfolios) and teacher reflection

Evaluation purpose

The evaluation of the SbD model and PQF+ Pilot program will help ACFE to:

- Determine **whether the new model is likely to achieve the expected improvements** in quality and consistency of pre-accredited programs and learner centred practice
- **Identify any changes or additions** that would improve the model and associated tools, guides and templates
- **Identify the key implementation issues** for consideration prior to a broader rollout of the model.

Evaluation approach

Methodology

Steps in the ACER evaluation were:

- Document a program logic for *Stronger by Design*
- Refine the evaluation questions
- Review the templates, pilot artefacts and PD approach
- Consult PQF+ Pilot participants, using
 - retrospective workshops with 31 participants
 - online survey with 28 responses
 - targeted interviews 15 individuals from 8 Learn Locals
- Analyse and report evaluation findings.

Research questions

The evaluation research questions focus on:

1. The new model's **fitness for purpose** and consistency with effective practices and approaches
2. **Stakeholder responses** to the new model and factors that impacted their implementation of it
3. **Adjustments** to the model and/or its implementation that would support take up and improved outcomes
4. **Effectiveness of the PD** program for supporting pilot participants to implement the new model
5. **Lessons** for building sector capacity to manage change and adopt new approaches in future

Artefact review



Week 6

Excerpt from a teacher's reflection journal



Pilot participants submitted:

- Course Plans and Session Plans (23)
- Learning Outcomes Summaries (18)
- Learner Pathways Plans Part A & B and/or Learner Portfolios (15)
- Additional materials – PRIAK assessments, work samples and reflection tools
 - Learner Reflection Sheet (Carringbush)
 - Teacher Journal (Wyndham)

There was variation in the way pilot participants used the PQF+ templates and the level of detail included in each document.

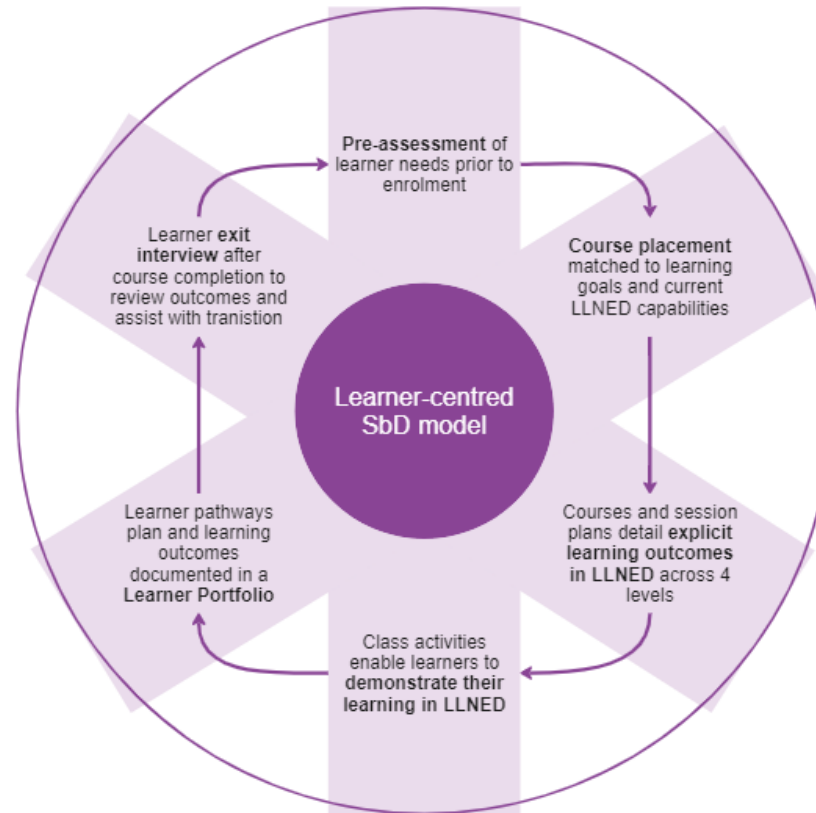
Consultation response

The pilot participants said:

- They support a learner-centred approach and can see the underpinning rationale of the model, but some questioned the policy focus on low-level LLNED
- Many LLOs believe that the availability of courses on a central portal will save them time and increase consistency of delivery
- Most LLOs were concerned about the administrative requirements for documentation of the learner profile, pathways and portfolio
- Many LLOs found that pre-assessment using PRIAK was time-consuming and off-putting for their learners
- LLOs varied in their capacity to support learner reflection and documentation of a learner portfolio
- Many LLOs had difficulty integrating pathways conversations into their programs

Model analysis

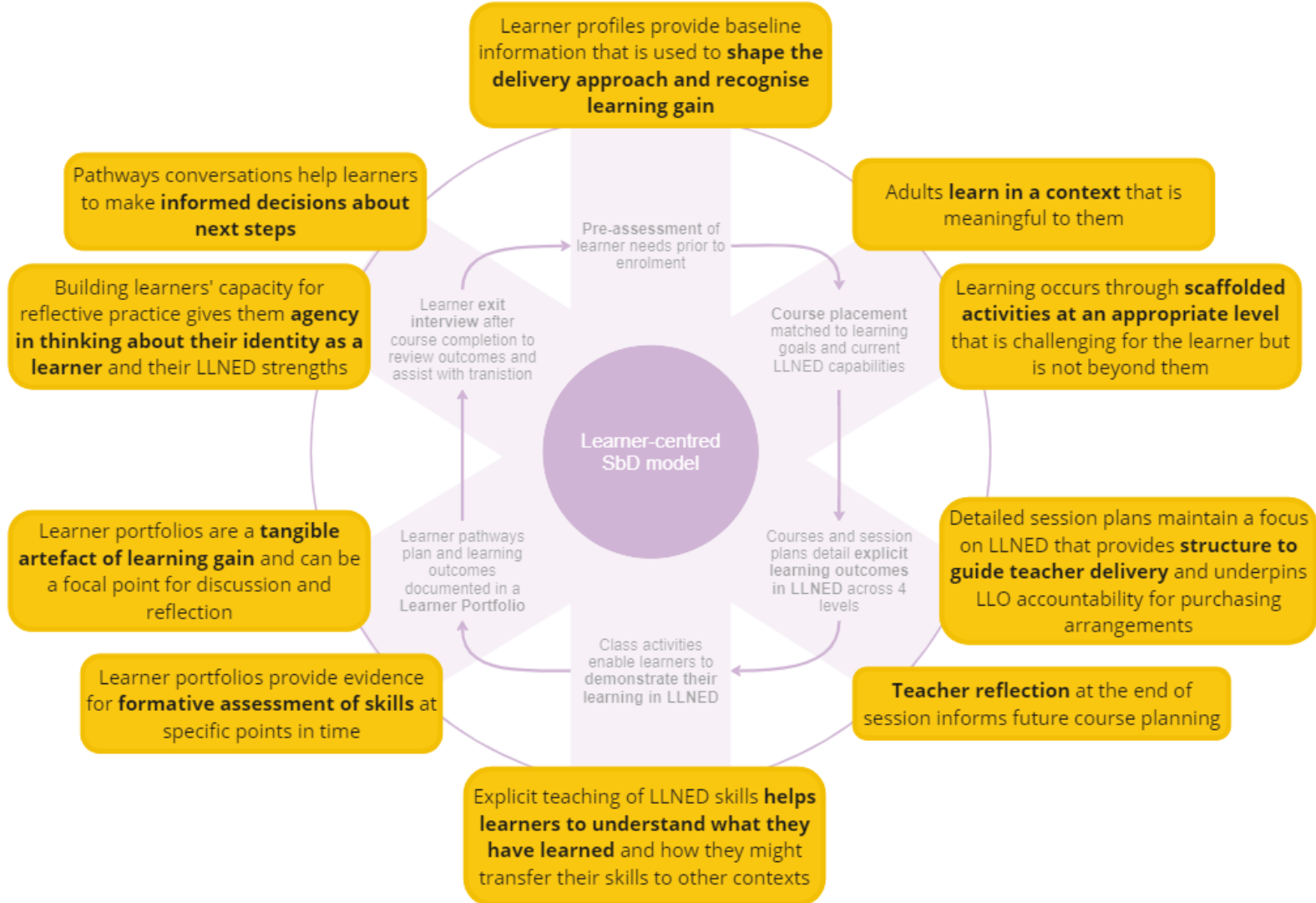
Cyclical SbD Model



This diagram shows ACER's understanding of the current Stronger by Design model.

Representing the model stages in a circle emphasises the interconnected nature of each stage.

Intended impacts on practice



If the SbD model is to work as intended, the stages must operate in synergy to drive learner-centred best practice.

Impacts on the Learner identified through the research



These issues will need to be addressed for the SbD model to work as intended.

Impacts on the LLO

identified through the research

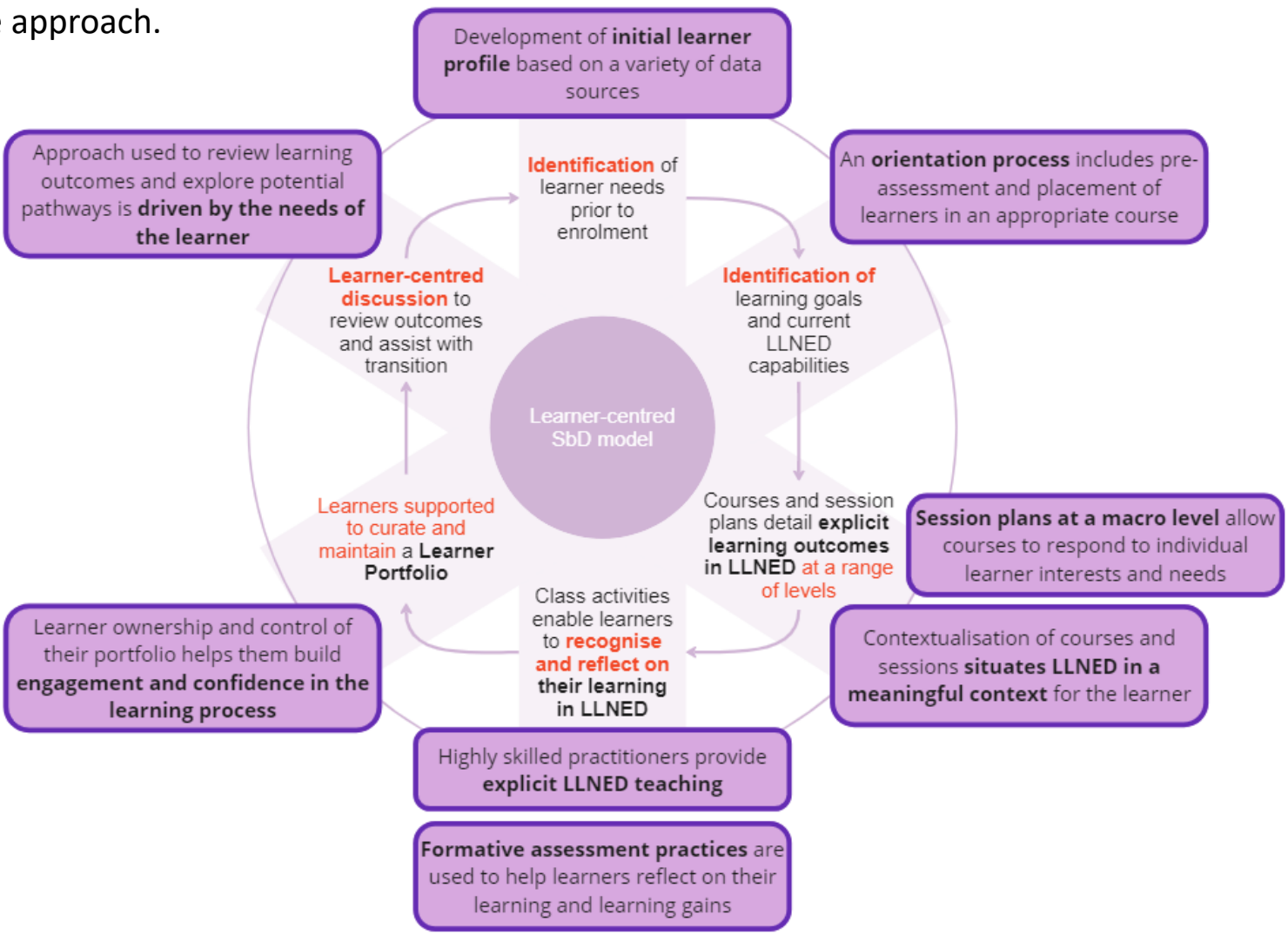


These issues will need to be addressed for the SbD model to work as intended.

Potential improvements

Modified model

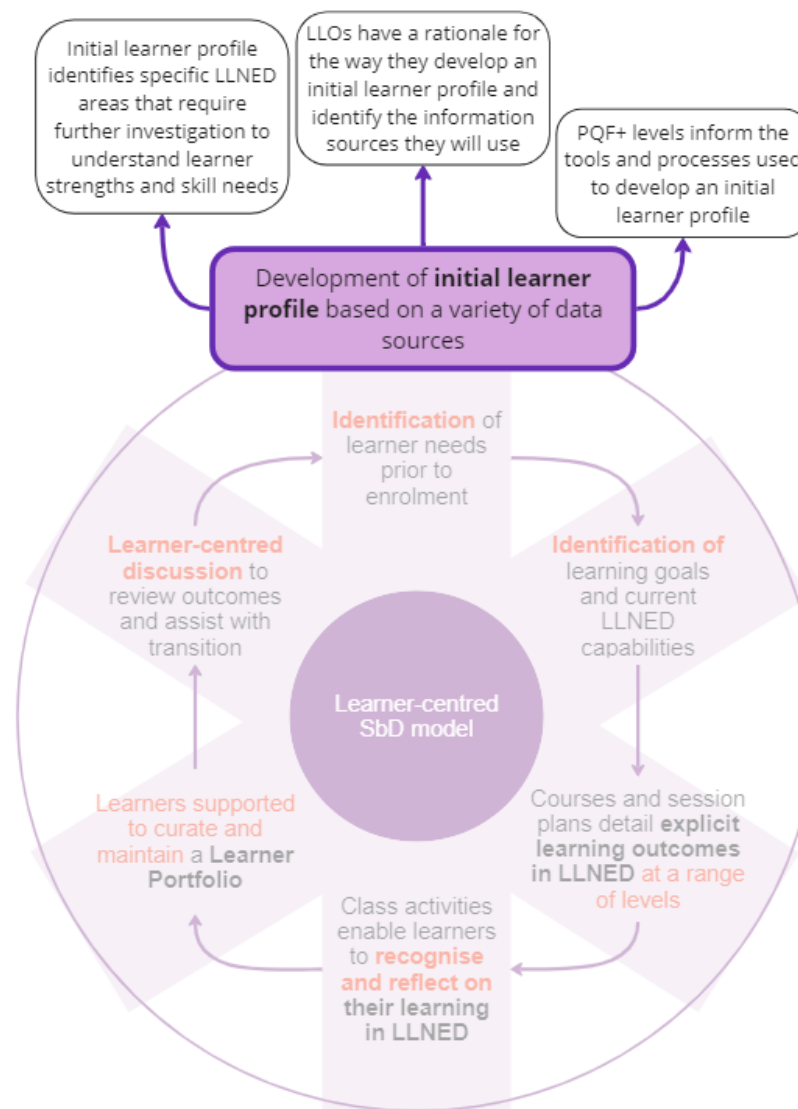
Red text in this diagram shows ACER adjustments to the model stages to support a best practice approach.



A clearer articulation of the model's stages supports stronger teaching and learning practice.

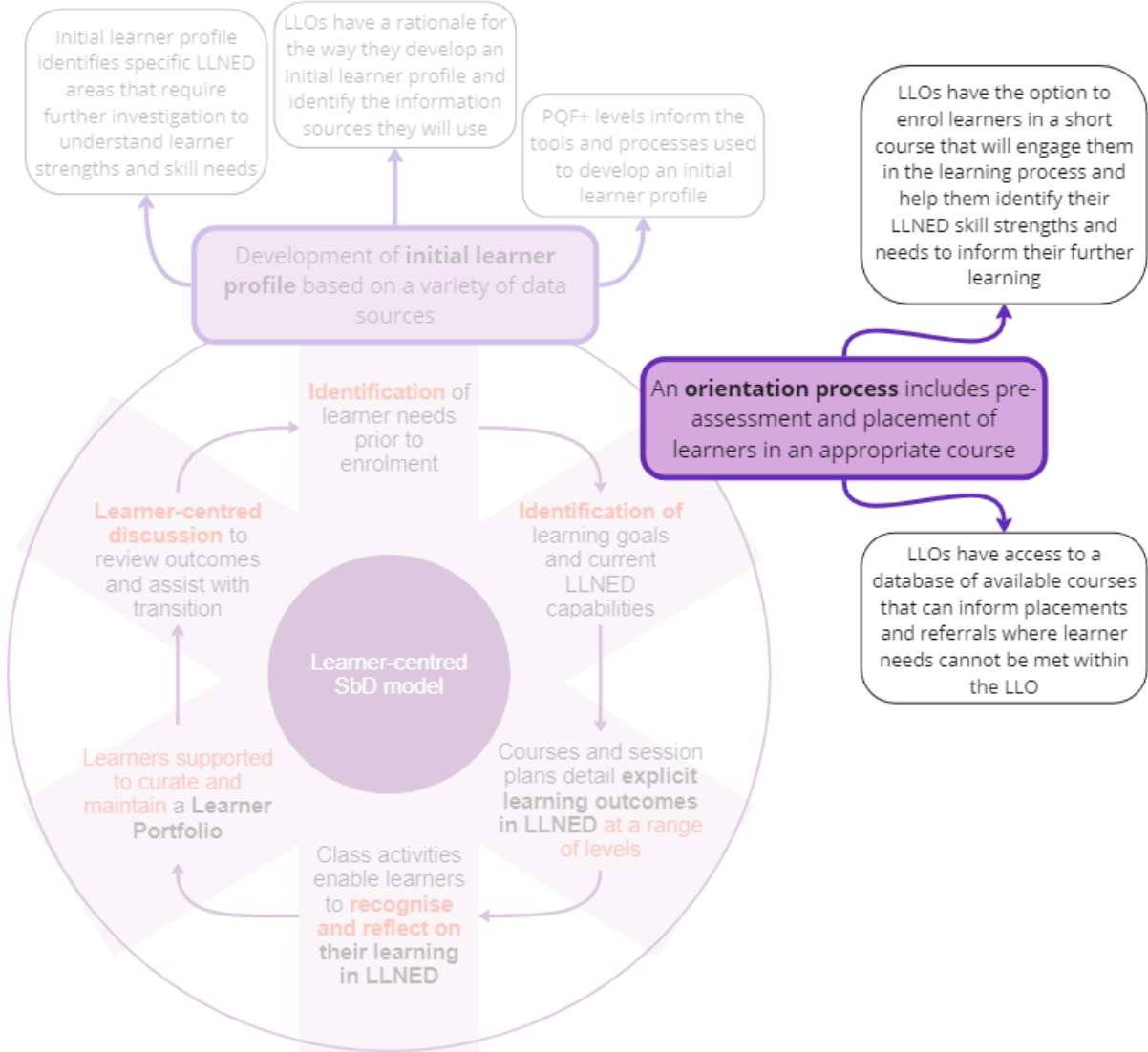
Stage 1

This diagram outlines what needs to be in place to implement the first stage of the model.



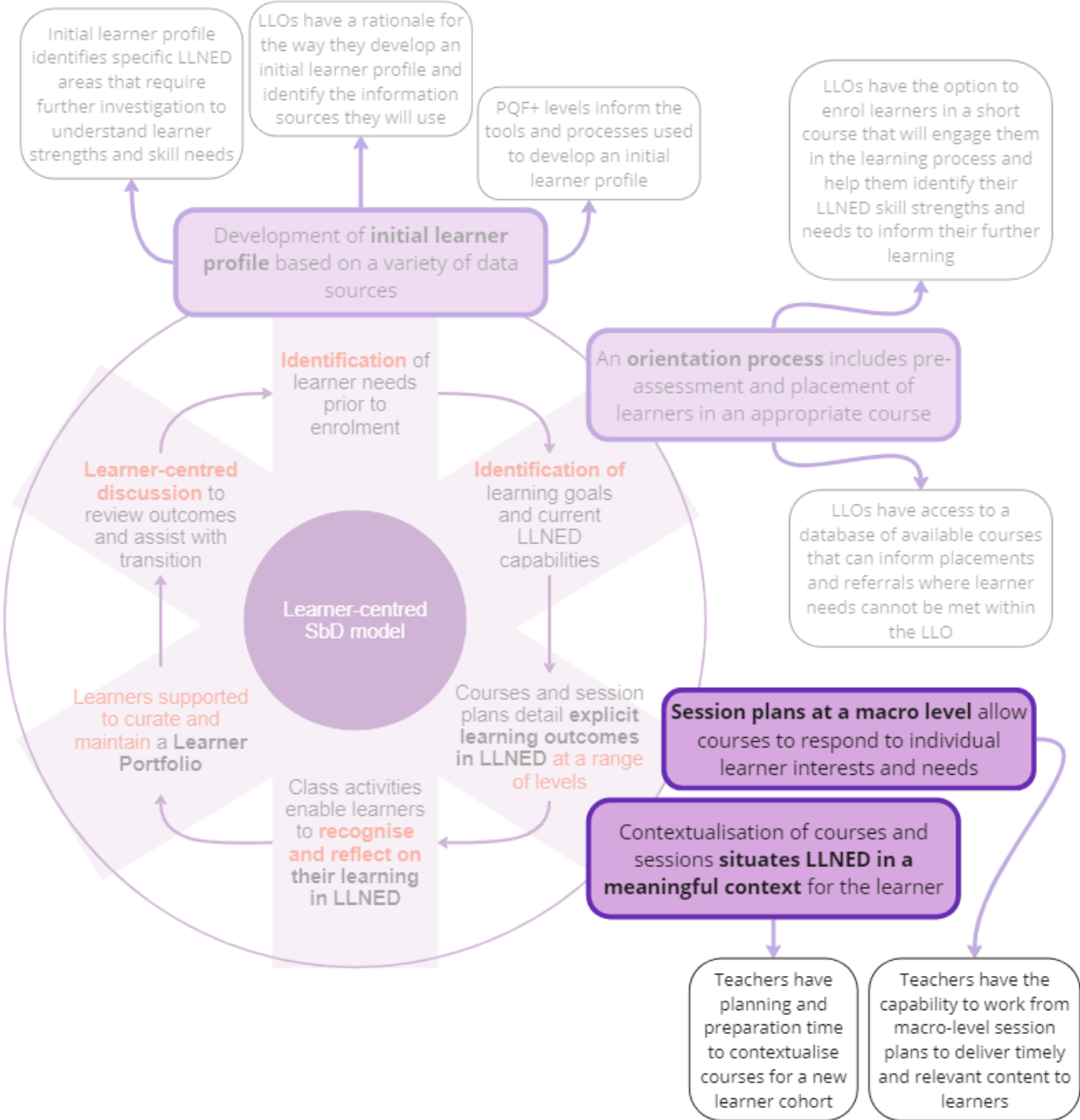
Stage 2

This diagram outlines what needs to be in place to implement the second stage of the model.



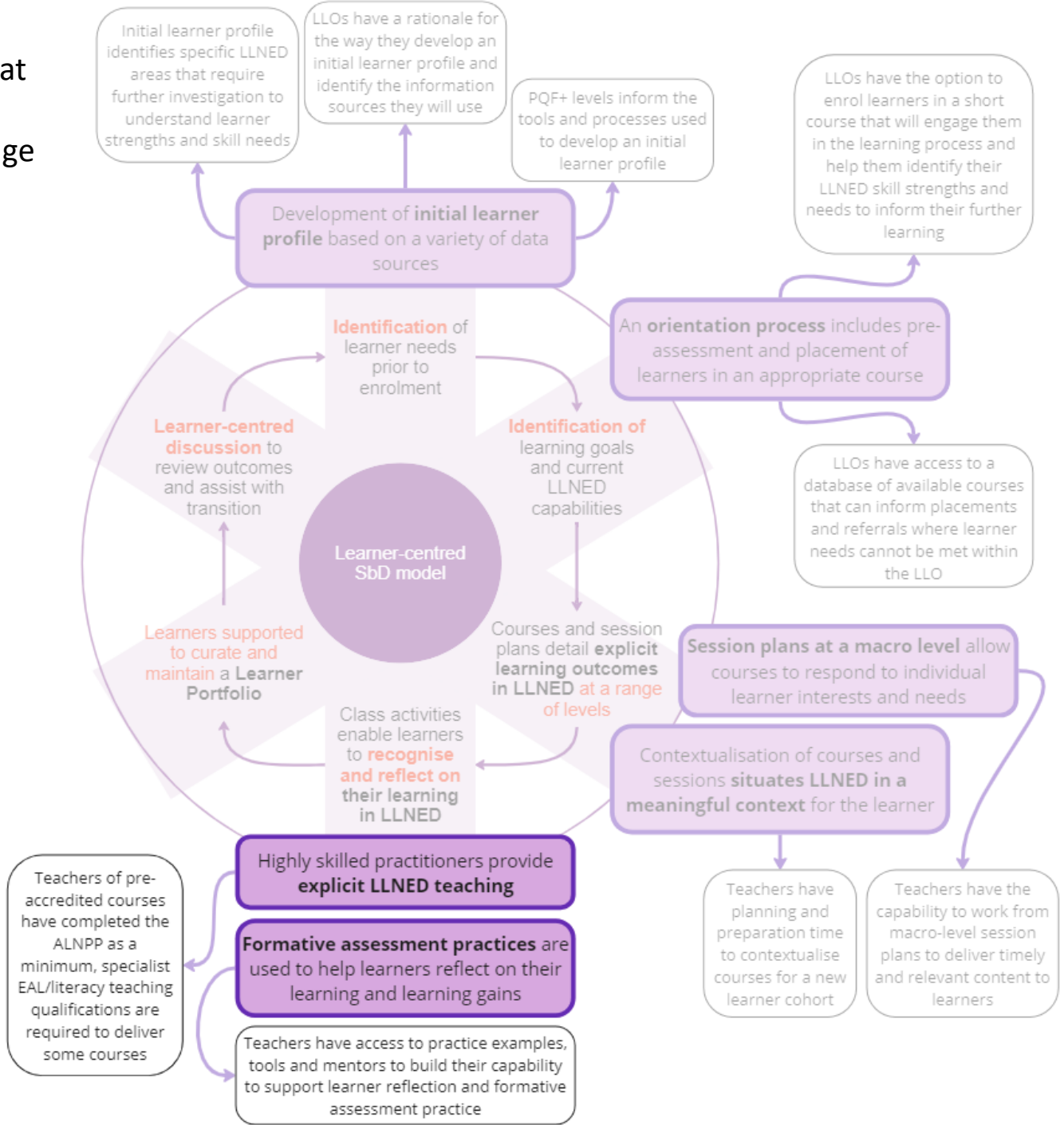
Stage 3

This diagram outlines what needs to be in place to implement the third stage of the model.



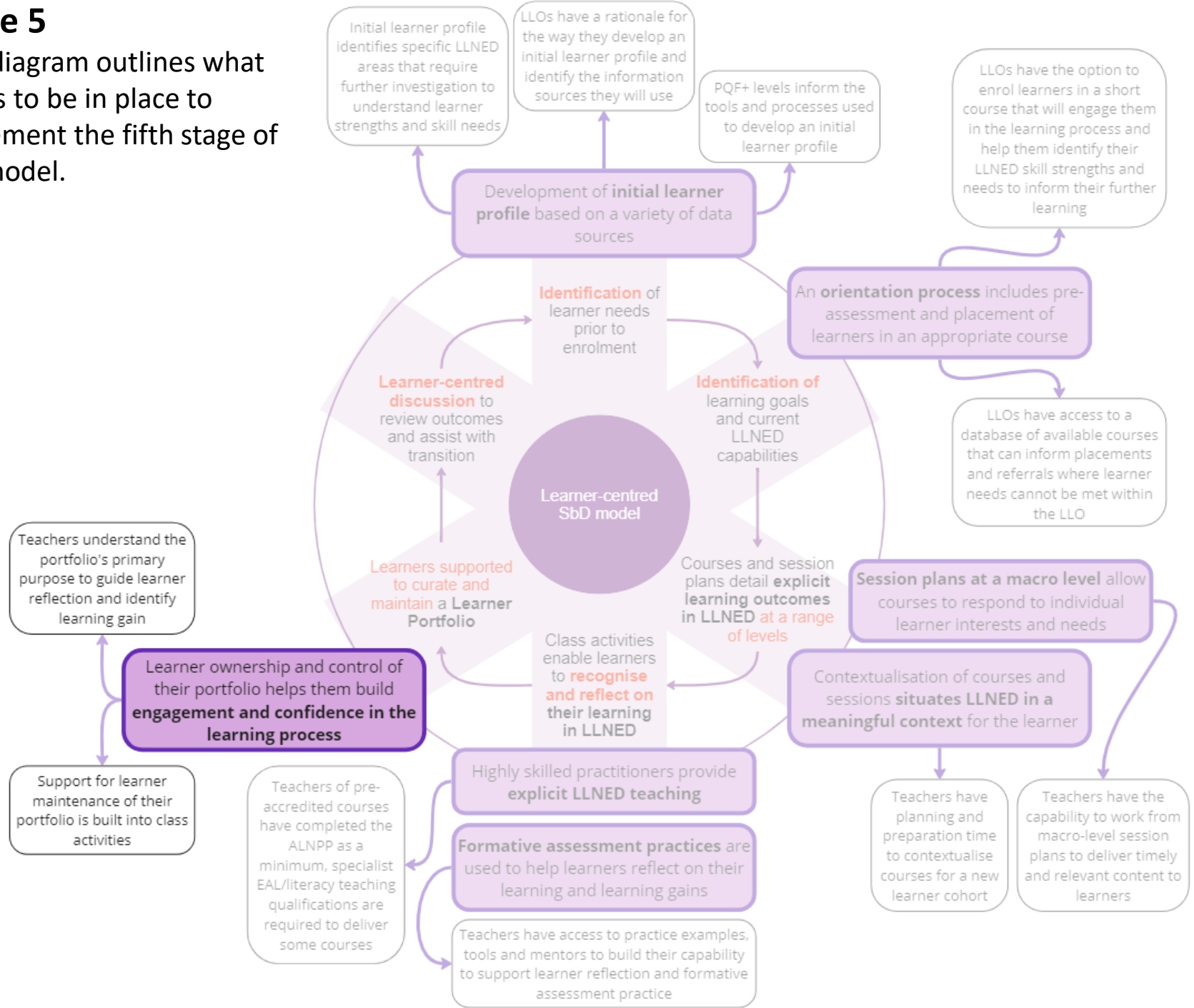
Stage 4

This diagram outlines what needs to be in place to implement the fourth stage of the model.

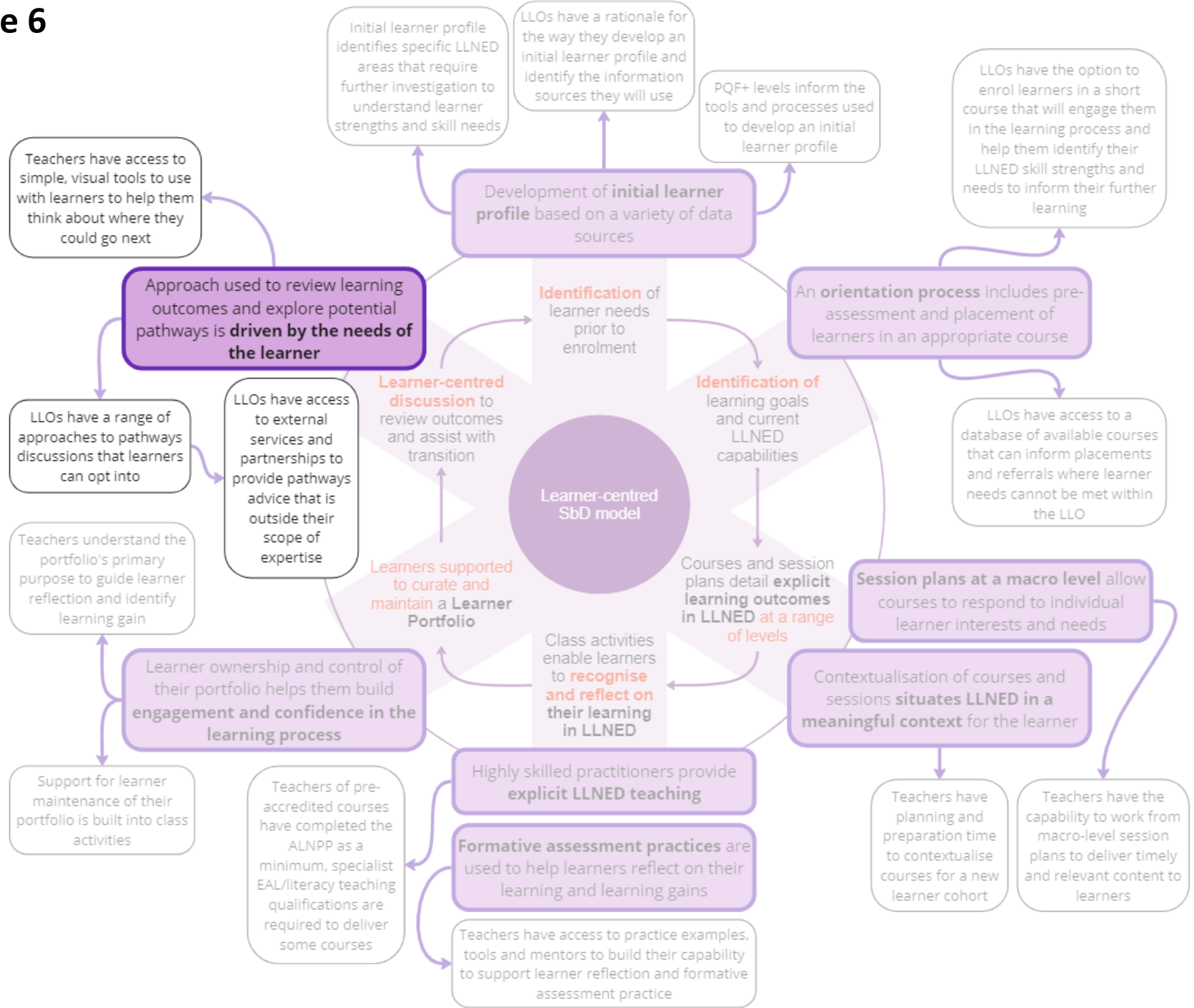


Stage 5

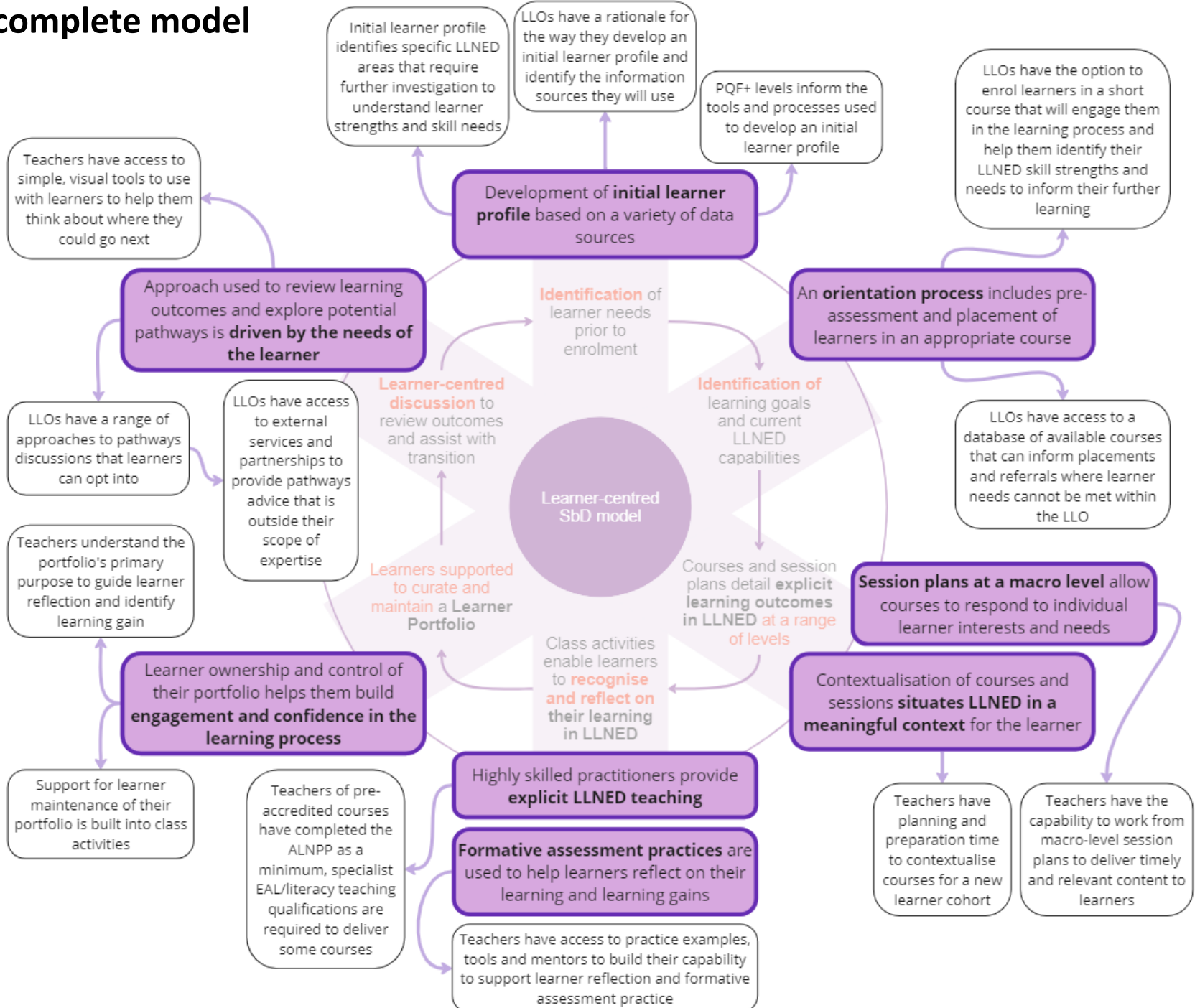
This diagram outlines what needs to be in place to implement the fifth stage of the model.



Stage 6



The complete model



The way forward

Model effectiveness

What is made **Stronger** by this Design?

Effectively implemented, the model has the potential to provide:

- Better ***baseline understanding*** of learner skills to guide delivery
- More ***explicit focus on LLEND*** delivery within all course types
- Greater ***teacher attention*** to how they will make LLNED learning relevant and contextual for adult learners
- Increased ***learner agency*** and involvement in identifying and documenting their learning gain
- More ***consistent collective approach*** to pre-accredited curriculum
- ***Greater transparency*** about the content of funded pre-accredited activity
- More ***joined up approaches*** to meeting learner cohort needs through partnerships and networks

Adjustments to the model

The evaluation found that implementation of the model will be aided by:

- A softer approach to pre-assessment offering a range of methods for establishing a learner profile
- The development of exemplars and practice examples to help LLOs use PQF+ documents and processes
- A mechanism to recognise employability skills gain
- The identification of non-LLNED learning outcomes and consistent mechanisms for LLOs to identify and record learning gain in these areas
- Streamlining PQF+ templates using SUPER approach to make documentation accessible for the intended audience.

SUPER SbD documentation

SUPER	<i>SbD templates and documents should:</i>	<i>...so that users can:</i>
SIMPLE	be written and structured in a straightforward manner	easily convey and collect information
USEFUL	be practical	use the documents to meet their needs
PURPOSEFUL	have a clear focus that relates directly to the SbD model	understand connections and links between the SbD documents
EMPOWERING	help and guide the user	use the documents confidently and develop agency
RESPONSIVE	include flexibility for adjustment and continuous improvement	address variation and diversity of learner needs and ways of learning

Implementation issues

A successful roll-out of the SbD model depend on:

- **Effective communication and messaging** – using language that aligns with sector values and builds support for the change process
- **LLO capability** – robust whole-of-sector professional development encompassing co-ordination, administration and teaching roles to support a shift to learner-centred approaches
- **Leveraging sector research** – maximising learning exchange about what is working in the sector by sharing outcomes from research and innovation activities
- **Appropriate resourcing** – designing funding approaches enable LLOs to deliver quality pre-accredited courses

Considering the variability of LLO capability, this might take considerable time.

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