

**FREE · L&D CAREER PLAYBOOK · 28 PAGES**

# The Free L&D Career Playbook

Templates, scorecards, benchmarks and interview prep — everything an L&D professional needs to design better programmes, prove impact, and progress their career.

<b>ADDIE &amp; SAM templates</b>	<b>Kirkpatrick scorecard</b>
<b>2026 L&amp;D salary benchmarks</b>	<b>Interview question bank</b>

**Inside this playbook:** ADDIE & SAM templates, a Kirkpatrick scorecard, 2026 L&D salary benchmarks, and a complete interview question bank — across 28 pages.

Published by **Global Skill Development Council (GSDC)**

Home of the CLDP — Certified Learning & Development Professional.

*Important: salary figures in this playbook are illustrative ranges intended as starting points for your own research. Always cross-check against current local sources.*

# What's inside

Twenty-eight pages, four parts. Each part is self-contained — use them in any order.

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# How to use this playbook

This isn't a book to read once. It's a working set of tools designed to be printed, filled in, and revisited every time you scope a new programme, plan a measurement approach, prepare for an interview, or negotiate a new role.

## The four parts

1. **Templates (pages 4–12)** — full ADDIE and SAM design templates you can copy or print and use on a real programme this week.
2. **Kirkpatrick scorecard (pages 13–16)** — a structured way to plan L1–L4 measurement *before* a programme launches.
3. **2026 salary benchmarks (pages 17–20)** — indicative ranges by role, city, industry, plus non-base negotiation levers.
4. **Interview question bank (pages 21–27)** — 40 real interview questions, what hiring managers look for, and how to answer using STAR.

## Three ways people use this playbook

- **As a working toolkit** — open the template you need, fill it in for a real project.
- **As interview prep** — work through the question bank a week before any L&D interview.
- **As a study companion** — pair with the CLDP study material to anchor what you're learning in real practice.

## Who this is for

- **Career switchers** moving into L&D from HR, teaching, or a subject-matter role.
- **Practising L&D pros** who want better templates and a stronger negotiation case.
- **L&D managers** coaching less experienced team members.
- **Candidates preparing** for an L&D interview or certification.

## Before you start

### A simple rule

**Pick one real programme or one real interview you're preparing for.** Apply this playbook to it. Templates filled in for an imaginary scenario teach nothing. Templates filled in for a real situation are the difference between knowing about L&D and being able to do it.

## PART 1 · Templates

# The ADDIE template — overview

ADDIE is the most widely used instructional design model — linear, structured, and easy to audit. The next five pages give you a fillable template, one phase per page.

## The five phases at a glance

Phase	What happens	Key output
A · Analysis	Identify audience, problem, gap, constraints.	Needs analysis brief
D · Design	Define learning objectives, sequence, modality mix, assessments.	Design blueprint
D · Development	Build the content — slides, modules, job aids, assessments.	Course assets
I · Implementation	Launch the programme. Train facilitators. Onboard learners.	Live programme
E · Evaluation	Measure outcomes against objectives. Refine for next iteration.	Evaluation report

## When to use ADDIE

### Good fit

- Compliance, safety, or regulated content.
- Large programmes needing multi-team coordination.
- Stable content with infrequent updates.
- Audit-trail-heavy environments.

### Reach for SAM instead when

- Requirements are fuzzy or evolving.
- Stakeholders are available for fast review cycles.
- Speed-to-launch matters more than perfection.
- Iterative refinement is welcomed.

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### Master ADDIE end-to-end with the CLDP credential

GSDC's Certified Learning & Development Professional covers ADDIE, SAM and 10 more frameworks.

[Explore the CLDP →](#)

## ADDIE template - Analysis

Use this template at the start of any new programme. Resist the urge to skip ahead — most failed programmes failed in Analysis.

<p><b>Programme name</b></p> <p><i>What will you call this learning intervention?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Business problem</b></p> <p><i>What's broken today — in business terms, not learning terms?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Target audience</b></p> <p><i>Who specifically? How many? What's their starting point?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Capability gap</b></p> <p><i>Difference between current and required skills, knowledge, behaviours.</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Constraints &amp; assumptions</b></p> <p><i>Time, budget, technology, language, accessibility.</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Success criteria</b></p> <p><i>How will you know it worked? What will be measurably different?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

## ADDIE template - Design

Translate the gap into a learning solution. Be ruthless about what stays out — every extra topic dilutes the rest.

### Learning objectives (3–5 max)

*“By the end of this programme, learners will be able to [Bloom verb] [skill] in order to [outcome].”*

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### Modality mix

*Self-paced digital · live virtual · in-person · coaching · on-the-job · job aids · community.*

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### Programme structure & sequence

*Module → activity → assessment. How does each piece build on the last?*

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### Assessment approach

*How will learners demonstrate the objectives? Quiz, scenario, role-play, observation?*

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### Stakeholder sign-offs needed

*Who has to say yes before Development starts?*

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## ADDIE template · Development

Build the assets. Most programmes lose two weeks here from scope creep — use this template to keep it tight.

### Asset inventory

List every artefact: slides, modules, job aids, facilitator guides, videos, assessments.

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### Tools & platforms

Authoring tool (e.g. Articulate Rise), LMS, video tool, image library, accessibility checker.

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### Content owners

Who provides the source material? Who reviews each draft?

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### Review cycle

Number of draft rounds. Reviewer SLAs. Sign-off criteria.

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### Accessibility & language checks

Alt text, captions, plain language, translations, screen-reader testing.

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## ADDIE template - Implementation

Launch is where bad communication and poor manager prep kill good programmes. Plan it like a product launch.

### Launch date & rollout plan

*Pilot first? Phased by region/team? Big-bang? With what dependencies?*

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### Facilitator preparation

*Train-the-trainer dates, facilitator guides, dry runs.*

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### Learner communications

*Pre-launch emails, manager talking points, launch announcement, weekly nudges.*

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### Manager enablement

*What do managers need to know, say, and do before, during, and after the programme?*

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### Support model

*Helpdesk, FAQs, escalation path, troubleshooting owner.*

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## ADDIE template - Evaluation

Designed last in the model — but planned first in practice. Decide your measurement approach *before* you launch, not after.

<p><b>Level 1 — Reaction</b></p> <p><i>What feedback will you gather? When? From whom?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Level 2 — Learning</b></p> <p><i>How will you measure knowledge or skill gain? Pre/post, scenario, observation?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Level 3 — Behaviour</b></p> <p><i>Who will assess on-the-job application? At 30, 60, 90 days?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Level 4 — Results</b></p> <p><i>Which business KPI will move? By how much? By when?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Reporting &amp; iteration</b></p> <p><i>Who sees what, when? How does the next cohort change based on this data?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

[LIMITED-TIME OFFER]

### Validate your design craft with a recognised credential

The GSDC CLDP cohort window is open for a limited seasonal enrolment period.

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# The SAM template — overview & cycles

SAM (Successive Approximation Model) is the agile alternative to ADDIE. Instead of long, sequential phases, you work in short, iterative cycles of prototype → review → refine.

## SAM at a glance

Phase	What happens	Key output
1 · Preparation	Quickly gather background, audience, and goals (time-boxed).	Information backbone
2 · Iterative Design	Sketch, prototype, review, refine — 2–3 cycles.	Approved design prototype
3 · Iterative Development	Alpha → Beta → Gold cycles.	Released programme

## The SAM principle: build small, review fast

### Why iteration beats perfection

SAM assumes no one — not the SME, not the learner, not the sponsor — really knows what the right solution looks like until they see a draft. So you make drafts cheaply, early, and often. Each prototype gets sharper.

## Use SAM when...

- Requirements are fuzzy or evolving fast.
- You can ship a v1 in 4–6 weeks rather than 4–6 months.
- Stakeholders are engaged and available for short, frequent reviews.
- You'd rather get directional feedback on three prototypes than perfect feedback on one.

## Pair SAM with these habits

- Time-box every cycle. Hard.
- Review with the same three stakeholders every cycle.
- Capture what changed each round so the team can defend decisions later.

# SAM template - Preparation phase

Preparation is time-boxed — typically 1–2 weeks. Resist the urge to make it ADDIE Analysis in disguise.

**Performance gap (in one sentence)**

*What behaviour or outcome are we trying to change?*

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**Audience snapshot**

*Who, how many, where, what's their starting context?*

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**Success picture (in one sentence)**

*If this works, what does someone do differently next quarter?*

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**Constraints & non-negotiables**

*Time, budget, format, accessibility, language.*

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**Three sources of insight**

*Who/what will you talk to or read? (Don't aim for 20 — pick 3 that matter.)*

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**Time-box rule**

**Cap Preparation at 2 weeks of calendar time.** If you can't get directional clarity in two weeks, you have an organisational problem — not a learning problem. Surface it, don't paper over it with more analysis.

## SAM template · Iterative Design & Development

Three short cycles. Each one ends with a small, reviewable artefact — not a finished product.

### Cycle 1 — Sketch

<p><b>What we'll show</b></p> <p><i>Storyboard, outline, paper prototype, or rough wireframe.</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Three review questions</b></p> <p><i>Specific questions you want answered — not “what do you think?”</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

### Cycle 2 — Prototype

<p><b>What we'll show</b></p> <p><i>A working sample of one module or one session.</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Decisions we need from this review</b></p> <p><i>What changes if reviewers say no? What changes if they say yes?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

### Cycle 3 — Alpha → Beta → Gold

<p><b>Alpha (internal-only test)</b></p> <p><i>Who tests? What do you watch for?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Beta (small pilot)</b></p> <p><i>How many real learners? What's the feedback mechanism?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Gold (full release)</b></p> <p><i>Launch date. Who signs off. What you'll iterate on first.</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

[LIMITED-TIME OFFER]

### Templates work better when paired with a credential

The GSDC CLDP cohort window is open for a limited time — anchor your design skills officially.

[Reserve Your Seat →](#)

**PART 2 · Measurement**

# Kirkpatrick scorecard — overview

The Kirkpatrick model has four levels — Reaction, Learning, Behaviour, Results. Most programmes measure only Level 1. This scorecard helps you plan all four **before** a programme launches.

## The 4 levels at a glance

Level	Question it answers	Typical measures
L1 · Reaction	Did learners find it relevant?	End-of-session, NPS, surveys
L2 · Learning	Did they gain knowledge or skill?	Pre/post test, observation, scenarios
L3 · Behaviour	Are they applying it on the job?	Manager check-in, observation, KPI proxy
L4 · Results	Is the business KPI moving?	Ramp time, error rate, sales, retention

## How to use the next 3 pages

- **Page 14:** plan L1 (Reaction) and L2 (Learning) for one real programme.
- **Page 15:** plan L3 (Behaviour) — usually the hardest, and the one that proves you can measure.
- **Page 16:** plan L4 (Results) and decide whether ROI is worth the work.

## The trap most teams fall into

### Why L1 alone is dangerous

“Learners loved it!” isn't proof of learning, application, or impact. A great smile-sheet score with no L3/L4 evidence will eventually get your budget cut. Plan L3 and L4 measurement *before* you launch — not when the CFO asks at the end of the year.

## Scorecard · Levels 1 & 2 (Reaction & Learning)

Every programme should at minimum measure L1 and L2. They're cheap, fast, and the floor of credibility.

### Level 1 · Reaction

<p><b>What you'll ask</b></p> <p><i>3–5 short questions. Include one open-ended (“What’s one thing you’ll use this week?”).</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>When &amp; how</b></p> <p><i>End-of-session in-tool, plus a 48-hour follow-up if relevant. Anonymous? Named?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Target threshold</b></p> <p><i>What does “acceptable” look like? Above what score do you not iterate?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

### Level 2 · Learning

<p><b>Knowledge / skill gained</b></p> <p><i>Which 3–5 things must every learner be able to do/know at the end?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Measurement method</b></p> <p><i>Pre/post test, scenario response, observation, peer review, working artefact?</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Pass criteria</b></p> <p><i>Score, threshold, or qualitative judgement — and who decides.</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

## Scorecard · Level 3 (Behaviour)

L3 is the most undervalued, most powerful level. If you can show learners changed what they do, everything else falls into place.

### Target behaviour change

One sentence: "After this programme, [audience] will [observable behaviour] in [context]."

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### How you'll see it

Manager observation? Self-report? Sample of work? Customer feedback? KPI proxy?

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### When you'll measure

30, 60, 90 days are typical. Pick the cadence that matches the behaviour cycle.

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### Manager role

What will managers be asked to do or notice? How will you make it 5 minutes, not 50?

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### Baseline

How will you know what the behaviour looked like before the programme?

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### Confounders

What else could change the behaviour? How will you separate signal from noise?

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[50% OFF]

### Prove your measurement craft with the CLDP credential

Promotional access to the GSDC CLDP is live now — limited promotional window.

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# Scorecard · Level 4 (Results) & ROI add-on

Level 4 connects learning to a business KPI the leadership team already cares about. Plan it with the business sponsor — not in isolation.

## Level 4 · Results

<p><b>Business KPI</b></p> <p><i>The single metric the sponsor will check: ramp time, error rate, sales conversion, NPS, retention...</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p><b>Target movement</b></p> <p><i>From what, to what, by when? Make it specific enough to be challenged.</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p><b>Data source &amp; owner</b></p> <p><i>Where does the data live? Who pulls it? How often?</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p><b>Isolation approach</b></p> <p><i>Control group, trend analysis, A/B, expert estimation, or stakeholder agreement?</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

## Level 5 · ROI (Phillips, optional)

<p><b>Use ROI when the CFO is asking</b></p> <p><b>ROI % = ((Monetary benefits – Programme costs) / Programme costs) × 100</b></p> <p>Only worth the effort for high-stakes programmes (leadership, sales enablement, large compliance). For most programmes, a strong L3/L4 narrative beats a fragile ROI percentage.</p>
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## PART 3 · 2026 salary benchmarks

## Salary benchmarks by role (indicative)

Use these as **starting points for your research**, not authoritative figures. Pay varies dramatically by country, city, industry, and company size. All ranges below assume mid-market private-sector employers; cross-check against current local sources.

## Indicative annual base salary by role (USD equivalent)

Role	Experience	Indicative range	Typical scope
L&D Coordinator / Administrator	0–2 yrs	\$38k – \$55k	Entry, support-oriented
Instructional Designer (Jr.)	1–3 yrs	\$50k – \$72k	Builds course content
L&D Specialist / Trainer	2–5 yrs	\$58k – \$85k	Owns programmes end-to-end
Senior Instructional Designer	4–7 yrs	\$78k – \$105k	Complex / leadership programmes
L&D Manager	5–10 yrs	\$90k – \$130k	Owns function in mid-size org
Senior L&D / Talent Dev Manager	8–12 yrs	\$110k – \$155k	Multi-programme, regional scope
Head of L&D	10–15 yrs	\$135k – \$190k	Function lead, multi-site
Director / VP of Learning	12+ yrs	\$165k – \$240k	Strategy & org capability
Chief Learning Officer (CLO)	15+ yrs	\$200k – \$350k+	Executive, large enterprise

## How to read this table

Treat the lower end as a realistic floor for that experience band and the upper end as top-quartile. Adjust upward for high-cost cities and high-paying sectors (next two pages).

## Salary benchmarks by city tier (indicative multipliers)

Apply these multipliers to the role-based ranges on the previous page to get a location-adjusted starting point. Always cross-check against current local data.

City tier	Multiplier	Example cities (illustrative)
Tier 1 — Premium global hubs	1.20 – 1.45x	San Francisco Bay Area, New York, London, Zurich, Singapore
Tier 2 — Major metros	1.00 – 1.15x	Boston, Seattle, Chicago, Toronto, Sydney, Dublin, Berlin
Tier 3 — Mid-size cities	0.85 – 1.00x	Austin, Denver, Manchester, Lisbon, Bangalore, Melbourne
Tier 4 — Smaller cities & regional	0.65 – 0.85x	Smaller metros, secondary cities in any country
Tier 5 — Lower-cost / emerging markets	0.35 – 0.65x	Many cities across South Asia, SE Asia, LatAm, Africa

### Remote work changes the math

- **Single-tier remote pay:** some employers anchor to one tier (often Tier 2/3) regardless of where you live.
- **Geography-adjusted remote pay:** others adjust based on your location — sometimes downward if you move.
- **Negotiable at offer stage:** if you live in Tier 4 and the role was scoped at Tier 1 budget, ask explicitly which model they use.

### Worked example

#### L&D Manager in a Tier 3 city

**Starting range (role table):** \$90k–\$130k.

**Tier 3 multiplier:** 0.85–1.00x.

**Location-adjusted estimate:** ~\$76k–\$130k.

**Your ask range:** aim for the upper half — e.g. \$105k–\$120k — if your experience and impact stories support it.

# Salary benchmarks by industry & company size

## Indicative industry adjustments

Industry	Typical vs baseline	Notes
Big Tech / High-growth Tech	+15% to +35%	Best total comp incl. equity
Financial Services / Banking	+10% to +25%	Strong base, bonus-heavy
Pharma / Life Sciences	+5% to +20%	Stable, regulated, structured bands
Consulting / Professional Services	+5% to +15%	Variable; often utilisation-linked
Manufacturing & Industrial	Baseline (0%)	Reliable bands; slower movement
Retail / Hospitality / FMCG	-5% to -15%	Tighter L&D budgets at scale
Education / Public sector / NGO	-15% to -30%	Mission premium; smaller bands

## Indicative company-size adjustments

Company size	Cash comp signal	Trade-off
Early-stage startup (<50)	Often -10% to baseline cash	Equity offsets cash
Growth-stage (50-500)	Baseline to +10%	Best balance for many L&D pros
Mid-market (500-5,000)	+0% to +10%	Most defined bands
Large enterprise (5,000+)	+5% to +20%	Strong base; slower decisions

**[OFFER VALID 48 HOURS]**

### A recognised credential strengthens every salary conversation

The GSDC CLDP promotional window closes in 48 hours — enrol before it expires.

[Enrol in the Next 48h →](#)

## Negotiating beyond base - 10 levers

When base is fixed, the rest of the package usually isn't. The 10 levers below are often cheap for the employer and valuable for you — strong negotiators always pick at least three.

Lever	Why it works
Signing bonus	Easier to give than base — different budget line.
Annual bonus target %	Push for a higher target, or a first-year guaranteed minimum.
Equity / stock grants	Standard in tech and growth-stage — ask for refresh schedule too.
Title	A better title costs them nothing and pays you for years.
Start date	Negotiate a later start to take a break or earn a final bonus.
Learning & certification budget	Easy ask for L&D pros — double it.
Conference & membership budget	Often a separate budget line.
Remote / hybrid flexibility	Days per week in office; full-remote on certain weeks.
Extra PTO / leave	Either base allowance or unpaid leave guarantees.
Promotion review timeline	Lock in a 6-month review, not a 12-month one.

### The rule of three

#### Why “three asks” outperforms “one ask”

Never go in asking for one thing. Ask for **three** — usually base + one financial lever + one non-cash lever. You'll almost always get one. Most negotiators get two.

## PART 4 · Interview question bank

# The 40-question interview bank — overview

The next four pages list 40 of the most common L&D interview questions, grouped by category. Pages 26–27 cover how to **answer** them (STAR) and what hiring managers actually look for.

## The four categories

Category	What it tests	How to prepare
Foundational (1–10)	Core understanding of L&D as a discipline.	Always asked — anchor your story.
Design & delivery (11–20)	Craft questions about ADDIE, SAM, modalities, facilitation.	Bring concrete examples.
Measurement & strategy (21–30)	Kirkpatrick, ROI, business alignment.	Show you speak business language.
Stakeholder & leadership (31–40)	Influence, conflict, coaching, team leadership.	Behavioural — use STAR.

## How to use the next 4 pages

1. **Skim** all 40 questions — circle the 10 that worry you most.
2. **Draft** a 60-second STAR answer for each circled question, in writing.
3. **Rehearse** the 5 most likely questions out loud, at least twice.
4. **Pair up** with a peer for a 30-minute mock interview.
5. **Refine** the questions you stumbled on — those are the ones that matter.

### The most important interview habit

**Reuse the same 5–7 stories across multiple questions.** Strong candidates sound consistent — not because they're rehearsing scripts, but because the same real experiences are deep enough to answer many questions.

## Foundational L&D questions (1–10)

These come up in almost every interview. Prepare a 60-second answer for each — and a 15-second “headline” version in case time is short.

1. Tell me about your background and what drew you to L&D.
2. How do you define learning & development — in one sentence?
3. What's the difference between training and L&D, in your view?
4. Walk me through a programme you designed from scratch.
5. Which learning frameworks do you use most often, and why?
6. Tell me about a programme that didn't work. What did you learn?
7. How do you stay current in L&D?
8. What kinds of learners do you find hardest to engage?
9. Describe a time you had to learn something quickly to do your job.
10. Why do you want to work in L&D at this company specifically?

### What strong answers do

- Lead with a **specific example**, not a generic principle.
- Quantify wherever possible — “reduced ramp time by 30%” beats “a lot faster.”
- End with reflection: what you learned, what you'd do differently.
- Connect to **this** role and company — not L&D in the abstract.

## Design & delivery questions (11–20)

Craft questions. Expect follow-ups that drill into the *how* — be ready to defend specific choices.

1. Walk me through how you'd design a new onboarding programme.
2. ADDIE vs SAM — when do you reach for each?
3. How do you do a training needs analysis with a busy stakeholder?
4. What does a great learning objective look like?
5. How do you decide between e-learning, live, and blended?
6. Tell me about a time you used Bloom's taxonomy in practice.
7. Which authoring tools have you used? Walk me through one project.
8. How do you handle an SME who is hard to extract content from?
9. Describe how you'd design for a multilingual, distributed audience.
10. What does your facilitation style look like, virtually and in-person?

### Watch out for

- **Tool name-dropping without depth.** Interviewers test the *how* — not just whether you've used the tool.
- **“Best practice” monologues.** Anchor in a real example you owned.
- **Ignoring constraints.** Strong designers always name time, budget, and accessibility constraints.

## Measurement & strategy questions (21–30)

These separate junior from senior candidates. Anyone can talk about courses; only experienced L&D pros can talk about **outcomes**.

1. How do you measure the impact of a programme?
2. Walk me through how you'd apply Kirkpatrick to a sales-enablement programme.
3. Tell me about a time you used data to change a learning programme.
4. How do you prove ROI when the business asks?
5. What metrics do you avoid relying on — and why?
6. How does L&D contribute to business strategy in your current role?
7. Describe a competency framework you've designed or implemented.
8. How would you build a learning culture from scratch?
9. What do you think changes in L&D over the next 2–3 years?
10. What does AI change for our function?

### Hiring-manager hot button

#### They are testing for business fluency

Senior L&D leaders fail interviews not because they don't know learning, but because they can't translate it into business outcomes the CEO or CFO cares about. Practise translating every answer into the language of revenue, cost, risk, and people.

[LIMITED-TIME OFFER]

#### A credential that signals you can do this work — not just talk about it

The GSDC CLDP is the credential hiring managers look for. Limited-time enrolment open now.

[Reserve Your Seat →](#)

## Stakeholder & leadership questions (31–40)

Behavioural questions — almost always answered with STAR. The next page shows you how.

1. Tell me about a time you said no to a stakeholder. What happened?
2. Describe a time you had to influence without authority.
3. Walk me through a difficult conversation with a senior leader.
4. Tell me about a time you coached someone through a tough spot.
5. Describe a time you led a team through change.
6. Tell me about a programme you killed. Why?
7. Describe a time you partnered with an HRBP / business partner well.
8. Tell me about a conflict you handled inside your team.
9. How do you prioritise across competing learning requests?
10. What does “great” look like for a manager of L&D?

### STAR is mandatory here

Behavioural questions deserve **STAR** answers — Situation, Task, Action, Result. If you don't use STAR, interviewers struggle to score you. See page 26 for a template.

## Building strong STAR answers

STAR keeps your answers structured, specific, and short. Aim for 60–90 seconds total — 4 short paragraphs.

### The STAR framework

Element	What it is	Example
S · Situation	Set the context in one sentence.	“Six months ago, our onboarding programme had a 28-day ramp time...”
T · Task	Your specific responsibility.	“As the L&D lead, I was asked to bring it down to 14 days within Q3.”
A · Action	What you specifically did. Use “I,” not “we.”	“I ran a needs analysis with 10 new hires, restructured the journey into a blended path...”
R · Result	The measurable outcome.	“Ramp time fell to 13 days. Manager satisfaction went from 6.2 to 8.1.”

### STAR worksheet — for one of your stories

**Situation**  
*Set the scene in one sentence.*

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**Task**  
*Your specific responsibility.*

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**Action (this is the longest part)**  
*Three to four concrete actions you took — not your team, you.*

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**Result**  
*Quantify wherever possible. End with reflection.*

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# What hiring managers look for in L&D

Across hundreds of L&D interviews, hiring managers consistently rank candidates on five underlying qualities. Most candidates think interviews are about technical knowledge. The best candidates know they're about evidence — of the five qualities below.

## The five things they're scoring for

Quality	What it means	How to show it
Business fluency	Translates learning into business outcomes.	Watch your verbs: capability, performance, results — not “engagement.”
Craft	Specific, defensible design and measurement choices.	Always name frameworks. Always explain trade-offs.
Pragmatism	Knows when to deviate from the textbook.	Tell stories where you broke a rule for a good reason.
Stakeholder skill	Influences without authority; handles conflict.	Use STAR. Quantify the outcome of the relationship, not just the project.
Credential & continuous learning	Independently validated, actively growing.	A recognised certification + a recent thing you read or built.

## Why credentials cut through

### Independent validation > self-rating

Hiring managers can't easily verify what you claim about yourself. They can verify a credential. A recognised, independent certification — like the GSDC CLDP — gives them an external anchor for your craft. That's why it matters disproportionately for career switchers and senior moves.

[50% OFF]

### Add the credential hiring managers actually look for

The GSDC CLDP is recognised in 100+ countries. Promotional access live now.

[Get 50% Off Now →](#)

## Next steps & your career checklist

You've worked through 27 pages. The hard part — applying it — starts now. Use the checklist below as your action plan for the next 90 days.

### This week

- Pick one real programme and fill in the ADDIE (or SAM) template for it.
- Print page 19 and book your next salary conversation.
- Circle the 10 interview questions that worry you most.

### This month

- Complete a Kirkpatrick scorecard for one programme you own.
- Draft a written STAR answer for each of your 10 circled questions.
- Update your LinkedIn About using L&D language and frameworks you've now mastered.

### This quarter

- Earn a recognised L&D credential — the CLDP is the credential hiring managers look for.
- Build a small portfolio: one designed module + one measurement scorecard.
- Do at least one mock interview with a peer or mentor.

### Final word

This playbook works because the templates are real and the questions are real. The career growth happens when you apply them to *your* real situation — not when you read about them. Pick the one page that's most relevant this week. Print it. Use it. Then come back for the next one.

[50% OFF]

#### Make the CLDP credential your next career milestone

The GSDC Certified L&D Professional builds on the foundations in this playbook. Promotional access live.

[Start Now — 50% Off →](#)